

Summary of Assessment Results

M.E.Ch.A. High School Senior Survey Fall 2007

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Assessment Goal: To gather data on Chicana/o Latina/o high school seniors from the salt lake valley in order survey needs and develop programming to meet those needs.

Summary of Findings:

The students surveyed for this assessment were attendees at the 1st annual M.E.Ch.A. senior day held at University of Utah's A. Ray Oplin Union Building on November 7, 2007. This was a student designed and run recruitment program. Students attended mandatory information sessions on university admissions, financial aid and scholarships. Optional workshops offer attendees insight into other aspects of university life as well as forums to discuss current issues facing the Chicana/o Latina/o community. Examples of the optional workshops are HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ, MEChA 101, Resistance through Art. All workshops and information sessions were presented by students, faculty, staff and community members.

The senior day drew approximately 200 Chicana/o Latina/o seniors from high schools throughout the Salt Lake and Granite school districts. The survey was designed to gather demographic information on the conference attendees at any point during the conference, no question pertained to the conference itself.

104 students at the conference participated in the survey. This is approximately half of the number of people in attendance. Q 1: Females comprised 67% of respondents, 32% were male and less than one percent identified as "other."

Q 2: The division of respondents between grades identified themselves as follows: 1.94% (2 respondents) from 10th grade, 5.83% (six respondents) from the 11th and 92% (95 respondents) from the 12th grade.

Because this was a senior day I filtered the remainder of the responses to reflect only the information gathered by students that identified themselves as seniors.

Q3: Has your high school counselor given you information on college admission?
70% answered yes to this question, 19% said no while 10% were "unsure."

Q4: Has your high school counselor given you information on financial aid for college?
57.89% stated yes, 35.79% no and 6.32% were unsure.

Q5. Have you taken the ACT or SAT exams for college entrance?

54.74% Yes
42.11% No
3.16% Unsure

Q6: What do your future plans include?

63.11% Attending a 4 year college in Utah
12.62% Attending a 4 year college outside of Utah
15.53% Attending a 2 year community college (e.g. SLCC, UVSC)
0.97% Attending a technical/vocational college
4.85% Taking time off to work, then attending college
2.91% I do not plan to continue my education after high school

Q7: Will you be applying to the University of Utah?

66.32% Yes
7.37% No
26.32% Unsure/Maybe

Q8: What would prevent you from attending college? (check all that apply)

75.79% Financial reasons
24.21% G.P.A.

Q 9: In response to the question "Is English your first language?"

27.66% Yes
72.34% No

Q10. Please indicate the highest level of education your FATHER completed: (scroll down) Count Percent

11.88% None/did not attend school
21.78% Elementary school
24.75% Some high school
20.79% Graduated from high school
6.93% Some college
9.90% Graduated from college
2.97% Graduate school/professional degree
0.99% Uncertain

Q11. Please indicate the highest level of education your MOTHER completed: (scroll down) Count Percent

2.97% None/did not attend school
21.78% Elementary school
31.68% Some high school
18.81% Graduated from high school
10.89% Some college
6.93% Graduated from college

6.93% Graduate school/professional degree
0.00% Uncertain

This was a great sample size based off of the number of students that attended the conference. Perhaps in the future it would be worth using a web format for this assessment so that students could provide a narrative description as a follow up to several if not all of the questions. It is unclear if the data indicates that more females attended the senior day or if it reflects an unbalanced sample with regards to gender. Next year I plan to make the students administering the survey aware of this so that we can strategize a method to capture an accurate sample.

Two responses raised red flags indicating that further research is required. The following data are included in this: 35% of respondents stating that their high school counselor has not provided information regarding financial aid for college and 42% of respondents indicating that they have not taken the ACT or SAT. When compared to the data indicating that 63% of respondents indicated that they plan to attend a 4 year college in Utah and 66% indicated that they will apply to attend the University of Utah, there is a disconnect occurring somewhere regarding the requirements for college admission. The most effective approach to bridging this gap would be to share this information with higher education institutions like the University of Utah so that more work can be done in high school outreach. In addition the high schools need to assess their methods of distributing information about college admission and the importance of the ACT and SAT as part of the admission process.

It is clear that there is a need for more scholarships due to the respondents overwhelming stating that financial reasons would be the biggest obstacle to attending college.

72% of respondents stating that English is not their first language demonstrates that the University of Utah as well as high schools need to embrace the bilingual abilities of Chicana/o Latina/o students and look at way in which they can view bilingualism as an asset. In addition it would benefit the University to increase the amount of outreach that is conducted in Spanish.

Finally, the responses to the final questions regarding educational achievement of parents indicates that involving parents in the recruitment of Chicana/o Latina/o students is key in order to value and recognize that all families are not able to bring the same cultural capital to the University.

I plan to use these findings to revisit the outreach programming conducted annually through M.E.Ch.A. In addition I will look to share this data with the office of high school recruitment as well as the Associate Vice President for Diversity and the Associate Vice President of Outreach with the hope of approaching the public high schools in salt lake to identify ways in which to improve their service to Latina/o students in Salt Lake.