The Case for an Endowed Chair in Higher Education
“This side of town is strongly thought of as the place where all of the poor, uneducated, and even problematic people live, especially Mexicans … It is amazing to realize the low expectations that are established only because you come from that ghetto school on the south side. This has … motivated me to prove all of those individuals with these misconceptions wrong … I felt the need to demonstrate that a Hispanic female from the south side can really achieve the unthinkable and unexpected regardless of what people think.”

Excerpts from an essay written by a student prior to her first semester at the University of Arizona
The widespread exclusion of Latinos/as from higher education across the nation, and in Arizona in particular, leads us down a path of economic and civic peril. Exclusionary educational practices violate our deeply held values and pose a significant threat to the long-term economic viability of our state and our nation.

The impact of these exclusionary educational practices across the United States is profound. In the U.S., of every 100 Latino/a students who enter elementary school, only 10 will earn a bachelor’s degree compared to 25 of 100 white students who enter elementary school. The fallout from exclusion is even more profound when we look at the number of Latino/a students who will go on to earn a graduate or professional degree. Only four in 100 Latino/a students who start elementary school will receive a master’s degree while one in every 250 will eventually earn a doctoral or advanced professional degree.

The significance of these trends is profound for us in the state of Arizona when we consider that the percentage of Latinos/as (41 percent) and Whites (45 percent) in K-12 schools is now nearly equal. Arizona’s three universities confer more than 70 percent of their bachelor’s degrees to Whites but only about 12 percent to Latinos/as in any given year. By 2020, Arizona’s population will grow from six million to nearly nine million. Most of this growth will be among the younger population, which means that six out of 10 Arizona high school students will be from racial and ethnic groups with historically low educational attainment rates.

If this disparity continues, Arizona’s economy will suffer, and the overall quality of life will drop for us all. To be nationally competitive by 2020, the Arizona Board of Regents estimates we need to increase the number of bachelor’s degrees produced in the state from 19,100 in 2008 to 36,000 in 2020. Moreover, our youth must be educated and prepared to work in industries that will move the economy of Arizona forward — high-tech industries such as biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, utilities, transportation research, and infrastructure development. These industries will refuse to locate in our state unless they have a highly educated workforce from which to recruit. This, of course, is based on a strong system of public education.

### The Educational Pipeline Challenge

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Educational Attainment Patterns by Racial/Ethnic Background
Leading us down a different path

For more than two decades, faculty and students from the Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) at the University of Arizona College of Education have been committed to enhancing educational opportunities for Latinos/as like the young woman quoted inside the front cover. We realize the economic problems in our state are complex and involve a diverse set of educational factors, including low expectations, inadequate preparation for college, career choices, and the challenges students face moving toward a degree once they are enrolled in college. Unfortunately, not enough intellectual resources, monetary investment, or political will have been mustered to address this crisis. In spite of these difficult challenges, we are committed to working with state and local leaders and other educators to resolve this crisis.

CSHE includes a team of nationally and internationally recognized faculty who focus on teaching, research, and outreach at each stage of the higher education process — precollege expectations and academic preparation, transition to college, success in college once enrolled, transition to graduate and professional schools and success once there, and transition to work.
This work is important for three major reasons

Our research matters

A Youth Survey for Pima County

In collaboration with Voices for Education (a nonprofit organization) and school districts across Pima County, our center studies youth practices and perspectives on key issues to inform the policies and decisions of school administrators, educators, policymakers, and advocacy groups. In Pima County, 8,568 students have participated: 36 percent are Hispanic or Latino/a students, 33 percent White, 7 percent African American, 4 percent Asian American, and 4 percent Native American. The goals of this project are:

- To understand the educational expectations and aspirations of local youth, their college opportunities, and obstacles to achieving their goals
- To translate their perceptions into meaningful measures to inform leaders in creating and implementing policies
- To analyze factors that influence at-risk behaviors, such as dropping out of school
- To track their experiences, perceptions, and practices over time to respond effectively to their needs

English Language Learners in Arizona

What works most effectively to provide Arizona’s English language learners with a quality education? The center undertook a study to examine teachers’ opinions and understandings about effective curriculum and optimal pedagogy for these students, how well-prepared teachers feel they are to deliver a quality curriculum, and how well these students advance to meet the same educational standards set for all of Arizona’s students, including successful on-time graduation from high school and adequate preparation for postsecondary education.
New Start Summer Program

Faculty and postdoctoral fellows from CSHE are involved with the ongoing evaluation of the New Start Summer Program, which has helped for decades with the transition to college for Latinos/as, other students of color, and low-income students from across Arizona. The program works with a diverse group of approximately 250 students each summer before their first semester at the UA to assist in the transition to college life. Although this program has existed since 1969, it is only recently that a group of scholars from CSHE (faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students) and New Start Summer Program staff have come together to implement this evaluation. The evaluation project began through the initiative and hard work of a group of current and former CSHE students who are alumni of the New Start Program.

Arizona Assurance

CSHE faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students have coordinated the design, implementation, and analyses of an ongoing evaluation of Arizona Assurance, a program designed to improve access to and success at the UA for low-income students. Arizona Assurance provides complete financial aid and related mentoring and support services for in-state undergraduates whose family incomes fall below $42,400 and who are Pell Grant-eligible. The research and evaluation component focuses on how members of the university community can work with students to achieve academic and social success at the UA.

Study of New Approaches to Medical Admissions and the Outcomes of Medical Education

In collaboration with the UA College of Medicine and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), a team of researchers led by CSHE Director and Professor Jeffrey F. Milem, who also is the department head of Educational Policy Studies and Practice, is involved in a project designed to enhance the diversity of the entering medical school classes and to study the outcomes of medical education on medical students. These efforts, coordinated by AAMC, are linked closely with a larger national project on holistic admissions in which Milem is involved.
Project SOAR

Associate Professor Jenny Lee developed Project SOAR and Native SOAR, service-learning outreach programs that prepare and supervise undergraduates as mentors and tutors in eight underserved middle schools throughout the Tucson area. The majority of students are Latino/a and Native American. Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies Assistant Professor of Practice Lydia Bell is the director of these programs, in which more than 100 undergraduates serve hundreds of middle and high school students per semester. This three-year project was supported by a grant from the Helios Education Foundation and a private donation. Now, through the efforts of the CSHE faculty, the programs will continue in a more institutionalized form as a general education class for students throughout the university. The College of Science partners with Project SOAR in enlisting science-major undergraduates as mentors.

Tucson GEAR UP

Our faculty is involved with the Tucson Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduates Project, known as GEAR UP, a partnership between the UA, Pima Community College, and the middle school and high schools in two local school districts — Tucson Unified School District and Sunnyside Unified School District. GEAR UP works with a cohort of students (largely Latino/a) from middle school through high school with the goal of increasing the number of students who attend and graduate from college.

College Knowledge for Counselors

We have partnered with the UA Early Academic Outreach Office to sponsor the College Knowledge for Counselors Conference. This professional development conference provides counselors, administrators, and other educators working with students in transition, with innovative ideas to create a college-going culture in Arizona’s middle and high schools. Faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and current and former students from CSHE and other areas in the College of Education are workshop presenters.
Michelle Espino  
*Assistant Professor, University of Georgia*

"At every step along my journey to the doctorate, I felt empowered and supported by the faculty to conduct research that would lead to change, to teach students to become advocates for social justice, and to translate my research and teaching into tangible resources for the greater community. Now, as a faculty member, I see how the values espoused by the CSHE faculty and within the program are enacted through my own research, teaching, and service activities as I create structures of opportunity for Latino/a students and families residing in the southeastern U.S."

Rudy McCormick  
*Director, Early Academic Outreach, University of Arizona*

"In the 10 years since I received my master’s degree, I have worked in both college access and retention for traditionally underserved populations. CSHE has been an active partner with me and the broader K-16 community in enacting positive change within the field of education. As a professional, I worked with two CSHE graduates to intertwine Funds of Knowledge theory into college-outreach work with primarily Latino/a families of elementary school students. I have witnessed the ability of CSHE faculty to keep pulse of critical and timely issues through innovative graduate colloquia, such as the recent *Higher Education and the New Economy* and *Debating Diversity: Approaches to Equity and Opportunity in a Changing Democracy.*"

Judy Marquez Kiyama  
*Assistant Professor, University of Rochester*

"I was one of the students the New Start Summer Program served. Many years later, I found myself in a position to reciprocate that service for this program. This opportunity came in the form of a research project assembled by CSHE faculty and students who were also New Start alumni. Being involved with this and other projects with CSHE faculty demonstrated that community advocacy, outreach, and working toward equitable educational opportunities are critical facets of research, teaching, and service. As a faculty member, I now incorporate those same values into my own work as I partner with the local community to understand the factors that promote and the barriers that prevent Latino/a students from gaining access to educational opportunities."

Our alumni carry on this important work

www.coe.arizona.edu
The widespread exclusion of Latinos/as from higher education across the nation, and in Arizona in particular, leads us down a path of economic and civic peril.
Assistant Professor Nolan L. Cabrera studies the impact the New Start Summer Program has on low-income, first-generation, and racial-minority college students. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he worked on the National Institutes of Health-funded project regarding diversifying the sciences. His dissertation, *Invisible Racism: Male Hegemonic Whiteness in Higher Education*, critically analyzed the racial ideologies of White, male undergraduates. His primary research interests include race and racism in higher education, diversity, and affirmative action.

Associate Professor Regina Deil-Amen’s research includes transitions into and through college, community college students’ aspirations and persistence, and educational stratification. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University, where she enjoyed a three-year position as research director for a study, College to Careers, at Northwestern University’s Institute for Policy Research. The study examined how community colleges and private occupational colleges prepare students for prebaccalaureate careers. The college sample included several colleges with predominantly Latino/a or African American student populations. She also was an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University and University of Notre Dame.

Assistant Professor Ozan Jaquette examines how changes in external funding and competition affect the organizational behavior of colleges and universities with respect to curricular offerings, enrollment management, and budgetary policy. These organizational behaviors have important policy implications, affecting the skill composition of the workforce and the opportunities available to those from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. He received his doctorate in higher education from the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan.

Prior to her arrival at the University of Arizona, Associate Professor Jenny Lee served as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research examines college access, particularly the roles of college outreach and mentoring on student success and educational aspirations. In addition to her research, she developed and directed college-outreach programs in low-income schools in both Tucson and Los Angeles for more than 10 years.

Director and CSHE Professor Jeffrey F. Milem is the Ernest W. McFarland Distinguished Professor in Leadership for Education Policy. He has a courtesy appointment in the UA Department of Medicine. He is past president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. His research interests focus on racial dynamics in higher education, race equity, access, and success, the educational outcomes of diversity, and the condition and status of the professorate, including ways in which faculty effectively use diversity in their teaching. He also is the department head of Educational Policy Studies and Practice.

Professor Gary Rhoades served as general secretary of the American Association of University Professors in Washington, D.C., for two years. He was director of CSHE from 1997-2009 and has been a faculty member since August 1986. His scholarship focuses on the restructuring of academic institutions, science and technology policy, and comparative higher education. In addition to his books, *Managed Professionals* and *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy* (with Sheila Slaughter), he is working on a new volume, tentatively entitled, *Managing To Be Different: From Strategic Imitation to Strategic Imagination*. 
The Center for the Study of Higher Education faculty make significant contributions to understanding the educational experiences of Latino/a students. An endowed chair would dramatically increase our work in addressing the challenges students of color face. When funded, this will be the first endowed chair in the U.S. that focuses exclusively on key issues related to the educational experiences of Latino/a students.

*An endowed chair will establish the University of Arizona as the preeminent leader in our nation of faculty who improve the access to and success of Latino/a students in higher education.*
Our youth must be educated and prepared to work in industries that will move the economy of Arizona forward.