The face of HSIs: Supporting students in navigating degree pathways

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3:30–5 p.m.
Room 50 Milton Hall

Undergraduate and graduate students leave school for myriad reasons. Compared with students in other institutional types, students at HSIs are more likely to face academic, financial, cultural, and social challenges in completing their degrees. Faculty and staff members hold critical responsibilities when it comes to promoting retention. Research documents that a student’s quality and quantity of interactions with a faculty member is among the most important predictors of whether a student will complete a degree. Staff members can also play a key role in whether a student stays in college. Staff offices are often the first or last points of contact for students beginning or leaving college. Drawing on a significant body of research literature on Hispanic student success and the institutional context of HSIs, as well as my own experience as a faculty member at an HSI, I will discuss seven target areas in which faculty and staff can promote retention in HSIs. I will also address how faculty and staff can build communities of support for one another while managing their responsibilities to students. Graduate students planning to work in higher education as faculty or administrators will gain personal and professional insights about strategies for degree completion.

Anne-Marie Nuñez, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), the second largest Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in the continental U.S. Her research addresses how individual, organizational, and structural factors influence Latina/o students’ and faculty members’ experiences in different postsecondary settings, including HSIs. She is the author or co-author of more than 30 publications and has received several honors. In 2011, she received the Mildred Garcia Exemplary Scholarship Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) for her research on the postsecondary experiences of underrepresented groups.

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