Psychological Coping and Well-Being of Male Latino Undergraduates

Sobreviviendo la universidad

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This study examined 100 male Latino undergraduates' cultural self-esteem, perceived educational barriers, cultural fit, coping responses (CRs), and subsequent well-being within higher education. The most commonly reported CR for Latino males was to actively find out more about the situation and take a positive planned action. Assessing group mean differences, a class standing by generation interaction revealed that first-generation lower division and first-generation upper division students reported higher perceptions of barriers to staying in school than second-generation lower division and second-generation upper division students, respectively. Similarly, examining differences of coefficients, the strength of the relationship of perceptions of barriers to staying in school and psychological well-being was significantly stronger for the first-generation than second-generation male students. Cultural congruity and emotion-focused coping were most predictive of psychological well-being; however, perception of barriers to staying in school was consistently evident in understanding male Latino undergraduates’ educational experiences.

**Keywords:** coping; well-being; male Latino undergraduates

The proportion of Latina/os graduating from college has not improved since 1990, despite improving rates for both Whites and Blacks (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003). Latino males, in
particular, are underrepresented in institutions of higher education compared with their Latina counterparts (NCES, 2003), with Latinos earning fewer bachelor’s degrees (6.0%) than Latinas (6.7%; NCES, 2003). From 1974 to 2003, 18- to 24-year-old White and African American males and females and Latinas increased their postsecondary education matriculation rates. However, male Latinos were the only group whose participation declined from approximately 27% to 22% (NCES, 2005). For this reason, accurately understanding Latino males’ educational experiences and their ability to navigate the university system is critical in mitigating their alarmingly low rate of matriculation and degree conferral.

Given male Latinos’ lack of educational progress over the past 20 years, increased investigations of Latino men’s experiences in higher education are warranted. The research literature on Latino males generally contains a plethora of deficiency-focused or maladaptive-behavior-based articles on issues of violence (e.g., gang related), aggression (Mattson & Ruiz, 2005), unhealthy machismo (Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000), and drug and alcohol abuse (Anderson, 2004). This deficiency-based approach to understanding Latino males is prominent and has the potential to add to superficial generalizations and harmful stereotypes propagated in the literature (Niemann, 2001). In effect, negative-based research limits social science’s understanding of and practice applications for Latino males in higher education. Careful review of the literature reveals that this study is one of the few empirical positive-focused investigations that specifically and intentionally investigates Latino males’ experiences within higher education.

The current literature on male Latinos’ education generally situates their academic experiences in the context of their Latina counterparts. Only recently has a call been made to the field to examine the “genderized” experience of Latinas in higher education (e.g., Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot, 2000) as they encounter unique educational challenges. Because a comprehensive conceptual and empirical literature base on male Latinos’ experiences in higher education simply does not exist, scholars and practitioners are limited in understanding Latinos in the context of Latinas and other REM groups. As a result, the theoretical bases from which this study was conceptualized unavoidably applied the literature pertaining to both Latinas and Latinos (i.e., Latina/os).

Authors’ Note: Sobreviviendo la universidad (surviving university life). When referencing both males and females, the term Latina/o is used. Address correspondence to Alberta M. Gloria, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 241 Schreiner Hall—115 N. Orchard Street, Madison, WI 53705; e-mail: agloria@education.wisc.edu.
The Latina/o educational persistence literature implicates campus climate, cultural misfit, perceived barriers, sense of self, differing familial responsibilities, and gender roles as influencing academic persistence (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Hernandez, 2000). Similarly, it is well-documented that factors such as lack of finances, low social support, few mentors, and cultural stereotypes influence Latina/os’ ability to navigate college (e.g., Capello, 1994; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rodriguez et al., 2000). Despite the commonality of difficulties experienced by Latina/o college students, male Latinos encounter distinct challenges and must manage a number of difficult psychosociocultural stressors (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006) including differing familial roles (Ramirez, 2006), negative stereotypes (Niemann, 2001), perceived barriers, and financial obligations (Hernandez, Cervantes, Castellanos, & Gloria, 2004). Although male Latinos experience a number of psychosociocultural stressors (i.e., those stressors that integrate psychological, social, and cultural aspects; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000) that are distinct from those of their female counterparts, no study to date has empirically examined the influence of the educational context, differential coping responses (CRs; problem- and emotion-focused), and subsequent psychological impact on male Latino undergraduates.

As academia is based largely on White male cultural values, Latina/os are challenged to negotiate the inherent cultural incongruity between the university’s values and their personal cultural values (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; González, 2002). Although values of competition and individualism characterize many institutions of higher education, many Latina/os often value cooperation and collectivism (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). As a result, students are often unprepared to negotiate these different and contrasting value sets (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Torres, 1999). Consequently, the mismatch of values increases stress and leads to feelings of alienation, despondence, and isolation for Latina/o students (Cole & Espinoza, 2008; Quijada, 2006; Segura-Herrera, 2006).

Examining how racial and ethnic minority students felt on campus, Hurtado (1994) indicated that 68% of Latina/o students felt that other students at their universities knew little about Latina/o culture, which affected their sense of feeling welcomed and subsequent perception of the university environment. In a 2-year longitudinal study of two Latino males attending a predominantly White university, they experienced marginalization, alienation, and a general lack of tolerance and understanding of Chicano culture on campus (González, 2002). Negotiating a balance of native and university cultures, Chicana/o undergraduates often consider academic “stop-out” or “drop-out” (Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004).
At the core of this cultural incongruity for many Latina/o students who adhere to Latina/o cultural values is the primary value of *familismo*. Specifically, many Latina/o cultures emphasize collectivism, cooperation, and intergenerational familial ties (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002), with research indicating that family plays a critical role in Latina/o students' college adjustment (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003), levels of distress (Castillo & Hill, 2004), and academic persistence decisions (Hurtado, 1994). Moreover, males often have gender- and culture-specific roles within Latina/o families, albeit these roles are changing with factors such as acculturation, education, and income (Aranda, Castaneda, Pey-Jinan, & Sobel, 2001). In particular, Latino men are regarded as protectors and providers of the family and are often called to support the financial needs of the family (Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004; Rodriguez, 1994).

When leaving home to attend college, however, male Latinos are often unable to provide fully (e.g., financially, emotionally, physically) for their family, which creates undue stress as they alter or negotiate familial roles. For example, attending college may delay the creation and/or maintenance of family or decrease familial involvement (e.g., visiting less frequently, attending fewer family events, and generally having less contact; Ramirez, 2006), which is a stressful experience for male Latino students (Kamimura, 2006; Quijada, 2006; Vera Sanchez, 2006), particularly as it challenges cultural and gendered notions of Latino masculinity (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008).

No research to date has specifically examined the stress management skills or CRs of Latino male undergraduates. In general, CRs or styles refer to one's tendency to manage or alter negative stressful events by thinking and acting in a particular manner (Struthers, 1995). Two primary types of coping dominate the literature: problem-focused coping (PFC) and emotion-focused coping (EFC). PFC ameliorates the stressor by using active and strategic measures and EFC attempts to mitigate the actual emotional distress caused by the stressor (Struthers, 1995). Building on PFC and EFC, these domains of coping are also known as active coping and avoidant coping, respectively (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989).

Despite the abundance of literature implicating challenges and stressful experiences of Latina/o undergraduates, the manner in which they cope with psychosociocultural stressors has received little scholarly attention. From the available research, it is evident that Latina/o undergraduates generally employ direct and active coping strategies to alleviate stress. For example, Vázquez and García-Vázquez (1995) reported that Mexican American college students most commonly employed a direct planned approach or talked
to others as a way of coping with acculturative stress. Similarly, Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado (1987) examined acculturative stress and coping strategies among immigrant and later-generation college students and found that late immigrant students experienced greater acculturative stress than other groups. Moreover, late immigrant students reported coping by taking a direct, planned action (individualistic) approach, whereas second- and third-generation students more frequently coped by talking to others about the problem (i.e., relying on their social network). Chiang, Hunter, and Yeh (2004) also reported that Latina/o undergraduates, in addition to engaging in individual coping practices (e.g., exercise, hobbies, and studying), most commonly coped by relying on their social outlets (in particular with their peers). Although seeking professional counseling was not a frequently used coping practice, Chiang et al. (2004) indicated that Latino males had a more favorable attitude toward counseling than did Latinas.

Another means of coping with educational stressors is through forging strong connections within the campus environment. For example, Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, and Snider (2001) found that racial and ethnic minorities who develop a strong sense of common group identity tend to have a higher level of satisfaction with their college campus and a stronger commitment to the university. That is, students who felt a part of a group with a common identity (e.g., shared ethnic or racial status) felt more strongly connected to their academic environment. In fact, having a strong sense of one’s cultural self is identified in the conceptual and empirical literatures as an effective buffer to the stressors students may encounter on university campuses (e.g., Ethier & Deaux, 1990; Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004; Torres, 1999).

Examining the degree to which students effectively manage or cope with psychosociocultural stressors lends insight into students’ psychological well-being, including a fundamental question of what it means to be psychologically healthy for Latina/o students. Despite the abundance of research on psychological well-being, scholarship examining the functioning and general well-being of racial and ethnic minority college students and of Latina/o students in particular is sparse. Solberg and Villareal (1997) examined the effect of stress on the physical and psychological well-being of Latina/o college students and reported that efficacy expectations led to greater well-being in both domains. Similarly, Vaughn and Roesch (2003) found in a study of Mexican American adolescents that coping techniques of positive reinterpretation, focusing and venting emotions, social support, active coping, religion, emotional support, and planning were associated with positive physical and psychological health.
As a sex- and race-specific empirical investigation, this study examined how one’s sense of self, perceived educational barriers, cultural fit within the university environment, and CRs predict Latino undergraduates’ well-being. As one of the first studies to examine quantitatively male Latino undergraduates’ coping and well-being, hypotheses were not formulated; however, research questions were posed. First, what CRs do these male Latino undergraduates use? Second, are there differences by class standing (i.e., lower and upper division) and generation (i.e., first vs. second) for the different CRs and for each of the study’s variables? Third, what are the relationships of the study’s variables, and are there differences in strengths of relationships by class standing and generation? Finally, to what degree do the study variables independently and collectively predict well-being for male Latino undergraduates?

Method

Setting and Procedure

Data collection for this study (approved by the Institutional Review Board) took place during two academic years at a large west coast research institution. Consisting of a total student population of over 24,000 (81% undergraduates), the university is primarily a commuter campus where Latina/os comprise 10.5% of the total university population and 11.5% of the undergraduates.

Chicana/o Studies professors and student leaders were contacted to recruit study participants from their classes and organizational meetings, respectively. Recruitment occurred in specific Chicano classes (e.g., Chicano/Latino Families, Comparative Latino Immigration, Chicano/Latino Psychology) and Chicano/Latino-focused student organizations (e.g., Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, Latino Business Student Association, Latinos Unidos). Students completed surveys during class or organizational meeting time (15-20 minutes). One student organization did not allow meeting time for survey completion, and materials were returned via campus mail. A total of 161 surveys were distributed of which 100 (62%) were returned, for which no compensation or incentive was provided.

Student Participants

Latino male undergraduates (N = 100), between 18 and 35 years of age (mean [M] = 21.33, standard deviation [SD] = 2.71, 91.0% between 18 and 24) participated in the study. By ethnicity, 69 students were Mexican
American/Chicano, 16 Central American, 5 South American, 2 Puerto Rican, and 1 Cuban; 5 students identified as Multiracial (i.e., one parent of Latina/o descent), and 2 students did not report their ethnicity. Most (73.2%) were second-generation students (i.e., born in the United States), followed by first- (13.4%) and third-generation (6.2%) students. Only a few students were fourth- (4.1%) and fifth-generation (2.1%) students. Three students did not report information on generation.

Approximately 35% of the males reported a familial income of $29,000 or less, and more than half reported taking out student loans (63%), working part-time (55%), and receiving financial support from family (50%). Most students lived off-campus with friends (39%), followed by those who lived in on-campus housing (28%). By class standing, 35.4% were juniors, and 31.3% were seniors, followed by sophomores (20.2%) and freshmen (13.1%). Most students began their undergraduate education at the university where the study was conducted (62%), were continuously enrolled in college (88%), and expected to earn an advanced degree (87.5%). The mean GPA was 2.87 (SD = 0.41, range 2.00 to 3.90).

Instrumentation

Students completed a general demographic sheet and seven standardized and counterbalanced scales. The demographic sheet was placed first, and surveys were available only in English.

**Demographic sheet.** Items included seven general, six educational, and seven historical questions. General questions addressed age, race/ethnicity, and marital status, whereas educational questions assessed items such as class standing, educational finance, and highest degree expected. Finally, familial education addressed mother’s and father’s highest completed level of education and siblings’ college attendance.

**Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).** The CSE measured self-esteem through membership (n = 4), private collective (n = 4), public collective (n = 4), and importance to identity (n = 4; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Based on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), high scores revealed increased sense of cultural self-esteem. The CSE includes statements such as “I am a worthy member of my ethnic group” and “In general, belonging to my race/ethnicity is an important part of my self image.” Previous use of the CSE with Latina/o college students yielded moderate to
high internal consistencies of .80, .83, .55, and .67 for the Private, Public, Membership, and Importance to Identity Collective Self-Esteem subscales, respectively (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). For this study, a total scale score yielded an $\alpha = .80$.

**Perceptions of Barriers Scale (PB; McWhirter, 1997).** The PB assessed perceptions of the likelihood that students would experience barriers that would cause withdrawal (PB-wd; $n = 9$) and barriers that would be experienced if one stayed in school (PB-stay; $n = 5$; McWhirter, 1997). The third subscale ($n = 2$) assessed barriers that made it difficult to achieve educational goals and to what degree the participant believes he/she will overcome any barriers. Items are based on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*), with higher scores reflective of increased perceived barriers. McWhirter (1997) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .70 for PB-wd and .74 for PB-stay. Recent use of the PB subscales with Latina undergraduates yielded alphas of .74 and .79 (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). This study yielded alphas of .77 (PB-wd) and .78 (PB-stay).

**University Environment Scale (UES; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996).** Specifically designed to assess Latina/o student’s perception of the university environment, the UES is a 14-item scale. Higher scores (five reverse-coded items) reflect more positive perceptions of the university environment based on a Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Addressing thoughts and feelings about classes, university faculty and staff, university student services, and overall perceptions about the university environment, sample items include “The university seems to value minority students” and “Faculty have been available for help outside of class.” Used with samples of Latina/o and Latina undergraduates, adequate internal consistency coefficients were reported (i.e., .86 and .88 by Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, et al. (2005) and Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco (2005), respectively). This study yielded an alpha of .75.

**Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996).** The CCS (13 items) measured students’ perceptions of how congruent their personal and cultural values are with the values of the university. Based on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), a high score (eight reverse-coded items) reflects increased cultural congruity or perception that students’ cultural selves fit with other students and the
campus environment. Sample items are "I feel that I have to change myself to fit in at school," "I feel I am leaving my family values behind by going to college," and "Given my ethnic background, I feel accepted at school." The CCS has yielded adequate internal consistencies when used with female African American college students (.93; Constantine & Watt, 2002), Latina/o and Black college students (.71; Constantine, Robinson, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2002), and Latina/o undergraduates (.86; Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). This study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .85.

List of Coping Responses-Modified (LCR-M; Mena et al., 1987). The LCR-M, originally developed by Sidle, Moos, Adams, and Cady (1969), assessed the CRs used by Mexican American college students. Modified by Mena et al. (1987), CRs include "I try to actively find out more about the situation and I take some positive, planned action" and "I try to reduce tension (e.g., drink, eat, take drugs, smoke, get more exercise)." Sidle et al. (1969) suggested moderate to low correlations of the CRs and recommended independent use of the items. Although, Mena et al. did not report intercorrelations, Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco (2005b), modified the measure allowing participants to identify the degree to which they used the CRs (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) and found low to moderate correlations. For this study, the items were used as independent CRs, and thus, no internal consistency coefficient is reported.

Student Coping Scale (SCOPE; Struthers, 1995). The SCOPE is a 30-item scale examining students' problem-focused (n = 15) and emotion-focused (n = 15) CRs. Students identified the degree to which they use a particular CR on a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 10 (extremely characteristic). A sample problem-focused item includes "I try to come up with a strategy about what to do," whereas an emotion-focused item includes "I pretend to believe that it happened." Previous use of the SCOPE with 203 college students (no data on gender, class standing, or race/ethnicity were provided) yielded adequate internal consistencies of .80 and .70, respectively, for the SCOPE-P and SCOPE-E (Struthers, Perry, & Menec, 2000). For this study, Cronbach's alphas of .73 and .90 were obtained for the SCOPE-P and SCOPE-E, respectively.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale—Short (PWBS-S; Ryff, 1989; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997) The PWBS-S measured six psychological domains of well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy,
environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Although the original scale has 120 items, this study used a shortened version consisting of 18 items. Based on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), higher scores indicate an increased level of psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Sample items include “In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live” and “I sometimes feel as if I’ve done all there is to do in life.” Using the PWBS-S, Murguía (2001) obtained an internal consistency coefficient of .73 in a study of 274 Mexican American adults, and Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco (2005) reported an alpha of .71 in a study with 98 Latina undergraduates. The Cronbach’s alpha for this study was .84.

Results

Preliminary data analyses revealed adequate internal consistency of the study’s variables (.73 to .90) and multivariate normalcy of the data (see Table 1). Next, a series of group mean difference (t tests and ANOVAs) analyses determined whether participants varied on their CRs by demographic variables. No significant differences by generation (i.e., first- and second-generation), grade point average (i.e., below 3.0 and above 3.01), class standing (i.e., lower- versus upper-class standing), ethnicity (i.e., of Mexican descent vs. non-Mexican descent), place of residence (i.e., on-campus, off-campus with family, off-campus with friends), mother’s and father’s educational level (i.e., some high school and less, high school, and some college to completed college degree), sibling college attendance (i.e., yes or no), and familial income (i.e., below $39,000 vs. $40,000 and above) were seen. For family income, students who reported less than $39,000 were more likely to endorse seeking professional advice than those who reported familial income of $40,000 and above (p ≤ .05).

Individual Coping Responses

The two most commonly employed CRs for the total sample were to actively find out more about the situation and take some positive planned action (CR1, 96.0%) and to draw upon past experiences (CR7, 88.7%; see Table 2). The least commonly used CRs were to pray and/or consult with a priest or minister (CR5, 37.3%) and to seek professional advice (CR6, 11.1%). By class standing (lower and upper division) and generation (first and second), similar trends were revealed for the most (CR1) and least frequently used
Table 1
Descriptives and Correlations of Study’s Variables for Total Sample

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>.80</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.28**</td>
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<td>PB-wd</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>17.85</td>
<td>6.48</td>
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<td>.44**</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.27**</td>
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<td>PB-stay</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.26</td>
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<td>UES</td>
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<td>40.47</td>
<td>5.50</td>
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<td>.62**</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.29**</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>39.39</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.57**</td>
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<td>SCOPE-P</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>92.27</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
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<td>SCOPE-E</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>111.10</td>
<td>19.40</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.48**</td>
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<td>PWBS-S</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>83.32</td>
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<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>CR1</th>
<th>CR2</th>
<th>CR3</th>
<th>CR4</th>
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<th>CR6</th>
<th>CR7</th>
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<td>CR3</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
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<td>0.865</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.23*</td>
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<td>CR5</td>
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<td>1.04</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
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<td>CR6</td>
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<td>0.697</td>
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<td>CR9</td>
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<td>1.10</td>
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</table>

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; CSE = Cultural Self-Esteem Scale; PB-wd = Perception of Barriers-Withdrawal Scale; PB-stay = Perception of Barriers-Stay Scale; UES = University Environment Scale; CCS = Cultural Congruity Scale; SCOPE-P = Student Coping Scale—Problem-Focused; SCOPE-E = Student Coping Scale—Emotion-Focused; PWBS-S = Psychological Well-Being Scale—Short; CR = Coping response.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.

(CR6) CR. Actively finding out more about the situation and taking some positive planned action was endorsed by all first-generation students, and talking with others about the problem (CR2, 64.7%) and becoming involved in other activities to keep their mind off the problem (CR4, 64.7%) were the next two most frequently reported CRs. Lower division students were least likely to report not worrying (CR3, 36.4%) as a CR.

Class Standing and Generation Differences

A MANOVA was conducted to determine differences by class standing (i.e., lower and upper division) and generation (i.e., first and second) for each of the study’s variables. Results of the omnibus equation revealed significant main effects for class standing ($\lambda = .74$, $p \leq .05$, $\eta^2 = .26$),
Table 2
Mean Coping Responses for Total Sample and by Class Standing and Generational Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Class Standing</th>
<th>Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR1: I try to actively find out more about the situation and I take some positive, planned action.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.54)</td>
<td>(0.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR2: I talk with others about the problem (friends, relatives).</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.84)</td>
<td>(0.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR3: I don’t worry about it. Everything will probably work out fine.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.95)</td>
<td>(0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR4: I become involved in other activities in order to keep my mind off the problem.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.86)</td>
<td>(0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR5: I pray and/or consult a priest or a minister.</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>(0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR6: I seek professional advice (physician, psychologist, counselor).</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.74)</td>
<td>(0.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR7: I draw upon my past experiences; perhaps similar situations might help.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.69)</td>
<td>(0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR8: I seek support from members of my cultural group.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR9: I try to reduce tension (e.g., drink, eat, drugs, smoke, more exercise).</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: CR = coping response; Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

generation ($\lambda = .77, p \leq .05, \eta^2 = .23$), and the Class $\times$ Generation interaction ($\lambda = .74, p \leq .05, \eta^2 = .26$). Examination of the interaction indicated significant differences only for PB-stay ($F(1, 79) = 6.11, p \leq .05, \eta^2 = .07$), with first-generation lower division ($M = 3.30, SD = .93$) and first-generation upper division ($M = 1.85, SD = .98$) students reporting higher PB-stay than second-generation lower division ($M = 2.09, SD = .74$) and second-generation upper division ($M = 1.93, SD = .78$) students, respectively.
Table 3
Correlations by Class Standing and Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Lower M (SD)</th>
<th>Upper M (SD)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>5.29 (0.74)</td>
<td>5.31 (0.79)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-wd</td>
<td>2.14 (0.87)</td>
<td>1.90 (0.62)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-stay</td>
<td>2.17 (0.83)</td>
<td>1.90 (0.80)</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.44*</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UES</td>
<td>2.93 (0.40)</td>
<td>2.88 (0.38)</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>2.98 (0.47)</td>
<td>3.04 (0.53)</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE-P</td>
<td>6.66 (1.36)</td>
<td>6.60 (1.29)</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE-E</td>
<td>7.28 (1.33)</td>
<td>7.51 (1.27)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWBS-S</td>
<td>4.41 (0.69)</td>
<td>4.71 (0.63)</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generation (First above Diagonal/Second Below Diagonal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>First M (SD)</th>
<th>Second M (SD)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>5.59 (0.86)</td>
<td>5.28 (0.75)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-wd</td>
<td>1.91 (0.78)</td>
<td>1.98 (0.65)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.54*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-stay</td>
<td>2.17 (1.08)</td>
<td>1.96 (0.75)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UES</td>
<td>2.71 (0.42)</td>
<td>2.94 (0.38)</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.67*</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>2.92 (0.51)</td>
<td>3.04 (0.53)</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE-P</td>
<td>7.46 (1.29)</td>
<td>7.40 (1.31)</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE-E</td>
<td>6.46 (1.30)</td>
<td>6.60 (1.35)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWBS-S</td>
<td>4.67 (0.67)</td>
<td>4.57 (0.68)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; CSE = Cultural Self-Esteem Scale; PB-wd = Perception of Barriers-Withdrawal Scale, PB-stay = Perception of Barriers-Stay Scale; UES = University Environment Scale, CCS = Cultural Congruity Scale; SCOPE-P = Student Coping Scale–Problem-Focused; SCOPE-E = Student Coping Scale–Emotion-Focused; PWBS-S = Psychological Well-Being Scale-Short.

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001.

Relationships of the Variables

Correlations by class standing and generation are presented in Table 3. For upper division students, each of the study’s variables was significantly (p ≤ .05) related to the criterion variable. An increased sense of cultural self-esteem, decreased perception of barriers to withdrawing and to staying in school, more positive perception of the university environment, increased cultural congruity, and increased use of EFC and PFC were associated with an increased report of psychological well-being. By comparison, only a
more positive perception of the environment, increased cultural congruity, and higher use of emotional-focused coping were related to increased levels of reported psychological well-being for lower division students.

By generation, results were similar to that for upper division students in that all of the variables, with the exception of cultural self-esteem, were correlated with increased reports of well-being for second-generation students. Specifically, second-generation students with higher psychological well-being reported lower perceptions of barriers related to withdrawal and staying in college, more positive perceptions of the university environment, increased cultural congruity, and increased levels of PFC and EFC. For first-generation students, higher psychological well-being was associated with higher levels of cultural self-esteem and lower perceived barriers leading to withdrawal and staying in school for first-generation students. Examining differences in the strengths of the relationships (using Fisher r to z transformation scores), we found that PB-stay and PWBS-S had a significantly stronger relationship for first-generation (r = -.85) than for second-generation (r = -.37) students (z = 2.86, p ≤ .01).

Predicting Psychological Well-Being

A five-step hierarchical regression assessed the degree to which student contextual variables (i.e., class standing and generation), cultural self-esteem, perceived educational barriers, cultural fit, and CRs predicted psychological well-being. The overall regression equation was significant (F(9, 81) = 11.20; p ≤ .001), collectively accounting for 58.3% of the variance of PWBS-S. Class standing and generation stabilized the regression equation (Step 1), revealing a nonsignificant Δr² (.06; ΔF(2, 79) = 2.67; p > .05). For Step 2, the Δr² was .09 (ΔF(1, 78) = 8.01; p ≤ .01) in which CSE was a moderate predictor (β = .30; t = 2.83; p ≤ .01). In Step 3 (PB-wd and PB-stay), the Δr² was .13 (ΔF(2, 76) = 6.75; p ≤ .001), with PB-stay the only significant predictor (β = -.39; t = 3.01; p ≤ .001). In Step 4 (UES and CCS), the Δr² was “.15” (ΔF(2, 74) = 9.64; p ≤ .001), with CCS (β = .50; t = 3.87; p ≤ .001) being a positive predictor. For Step 5 (SCOPE-E and SCOPE-P entered), the Δr² was .16 (ΔF(2, 72) = 13.41; p ≤ .001), in which SCOPE-E was the strongest and only significant predictor in the cluster (β = .39, t = 4.60, p ≤ .001).

Discussion

Male Latino undergraduates (N = 100) were examined for the degree to which cultural self-esteem, perception of barriers to withdrawing or staying
in school, cultural fit in the university environment, and coping responses
predicted their psychological well-being. The study's variables accounted
collectively for 58.3% of the variance of psychological well-being in a five-
step hierarchical regression, with cultural congruity being the strongest
predictor, followed by emotion-focused coping and perception of barriers
to staying in school. Findings revealed that perceptions of barriers to stay-
ing in school informed the educational experiences of the male Latino
undergraduates.

Consistent with Vázquez and García-Vázquez (1995) and Mena et al.
(1987), whose participant samples included males (but were not specific to
males), this study found that Latino male undergraduates most frequently
used a direct or planned approach to coping. The second most common
CR, however, diverged from previous findings in that they drew upon past
experiences rather than talking with others as a means of coping. Rather than
relying on their social network to alleviate concerns (e.g., Vázquez & García-
Vázquez), this study's males employed a response that was self-reliant. This
finding is consistent with both the social and cultural notions that expect
Latino men to protect and provide for family and solve problems alone rather
than asking for help (Aranda et al., 2001; Gloria & Segura-Herrera, 2004).
This supposition is further supported by the finding that the least frequently
used CR was to seek professional advice—a common finding for men in
general (Fischer & Good, 1994) and Latino males in particular (Gloria, Hird,
& Navarro, 2001). Given Chiang et al.'s (2004) results that Latino male col-
lege students were more likely than females to talk to a counselor when
concerns arise, additional gender-specific research would further support or
refute the findings of this study. Nonetheless, the literature indicates that
Latina/os tend to underutilize counseling, often because of cultural norms
that discourage discussing problems with strangers (Leong, Wagner, & Tata,
1995). Despite the support of these claims, research is needed to substantiate
this trend in CRs specifically for male Latino undergraduates.

When examining the males by class standing, an interesting pattern
occurred as lower division students were more likely to talk to others as a
CR, whereas the upper division students were more likely to use a contex-
tualized approach of drawing upon past experiences. As students spend time
in an educational environment that may be unwelcoming and dismissive of
Latino males, perhaps they find it necessary to reformulate the expectations
that they will receive help within the environment, moving from a collectiv-
istic to a more self-reliant and individualistic approach to coping. For
example, Kamimura (2006) recounted how as a Latino male in a negative
academic environment he recoiled into himself and became overly self-
reliant, thereby negatively affecting his overall psychological well-being:
In managing my frustration, I began to separate myself from the social and academic aspects of the department. . . . The rationale behind this response was my rejection of the culture inherent to the department and my attempt to avoid the enculturation process. (Kamimura, 2006, p. 197)

Next, emotion-focused coping and cultural congruity predicted psychological well-being for Latino males. Similar to Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, et al.'s (2005) study, cultural congruity was a significant predictor for 98 Latina undergraduates (8%, $\beta = .28$). In this study, however, cultural congruity accounted for almost twice the variance and predictive ability (15%, $\beta = .50$) for the Latino male undergraduates in this study. Although REM undergraduate females report higher cultural congruity than males (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001), congruity was more foretelling of male psychological well-being in this study. Heeding congruity issues for Latino males may be especially important as men are often less encouraged in their academic environments (Fischer & Good, 1994) and may have fewer resources and greater cultural barriers in finding personal and social connections (Hernandez, Cervantes, Castellanos, & Gloria, 2004) than their female counterparts. Taken together, previous research provides evidence for the differential processes between male Latinos and Latinas and raises questions as to whether the educational outcomes (e.g., matriculation and graduation rates) are subsequently and similarly affected.

Despite a seemingly individualistic approach to coping, use of EFC was the largest predicting variable of psychological well-being (16% of the variance). This finding suggests that having an emotional outlet where Latino males could comfortably address their reactions to their educational stressors is critical. Ideally, such emotion-friendly forums would provide a space and opportunity to voice or vent concerns in the company of supportive listeners, without fearing judgment based on common Latino male socialization expectations that might threaten their sense of healthy masculinity. An outlet for emotion-focused coping can create a safe place and forge interconnections for Latino male undergraduates, which challenges the commonly held social expectation that men mask or dismiss their feelings. For example, bringing Latino males together to socialize, share common stories or experiences, and explicitly address societal stereotypes and expectations about who they are as Latino males (see Arciniega et al., 2008, for an extended discussion on the dimensionality of machismo) and how it affects their educational pursuits can help relieve feelings of distress or concern (Gloria, 1999). Although PFC (e.g., taking a planned active approach to coping) has consistently been found as a source of support
within the literature, this study's finding of the importance of emotions within the coping process warrants intentional and continued exploration to determine how emotional expression influences male Latinos' development as optimally functioning individuals (Arciniega et al., 2008).

Finally, students' perceived barriers to staying in school (PB-stay) were most informative in explicating the differences in and relationships between variables that predicted psychological well-being for the study's Latino males. In previous research, Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, et al. (2005) found a nonsignificant and nonpredictive relationship of perceived barriers to staying in school to psychological well-being for Latina undergraduates. The current study, however, revealed that perception of barriers to staying in school was a moderately negative predictor of psychological well-being for the Latino undergraduates. Both studies were gender specific, which underscores how gender-focused studies can facilitate the distinction in psychological processing that might otherwise be masked. Despite Latino males experiencing more alienation and isolation than females in higher education (Rodriguez, 1994), McWhirter (1997) found that Mexican American females anticipate more educational barriers than males. Indeed, the barriers themselves might have a more pervasive and detrimental psychological impact on Latino male undergraduates' sense of self and overall well-being.

The perception of barriers is further indicated as a salient variable for Latino male educational experiences, in that first-generation lower-division students perceived more barriers to staying in school than second-generation lower-division students. Similarly, first-generation upper-division students had greater perceived barriers to staying in school than their second-generation lower-division counterparts. Significant differences of coefficients further emphasize the relationship of perceived barriers to staying in school with psychological well-being in first-generation students. It is possible that increased time in the university setting (upper division vs. lower division) will lead to greater familiarity with the cultural expectations of the institution. For example, Guzman, Santiago-Rivera, and Haase (2005) indicate that being more comfortable with an Other-group orientation leads to greater academic achievement. In addition, increased time and familiarity might lead to the development of supportive and nurturing mentoring relationships with academic staff and faculty, which will likely include vicarious learning. For example, Vera Sanchez (2006) indicated that supportive faculty and staff relationships increased as he progressed academically, which subsequently added to his overall educational self-efficacy as a Latino male undergraduate.
Understandably, all universities want their campuses to be free of racism and sexism such that all students feel welcomed. However, considerable efforts are needed before this goal can be realized. Practitioners (e.g., academic advisers, counseling center staff, and university faculty) who work directly with students can create campus environments that recognize, value, and foster cultural and gender-related differences. For example, practitioners can connect and unite their Latino male clients with other men who might share similar values. These connections could occur by referring students to culturally relevant classes, groups, and faculty who could ultimately help them develop community or “academic families” (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Likewise, university administration and practitioners can develop specialized, ethnically-focused, and gender-specific student service groups (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002) that address the cultural and emotional needs of Latino men (e.g., a Latino men’s support group). Such supportive programming can help dismantle micro- and macro-educational barriers and assist Latino males in staying and succeeding in higher education.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Some caveats of the study’s findings warrant consideration. First, generalizability is limited as self-report and nonrandom sampling methods accessed Latinos in classes and student organizations in which their representation was substantially high. These students may have had higher perceived social support than their Latino male counterparts who were not connected with similar cultural communities. Future researchers might consider working with university administrators to access Latino students more generally from the university campus (e.g., student list of all Latina/os). Similarly, because cultural variability and distinction among Latina/o ethnic groups exist, future research would do well to target specific subgroups (e.g., Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans), allowing for culture-specific contexts by which coping can be better understood.

Second, despite the use of multiple coping assessments (i.e., LCR, SCOPE-E, SCOPE-P), future research should take a more dimensionalized and time-focused approach to understand how stressors influence students’ coping responses. That is, students might employ different coping activities based on whether their responses are proactive (i.e., in preparation for stressors) or reactive (i.e., in response to stressors), and these strategies may change as a function of time spent within the higher education context. Similarly, examination of the response types employed while considering the cultural significance of the stressor and subsequent emotional affect is
also warranted. To examine such issues, providing short scenarios of common culturally related academic challenges for Latina/os students (e.g., parents demand that the student return home for the weekend, whereas he/she has a paper that requires use of the library) would help determine how they would or have coped with the situation and their related emotional reactions (e.g., sense of empowerment, confidence, frustration, anger). Such research could provide an in-depth understanding of their navigational considerations and processes. In addition, use of other methodologies (e.g., focus groups, extended case analyses, semistructured interviews about coping) could elucidate individual differences that would direct specific educational, administrative, and clinical interventions for Latino male students. Moreover, similar lines of research would benefit from incorporating more individual and gender-related constructs, such as Latino masculinity (machismo and caballerismo, Arciniega et al., 2008), gender-role conflict, and expectations in subsequent investigations.

Note

1. Given the low number of male Latino students on campus, all Latina/o heritages were included in the study. Aggregation of heritages was not intended to minimize within-group distinctions (e.g., parental human capital, immigration history) inherent to the different subgroups but to involve as many male Latino undergraduates as possible.

References


**Alberta M. Gloria** received her doctorate in counseling psychology from Arizona State University and is currently a professor in the Department of Counseling Psychology. Her primary research interests include psychosociocultural factors for Latina/o and other racial/ethnic students in higher education, addressing issues of cultural congruity and educational and social coping supports, and academic well-being. She was awarded the Outstanding Latino/a Faculty in Research/Teaching in Higher Education (Research Institutions) by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in 2008 and was selected as Woman of Color of the Year in 2006-2007 for the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus. For the 2008-2009 academic year, she was awarded a research fellowship at Marquette University as the Chair in Humanistic Studies. Alberta enjoys making cards, “de-cafing” and talking at coffee shops, and taking Wisconsin-weekend trips with her partner Jeff and her dog Fenway.

**Jeanett Castellanos** is the director for the Social Science Academic Resource Center and lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at the University of California–Irvine. In addition, she has served as a consultant for various higher education institutions in the area of cultural
competency. She holds a baccalaureate degree from the University of California–Irvine, a master's of education with an emphasis on counseling psychology, and a PhD in education from Washington State University. She also completed a summer postdoctoral fellowship at Indiana University–Bloomington. She recently co-coordinated the 2008 biannual conference for the National Latina/o Psychological Association at which she was honored with the Star Vega Distinguished Service Award for her exemplary service to the Latina/o community. In 2007, she was awarded the Samuel M. Turner MENTOR (Minority Education, Nurturing, Training, Organizational Advocacy, and Research) Award by the American Psychological Association, Division 12. She values her time with friends and family, exploring various spiritual healing modalities and reading about spiritual consciousness.

Nicholas C. Scull, received his master's degree in social work from Bryn Mawr College and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling Psychology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His clinical interests include multicultural and developmental approaches to college student mental health, and he is currently completing his predoctoral internship at UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services. His research interests address international research in Latin America and the Middle East, and he is currently working on a study of cross-cultural relations in Guatemala. His doctoral dissertation explores forgiveness among survivors of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In his spare time, Nick enjoys traveling (especially to Latin America and the Middle East) and spending time with his wife, Yasmine, and their newly adopted English Bulldog, Zoomie.

Francisco J. Villegas is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. His research focuses on immigration and schooling, and his proposed dissertation will address the experiences of families with undocumented children in Toronto schools. He received his MA in Mexican American Studies from San José State University and completed a thesis examining the experiences of undocumented students in a California university. Francisco is a year-long football fan and enjoys playing with his boxer Jam.