

Latino Student Success Center (LSSC)– “La Casa Latina”¹

Research Task: Develop a project scope for a temporary LSSC.

Process: After reading the final report of the President’s Taskforce on Latino Success, I scheduled informational interviews with key stakeholders including: Dr. Carlos Crespo-- Chair of the Taskforce -- as well as committee members Dr. Jackie Balzer, Dr. Roberto De Anda and Perla Pineda. In addition, with the assistance of Stefanie Cruz from the Office of Diversity and Equity, I convened a focus group of 10 students on this subject. This group included officers from the student organizations Las Mujeres and MECHA as well as unaffiliated students, recent graduates, and current graduate students. ²

This research revealed that there is a great deal of faculty and student interest in a temporary LSSC. However, it is also clear that both faculty and students have a much larger vision of what a LSSC could be.

Findings: Stakeholders interviewed for this project described a temporary LSSC that has the following physical and (to the extent they impact space requirements) programmatic characteristics:

Physical Space

1. The visibility of the LSSC is a chief concern of this stakeholder group. Although they understand there is very little PSU space available for this purpose that is highly visible to the general public, nevertheless - they would like the LSSC to be as visible as possible. Some ideas that were discussed: place it close to other similar spaces (ie the Multi-Cultural Center) that are already established; utilize portable signage (ie. the Food For Thought signs outside of Smith). They also felt a LSSC website would be an important “signage and visibility” feature.
2. In choosing fixtures – chairs, sofas, etc. – those interviewed asked that two considerations guide the selection process: Latino students are more likely to have come to campus from further away and therefore they are more likely to spend more time on campus - because of transportation issues.
3. Ideally, the space would be flexible enough to accommodate regularly scheduled activities as well as workshops, presentations by student organizations, occasional speakers, special presentations – such as “family nights” – and celebrations. ³
4. This means permanent fixtures should be positioned around the perimeter of the space, and all chairs and tables (they would prefer round tables) should be collapsible or stackable. In addition, this space should be built out to high tech classroom standards, with a hard wired Audio Visual system containing microphone, amplifier, speakers, playback capability for music; a ceiling

¹ Appendix 1 is a Powerpoint presentation done at a recent conference that gives a national perspective on the importance of Latino Student Success Centers.

² Appendix 2 is a list of everyone who was interviewed or served on the focus group for this report.

³ Additional information on Latino Student Success Centers on other campuses is available in Appendix 3.

mounted projector for Powerpoint presentations and a movie projection screen.

5. All stakeholders expressed a need for a small, lockable room that would provide adequate privacy to serve as a flexible office space for faculty, admissions, mentoring, and tutoring -- office hours, as well as legal and academic counseling. Ideally, it would also contain several computers and a copier and could be used as a mini study lab when not otherwise in use.
6. According to all those I spoke with, providing a welcoming space for families is also an important function of this temporary center. With this in mind, stakeholders would like to see the center provide:
 - a. space and some bilingual books and toys for small children who come with older siblings and parents to the center
 - b. a very colorful space – several students volunteered to help pick colors and fixtures
 - c. photos of successful students and their stories on the walls as well as a portable mural that could be used by students to explain to their parents the need for and value of higher education
 - d. printed materials that are in both English and Spanish and organized so the translations are laid out side by side on the page
 - e. bookshelves containing Latino Student success stories and materials
 - f. lockers for student storage
 - g. a community bulletin board for events, jobs, etc
 - h. a dry erase board for planning purposes ⁴

Programmatic

1. The question of who will “turn on the lights” and oversee the center is critical. Several suggestions were made in this regard:
 - a. locate the office of one of the bilingual/bicultural Student Affairs staffers working on Latino student success and retention issues in the LSSC
 - b. the President has committed \$250,000 for student scholarships to this initiative – students suggested that recipients be required to spend time working in the center as a condition of their scholarship
 - c. another suggestion was to create a LSSC Ambassador’s program – modeled on the PSU Ambassador’s program – these ambassadors would work in the center and the community

Other Issues: During my interviews, several issues arose that may or may not affect the design of a temporary LSSC. I mention them here because they were raised so frequently in my stakeholder interviews.

- **Student groups and the Center:** Many of the student’s involved in the focus group were current or former members of either MECHA or Las Mujeres. These students expressed an interest in moving their current offices from the student organization office cluster in the Smith Student Union to the Center. From discussions with other stakeholders, I understand there are legal reasons

⁴ A student designed floor plan, showing a possible layout for the LSSC is illustrated in Appendix 4.

this is impossible: MECHA and Las Mujeres are funded by student fees; they are an important part of the SALP program; their organizational missions could not be fulfilled if they were located in a community space that must by definition be welcoming to all Latino students.

Recommendation: This is an important student concern that should be addressed by administration.

- **The Multi-Cultural Center:** Latino students make up a significant proportion of MCC users. There was concern that the creation of a new LSSC will weaken the MCC's program.

Recommendation: The suggestion was made to have the MCC mentor the LSSC and provide it with the larger space they need for special activities until a permanent space can be provided. This would help support the LSCC, while mitigating the "loss of Latino Students" to the MCC's program.

- **Recruitment of Latino Students and the Center:** The students involved in MECHA and Las Mujeres want to see the LSSC become very involved in the recruitment of Latino students. Both organizations feel too much of their organization's time and resources are being spent off campus helping recruit Latino students with PSU admissions representatives. The groups would like to focus more attention serving the Latino students who are here.

Recommendation: Members of MECHA and Las Mujeres seem to be very committed and successful students who understand how PSU works; perhaps they could be recruited for a Latino Ambassador's program, if one were to be enacted.

Appendices:

1. *Latino Cultural Centers: Building on a Legacy of Action* – A Powerpoint presentation given at the Student Affairs Administrator's 2010 NASPA Conference
2. Full list of interviewees, with their affiliations and contact information
3. Hyperlinked list of all Latino Student Success Centers on American Campuses
4. Suggested Floor plan based on findings

APPENDICES

Latino Cultural Centers: Building on a Legacy of Activism



2010 NASPA CONFERENCE

Lillian Casillas, Director
La Casa Latino Cultural Center
Indiana University – Bloomington

Adele Lozano, Assistant Dean & Director
La Casa Cultural Latina
University of Illinois –Urbana/Champaign

Ivone DeJesus, Acting Director
Rafael Cintron-Ortiz Latino
Cultural Center
University of Illinois – Chicago

Angelica Mendoza, Assistant Director
Latino Resource Center
Northern Illinois University – DeKalb

Session Overview



1. Space and Place Framework
2. Background on Latino CCs in Midwest
3. Student Activism on Our Campuses
4. Conclusion/Creating a Research Agenda
5. Discussion

Space & Place Framework

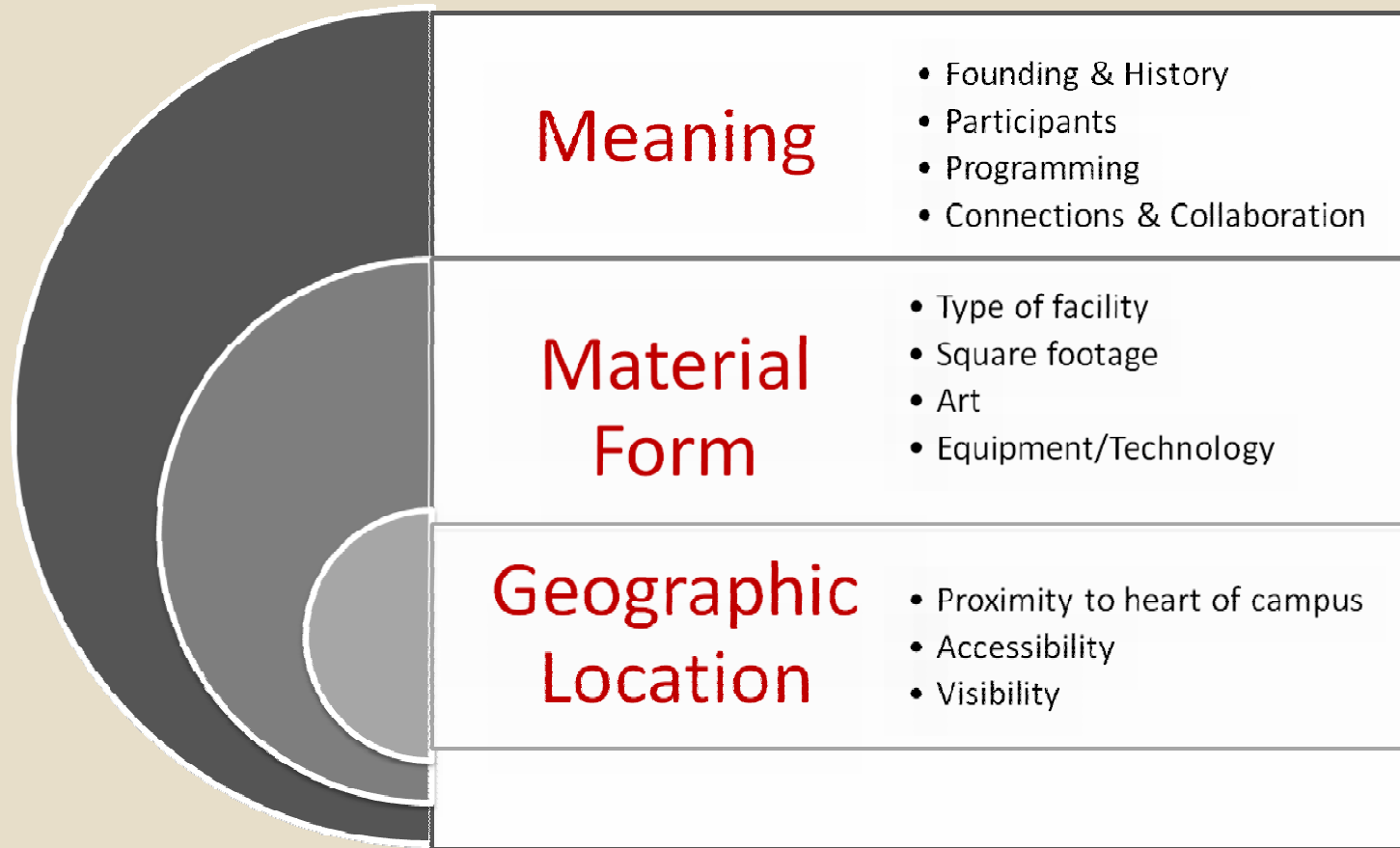


Sociology of Place (Gieryn, 2000)

Three Necessary and Sufficient Features:

- Geographic Location
- Material Form
- Investment with Meaning & Value

Applying Framework to Cultural Centers



Adapted from Gieryn (2000)

Latino Cultural Centers – IL, IA, IN



<u>Center Name</u>	<u>Yr Est.</u>	<u>Inst - %Latino</u>
Casa Latina Cultural Center	1973	WIU - 4.5%
La Casa Cultural Latina	1974	UIUC – 6%
La Casa Latino Cultural Center	1973	IU Bloom. – 2.6%
Latino Resource Center	1980s	NIU – 7.5%
Latino Cultural Center	1976	UIC – 13%
Latino Cultural Center	2003	Purdue – 2.78%
Latino/Native American Cultural Center	1971	U of IA – 2.8%

Reporting Lines



<u>Center</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Reports to</u>
CLCC/WIU	Student Services	VP for Student Services
LCCL/UIUC	Student Affairs	Assoc VC for Inclus. & Intercult Relat.
LCLCC/IU Bloom.	MC Initiatives	VP for Diversity, Equity & MC Affairs
LRC/NIU	Student Affairs	Asst VP of Diversity & Equity
LCC/UIC	Provost	V. Prov for Under- graduate Affairs
LCC/Purdue	Provost	Assoc. Provost
LNACC/IA	Ofc of Student Life	Asst Dir for Diversity & Cultural Centers

Location & Staffing



<u>Center</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Staffing</u>
WIU	Hub	Dir, Instructor, 3 grad asst
UIUC	Hub	Dir, Asst Dir, Prog Coord, Sec, 8 undergrads, 1 grad student
IU Bloom.	Hub	Dir, Sec, Grad Asst, 5 undergrad work-study students
NIU	Hub	Dir, Asst Dir, Admin Asst, 2 GAs, 3 undergrad interns, 5 work study
UIC	Hub	Dir/Asst Dir, 3 undergrads, 1 grad student
Purdue	Near athl. Facilities	Dir, Prog Coord, Exec Asst, 1 Grad Assistant
IA	Outskirts	Asst Dir (.30), 3 work study students

Mission Statements



Key phrases/words:

- *educational, cultural, socio-political, academic, social programs*
- *recruitment, retention*
- *advancement, and empowerment*
- *historical, political and cultural awareness*
- *celebrate and enhance understanding*
- *Latino and International students*
- *informed understanding*
- *a permanent gathering space*

La Casa Cultural Latina

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Latinas/os at the University of Illinois:

A History of Neglect and Strategies for Improvement,
1992-2002



A Report from the Chancellor's Committee on Latina/o Issues

1992 Demands



Focus Areas:

- Recruitment and Retention
- Faculty and Administration
- Chief Illiniwek
- Latina/Latino Studies Program



Daily Illini – May 6, 1992

1992-2002

Spring 1992, Students issue demands and take over Henry Administration Building on May 5th.

Spring 1993, Three senior Latina/o studies professors interviewed, none hired.

Fall 1995, Students issue petition for the creation of a LLSP. Student negotiations save the mural and LLSP is housed at 510 E. Chalmers.

Fall 1999, First LLSP Director resigns. Interim Director appointed, no outside search initiated.

Fall 2000, Four tenure/tenure track faculty leave UIUC.

Spring 2001, Over 180 students meet with Dean and History Department Head to protest lack of cluster hire.

Summer 2001, LLSP Director Search Committee formed without undergraduate representation.

Fall 2001, Students withdraw from negotiations with Provost due to lack of progress.

Spring 2002, 170 students signed petition for cluster hire of three senior Latina/o faculty.

Cycle of Struggle for

1990-1995 Reports annually calling for recruitment of Latina/o faculty and establishment of LLSP.

Spring 1994, La Casa relocates to larger facility at 1203 W. Nevada.

Spring 1996, Of three "rank open" positions, only 1 hired at senior level. No specific LLSP director search conducted.

Fall 1996, First Director of LLSP appointed.

Fall 1997, Administrators refer to Latinos as hyphenated Americans in meeting with students.



ILLINOIS

Latinas/os at the University of Illinois: A History of Neglect, 2003

Indiana University - Bloomington



La Casa Latino Cultural Center

Lillian Casillas
Director

Student Protests



Summer of 1971 - Indiana Daily Student newspaper article

1972 - Latino students first protests

April 1973 - Taliaferro-Joyner report

Summer and Fall 1973 - First Director of Latino Affairs hired and Latino Cultural Center opens.

1976 - La Casa moves to current location

February 1977 - Further demands

August 1978 – First Dean Appointed

January 1997 – Protest for Latino Studies



J.D. Scholz

More Recent Events



June 1999- the Office of Latino Affairs closes and La Casa reopens after a \$200,000 renovation



Fall 2000 – Latino Studies open its doors



University of Illinois at Chicago

rafael cintrón ortiz
UIC
latino cultural
center



Rafael Cintrón-Ortiz Latino Cultural Center

Ivone De Jesus
Acting Director

Student Activism in 1970's



- **Student Plan**
 - Expand limited selection of course offerings dealing with Latin American history
 - Address admissions policies
 - Address lack of Latino student recruitment
 - Challenge absence of relevant programs related to Latino culture and academic development
 - Establish independent Latino recruitment and retention program
 - ✦ Dual function

Student Activism in 1970's



- **Action**
 - Demands, sit-ins, protests
 - Political and community pressure
 - September 1973 arrests at UH
 - Protests, rallies
- **Results**

"We demand that a definite and identifiable cultural and educational center with community input be established within the University to insure the academic survival of our students. The cultural center should have adequate space for library functions, cultural activities, and the availability for meaningful communication between the Latino students and the community."

-Student & Community Action plan addressed to the University

Struggle for their Vision



- Status of original proposal
- Vision for center
- Struggles
- Finally a reality
- “Home away from home”
- Murals

“We propose the creation of a Latin American Cultural Center at Circle Campus to serve Latino students and other students interested in Latin American culture and related topics. The establishment of the Center is necessary in order to bring together Latino students, who represent the fastest growing ethnic group in Chicago, and an increasing portion of the UICC student body, but who as of now have no permanent place of their own on campus to meet for social, cultural, and educational purposes.”

-Addendum Concerning the Creation of a Latin American Cultural Center





Lolita Lebrón visiting the UIC Latino Cultural Center in 1997 to sign her name to the mural depicting her 1954 arrest



Actual picture of Lolita Lebrón being arrested in 1954 for trying to overthrow the U.S. government

Student Activism in 2010



- Mobilization
- Budget cuts
- Protect autonomy
- Action
 - Meetings with administrators
 - Political and community pressure
 - Protests, rallies



Currently cultural centers are being threatened to be cut due to the University's budget problems. These centers provide tremendously important services to marginalized groups within our society. From providing education on one's hidden or stolen history to being just a safe place to be oneself, these centers play a vital role for others on our campus. Don't let UIC cut our funding and send us back twenty or thirty years in progress, WE ARE NOT A BUDGET CUT!

-Students for Saving the UIC Cultural Centers

Northern Illinois University



Latino Resource Center

Angélica Mendoza

Assistant Director

Overview of Historical Context



- University Resources for Latinos (URL) established in 1978.
- Original Latino house was destroyed to make room for a parking structure.
- In 1992, the URL was located at the Knetsch House.
 - International Student and Faculty Office
- In 1996, the URL had the entire Knetsch House for Latino students.
- In summer 1999, the new Latino building was completed.

Methodology



- Two types of research:
 - Historical
 - University archives
 - Ethnographic
 - Tape-recorded interviews
- Interviews
 - Four (4) administrators (1992-2002)

Building a New Home



Rationale FOR new facility

- Increase of Latino population
- Space to provide services to students
- Identity, visibility & sense of belonging
- Environmental hazard
- URL/Center for Latino & Latin Amer. Studies

Rationale for NO new facility

- Financial reasons
- Remodeling → cost effective

Strategic Planning for New URL



- Student Activism
 - “Knowledge is Power”
 - Meeting with administrators
 - Student government
 - Unity with student organizations
- Role of Administrators
 - Reporting numbers and needs of Latino students
 - Advice on proper protocol

Student Struggle – Space and Place



Latina/o Cultural Centers

- Location
- Material Form
- Meaningfulness

Creating a Research Agenda



- **History, Founding stories**
- **Organizational Models**
- **Impact on Recruitment & Retention and Sense of Belonging**
- **Impact on Campus Environment/Campus Climate**
- **Funding and Resources**
- **Alumni Outreach**
- **Community Outreach**

Websites



La Casa Cultural Latina, University of IL Urbana-Champaign

<http://go.illinois.edu/lacasa>

La Casa Latino Cultural Center, Indiana University – Bloomington

<http://www.indiana.edu/~lacasa/>

Rafael Cintron-Ortiz Latino Cultural Center, University of IL - Chicago

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/lcc/>

Latino Resource Center, Northern Illinois University – DeKalb

<http://www.niu.edu/lrc/>

**Latino Student Success Center
Student Focus Group Participants
7/23/10**

Name	Email
Rebecca Arcos	Major: Social Work Transfer student Senior Standing Officer for Las Mujeres rarcos@pdx.edu
Erich San Juan Corona	Major: Marketing/Advertising Transfer student-MHCC Senior, graduating summer '10 MEChA sanjuan_996@hotmail.com
Bryan Ortega-Schwartz	Major: Anthropology Junior/Senior Standing MEChA orteezy@gmail.com
Francisco Ianni	Major: Grad Student-Education, emphasis on adult education lannif@redcross-pdx.org
Christina Estrada	Major: Psychology Senior Standing PsyChi Board Member estrada.christina@gmail.com
James Nuñez	Major: Education Near completion on Undergrad, continuing in the school of ED for graduate studies gjnunez@pdx.edu
Araceli Miranda	Major: International Studies (focus on Latin America) & Chicano Latino Studies (certificate) Transfer student-PCC Junior Standing Las Mujeres amiranda@pdx.edu
Daniela Garza	Major: Sociology & Political Science Junior/Senior Standing dgarza@pdx.edu
Margarita Gonzalez	Freshman/Sophomore Standing Officer for MEChA gonz@pdx.edu

Also interviewed for this report:

- **Dr. Jackie Balzer** – Vice Provost for Student Affairs - jbalker@pdx.edu - (503) 725-5249
- **Dr. Carlos Crespo** – Director of Community Health - ccrespo@pdx.edu - (503) 725-5120
- **Stefanie Cruz** – Office Specialist 2 - Office of Diversity and Equity – scruz@pdx.edu – (503)-725-5919
- **Dr. Robertson De Anda** – Associate Professor and Chair – Chicano Latino Studies - deanda@pdx.edu - (503) 725-8462
- **Perla Pinedo** – Equity Retention Advisor and Coordinator - perlap@pdx.edu - (503) 725-9687

Latino Cultural Centers at US Universities

Urban 13 Cultural Centers

- University of Alabama at Birmingham | [Manos Juntas](#)
- University of Illinois at Chicago | [Rafael Cintron-Ortiz Latino Cultural Center](#)
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee | [Roberto Hernandez Center](#)

Other Latino Cultural Centers

- University of California Santa Cruz | [Chicano Latino Student Life Resource Center](#)
- California State University Fullerton | [The Chicana & Chicano Resource Center](#)
- California State Polytechnic University, Pomona | [Cesar E. Chavez Center for Higher Education](#)
- Claremont University | [CLSA](#)
- Chicago State University | [Latino Resource Center](#)
- Florida State University | [El Centro Hispanic / Latino Student Center](#)
- Governors State University | [Title V Cooperative Grant Latino Center for Excellence](#)
- Indiana University Bloomington | [La Casa](#)
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | [La Casa](#)
- University of Iowa | [Latino Native American Cultural Center](#)
- Northeastern University | [Latino/a Student Cultural Center](#)
- University of Northern Colorado | [Cesar Chavez Cultural Center](#)
- Northern Illinois University | [Latino Resource Center](#)
- University of Pennsylvania | [La Casa Latina](#)
- Purdue University | [Latino Cultural Center](#)
- University of South Florida | [La Unidad Latina](#)
- Stanford University | [El Centro Chicano](#)
- Tufts University | [Latino Center](#)
- Washington State University | [Chicana/o Latina/o Student Center](#)
- Western Illinois University | [Casa Latina Cultural Center](#)
- University of Massachusetts Boston | [Casa Latina](#)
- Yale University | [La Casa Cultural](#)

Programs/Events

- Brandeis University | [Latin American and Latino Studies Program](#)
- Columbia University | [Institute of Latin American Studies](#)
- Florida A&M University | [Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- Fordham University | [Latin American and Latino Studies](#)
- Georgetown University | [Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- University of Georgia | [CLASE](#)

- Georgia State University | [Center for Latin American and Latino/a Studies](#)
- University of Houston | [Center for Mexican American Studies](#)
- University of Notre Dame | [Institute for Latino Studies](#)
- Ohio State University | [Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- Rutgers New Brunswick | [Center for Latino Arts and Culture](#)
- San Diego State University | [Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- Texas A&M University | [Student Conference On Latino Affairs](#)
- Tulane University | [Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- University of Pittsburgh | [Center for Latin American Studies](#)
- Wayne State University | [Center for Chicano-Boricua Studies](#)

Note: This floor plan was done by the students in the focus group held 7/23/2010

“Temporary” – Latino Student Success Center

Chicano Latino Center Aka “LA CASA”

