

ENLACE IN ALBUQUERQUE



INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH **Results Summary—April 2003**

2002 HTP ENLACE Fellows: Survey Results **(Compiled by Donna Navarrete for ISR)**

I. INTRODUCTION

Each academic year, ENLACE administrators of the Hispanic Teacher Pipeline (HTP) select up to 20 Hispanic Educational Assistants (EAs) as ENLACE fellows. Typically, these fellows are employed in Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and have a strong interest in becoming licensed schoolteachers within APS. As ENLACE scholarship recipients, fellows receive financial and professional support to continue their teacher education at either the Technical Vocational Institute (TVI) Community College and/or the University of New Mexico (UNM).

At the beginning of the academic year 2002-2003, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) administered a survey to current HTP scholarship recipients pursuing their education in teaching; 13 fellows provided survey responses (nine scholars are enrolled at the UNM and four are attending the TVI). This summary report provides research findings based on survey responses from the 13 HTP scholarship recipients.

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS: Issues Affecting Students' Education.

- A. Financial.** On the survey, scholars were asked to discuss issues pertaining to their ability to pursue their education on a full-time basis. Results showed that, prior to receiving the HTP scholarships, most of the respondents' *inability* to attend college full-time was primarily due to financial obligations (85%) and/or family and job responsibilities (70%). All of the respondents indicated that the HTP scholarship has, in fact, relieved the financial burden of full-time college attendance; i.e., making college more affordable. In addition, recipients reported that, as a result of having received scholarships, graduation from college is now expected sooner rather than later—the mean graduation date estimated by scholars is 2004.
- B. Ethnicity.** On the survey, scholars were asked to discuss a number of issues pertaining to their ethnicity. First, when asked if ethnicity had affected their educational progress, nearly half (46%) of the respondents reported no affect while the remaining respondents referenced ethnic components, such as language and cultural barriers and racism, as having affected their educational progress. Second, scholars were asked to discuss the importance of having a teacher of the same ethnicity. Results showed that, in the past, 9 of 13 (70%) scholars neither thought about this importance nor were taught by a Hispanic teacher; the remaining four scholars were taught by Hispanic teachers who “offered encouragement and understanding of the culture” and “taught Spanish and pride in the culture.” Today, most of the scholars (77%) agree about the importance of having a teacher of the same ethnicity. That is, some scholars have really enjoyed being taught by someone of the same culture:

- *I really enjoy being taught by someone of my culture. I think it really makes my goals seem more attainable.*

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- *I enjoy having teachers who understand my background and can relate to me*
- *[I] appreciate different perspectives and diversity depending on the course (i.e., a Latina professor teaching a Mexican immigration course is important).*

While other scholars consider teachers of the same ethnicity to be valuable role models for students:

- *Hispanic/Latino instructors are role models of what I can become.*
- *[It is] very important to see successful Hispanics in any profession.*
- *Hispanic teachers can show me methods/techniques to use to better teach Hispanic students.*
- *Understanding someone culturally is important; the key is not so much ethnicity but respecting cultural diversity.*

Finally, when asked about teaching students of *their* same ethnicity, 12 of 13 (92%) the scholars considered this scenario to be very important for a variety of reasons:

Instill Cultural Pride

- *I want to impart my cultural experience, instill cultural pride.*
- *I want to afford Hispanic Children the wealth of their own history enabling them a sense of connection to the world through academia.*

Encourage Higher Education

- *I want to instill the importance of getting a good education.*
- *I want to encourage Hispanic students to stay in school and go to college.*

Act as Role Model

- *Students need to see teachers from all minority groups (e.g., Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians).*
- *I want students to know that there are Hispanic women who are educated; and that all dreams are attainable.*

C. Educational Levels of Family Members. On the survey, scholars were asked to describe the education levels of their immediate family and that of their extended families as well. In their immediate families, 11 of 13 (85%) scholars reported having immediate family members who graduated from high school, with over half of these members having pursued or now pursuing a postsecondary education. In fact, three scholars reported having at least one parent and/or one sibling who hold undergraduate or graduate degrees. Additionally, in their extended families, scholars reported a considerable range of academic achievement among family members, from little or no formal education up through the doctorate level.

D. Educational History. First, in terms of their elementary and mid-school education, most scholars (12 of 13) reported having had a positive learning experience and indicated that academic attainment was valued not only by parents but the community as well. Parents expected scholars to finish high school, and regularly encouraged educational attainment. In addition, these same scholars reported having had at least one role model as a teacher, including teachers of the same ethnicity. In high school, 10 of 13 (77%) scholars

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reported having had a positive experience in secondary education, with at least one teacher of the same ethnicity who acted as a role model. Noteworthy is that most of the scholars (11 of 13) reported that, although academic advisement may have been available at their high school, scholars did not actively seek advisement regarding educational attainment. In fact, only two scholars report ever having been encouraged by high school teachers/counselors to attain a post-secondary education, but at least five scholars developed a clear sense of importance of an education while attending high school.

III. CONCLUSION

Currently, the majority of teachers in New Mexico are White from middle and working class backgrounds, who often may know little about their diverse students' backgrounds. The statistics are telling: While 63 percent of New Mexico's public school students are non-European American, the teaching force is 72 percent European American. In 1998, while 49 percent of the total public school students were Hispanic, less than 25 percent of their teachers were Hispanic (NM SDE, 2000). To this end, the ENLACE Fellows program is aimed at providing financial as well as academic support (teacher preparation) for former EAs toward their induction as licensed Hispanic teachers in New Mexico. Key projected outcomes of the ENLACE Fellows Program include a measurable expansion in the number of qualified Hispanic teachers within the APS, and the creation and nurturing of a significant number of Hispanic teachers who plan to return to teaching positions within the APS.

The research findings provided herein suggest that the HTP scholarships do indeed help to relieve some of the financial burden posed by attending college full-time; in fact, a number of recipients made reference to their financial inability to attend college prior to having received their ENLACE award. Further, these data revealed that recipients had little or no concern about the ethnicity of their teachers during childhood; however, the importance of having teachers of the same ethnicity tended to increase as recipients grew older and gained greater awareness as to the importance and value of their Hispanic culture and traditions. As college students, recipients acknowledged having reaped tremendous reward from teachers of their same ethnicity, particularly in terms of academic encouragement, cultural pride, and role modeling. Finally, these data revealed that the majority of the scholarship recipients came from families whose members graduated from high school and sought direct pursuit of either a successful career or a postsecondary education. The educational importance stressed in these families may account, in part, for the educational ambition of the scholarship recipients in their own pursuit of teaching degrees; as these data revealed, teachers and/or counselors seeded little if any ambition in these students during their high school years.

Reference:

New Mexico State Department of Education. (2000). Data collection reporting unit: Annual report 2000.