Latinx Students and Career Development at the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

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This paper highlights the important role that career services play in tertiary education and their role in the career readiness of students from underrepresented populations. In particular, the research team worked with the Office of Career Development in IUPUI’s School of Liberal Arts to see how that office could best support their Latinx students. Utilizing the framework of Museus’ Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model, a review of current literature, and a mixed-methods assessment, the research team began to evaluate how career services can better support and reach Latinx students, the expectations this student group may have for the career services office, and whether the students are utilizing these career services.

Keywords: career services, Latinx students, career readiness

Career services play a prominent role in offering support for students and alumni within higher education (Kayingo, 2018). With an ever-changing post-graduate work climate, students need career services and as much intentional staff guidance as possible. Most career offices offer services such as one-on-one coaching, consulting, and advising in support of transitioning the student into a professional (Kayingo, 2018). With increased interest and investment in post-graduation career outcomes by politicians, parents, and other stakeholders, career services offices need to make sure they grow and develop to meet the demands and needs of their clientele (Ceperley, 2013). This research team has a strong interest in the career services realm due to a variety of factors. The majority of the researchers have worked at three separate campuses within the career services area, and have a vested interest in this segment of higher education. The research team is devoted to improving the ability for students to achieve their desired career outcomes, and receive effective and equitable career services.

After a thorough analysis of the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) First Destination Survey and the IUPUI 2018 Diversity Report, it was evident that there is a need for deeper research on the Latinx student population within the School of Liberal Arts. The IUPUI First Destination Survey is built from the standards and protocols set by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and is sent to all graduating students to collect information on their career progress immediately following graduation. The data within the reports displayed disparities amongst the career outcomes of minoritized racial and ethnic populations. The data more explicitly showed a substantially lower full-time employment rate for Latinx students in the School of Liberal Arts when compared to students from other racial and ethnic groups. Latinx students from the School of Liberal Arts’ classes of 2016 and 2017 had a 50 percent full-time employment rate, with the next lowest race/ethnicity in full-time employment being Asian students at 57 percent (IUPUI, 2018a). Despite having a lower full-time employment rate, Latinx students in the School of Liberal Arts have the highest part-time employment rate and seeking employment rate.

There may be a variety of reasons for this result, hence an assessment with the career services staff and Latinx students within the respective school is an important
step. After meeting with the career services staff and addressing the scope of the project, the research team decided to conduct a more holistic review of how the office could best support their Latinx students. The purpose of this research was to begin to evaluate how career services can better support and reach Latinx students, the expectations this student group may have for the career services office, and whether the students are utilizing these career services. The following research questions were the core of the research:

1. Are Latinx students utilizing the career services within the School of Liberal Arts?
2. What are the expectations Latinx students hold for the Office of Career Development?
3. To what do staff and students attribute the disparity in career outcomes for Latinx students in the School of Liberal Arts?

This research was conducted with the hopes to better support Latinx students within the School of Liberal Arts and, thus, hopefully enhance positive career outcomes for Latinx students. This research is essential for the progression of the Latinx student population within the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Research has shown that 86 percent of first year students state they attend college with the goal of getting a better job (Rampell, 2015). In 2018, Latinx individuals made up about 18.1% of the US population and this percentage is likely to continue to grow (Hispanic Heritage Month 2018, 2018). However, Latinx students are not being proportionally represented within higher education due to various barriers. Castellanos and Gloria (2007), highlight how Latinx students are succeeding in higher education in spite of these barriers, such as how the structure of higher education leads “Latina/o college students [to] face unique challenges, feel alienated and discriminated, have limited role models, and are subjected to low educational expectations” (p. 379). However, if Latinx students are disproportionally unable to secure full time jobs compared to their peers, higher education is not achieving these expectations and not creating an equitable environment to facilitate success. A reevaluation of career services, resources, and support could potentially improve the school’s ability to achieve these expectations.

It is necessary to understand the desired career outcomes for Latinx students and their engagement with career services to understand how to provide effective and culturally engaging support. For this project, the success of these students was evaluated through a review of satisfaction rates and other internal office data, in addition to other factors that may help determine how career services can better support Latinx students, and how the support or lack of support from career services affects these students. Furthermore, studies have shown that individuals in the Latinx community are generally less likely to have a college degree than any other racial group. If career services staff continue to perpetuate this gap in degree attainment then we must evaluate if Latinx students would even find attending a university worthwhile with there being a nonexistent expectation for career services (Barshay, 2018). Moreover, it has been proven that Latinx students historically have faced disparities within higher education, and there needs to be a further evaluation of how career services are affirming that gap or actively seeking methods against that (Kolodner, 2017). This study will provide suggestions for the staff within the School of Liberal Arts, in addition to providing information that will be mutually beneficial for the students within this population.
Literature Review

Before beginning the data collection, the research team completed a thorough review of the literature surrounding career services. While the research team attempted to focus the review on the role that career services can play in the college experiences for Latinx students, there were three main themes that appeared. The first was challenges confronting career services as a whole and how institutions are developing to address them. The second and third focused on the role of culturally engaging campus environments in effective career services for Latinx students.

Challenges Confronting Career Services

Like other functional areas, career services have changed and adapted with the times “following economic conditions, trends and demands of the labor market, and needs of the university and society” (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014, p. 5). From a vocational model focused on teaching in the 1920s, to a focus on networking with the rise of technology and social media in the 2000s, it is clear that career services are influenced by external as well as internal factors (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). Recently, there has been a shift in focus on the value of higher education as a whole. More intense investment, from parents to government officials, on evaluating universities by their post-graduation outcomes has led to a new period of transition in career services (Ceperley, 2013). Today, universities put extra pressure on career services to not only locate job opportunities, but to also make sure students are equipped with professional skills after graduation. Government officials are making the extra step by increasing a university’s funding based on the graduates who are “work ready” and placed into jobs (Bridgstock, 2009). With this, the workforce is in need of adaptable employees that are trained with new skill sets to keep up with technology and society, and to lead their organization to success in the future (Bridgstock, 2009).

The need for career services to adapt to students’ needs extends past increasing the use of technology. The results of a 2006 study by Fouad et al. “demonstrated that although students had need of services, only about half of the students” that completed their survey actually indicated that they were aware of the career services on campus, and a much smaller amount had actually utilized career services (p. 416). The campus analyzed in this study had similarities to IUPUI, particularly in that career services had their own offices and students were more aware of similar services offered elsewhere (such as counseling services) (Fouad et al., 2006). Overall, this research indicated that many students were unfamiliar with the process and turned to friends over career counselors, which indicates that career services offices need not only further promote their resources but also increase awareness on “the stages of career decision making” (Fouad et al., 2006, p. 417).

A 2003 research study on race and career services on campus showed that “undergraduates of color anticipate more career-related barriers than their White counterparts” and that students found out about career services from different places on campus (Carter, Scales, Juby, Collins, & Wan, 2003, p. 394). According to their research, Asian and White students were more often referred to career counseling by a friend, whereas Latinx and Black students were more often referred to career counseling by academic services or counseling. Thus, some students have more of an awareness of services and choose to utilize them, whereas “the fact that academic services appeared to refer Hispanics and Blacks more so than other groups might give
These students the impression that career counseling is something they must comply with rather than choose for themselves” (Carter et al., 2003, p. 402). Once again, this research emphasizes the role of social and familial capital and the need for intentional outreach by career services.

As the need for career services rises it is important for career offices to do everything they can to reach all students on campus. According to Venable (2010), distance learning is becoming more popular and most students will take at least one online course before they graduate. Venable (2010) explains, “Today's students can be characterized as multitaskers with 'zero tolerance for delays’” (p. 88) where technology is an integral piece of students’ everyday life. This means that when students need help they often search for resources online because they want information instantly. It is important for career services at universities to consider putting resources online and to take into account the image their office provides to students when they go to their website or access their technological resources. Venable (2010) also noted that students, “possess a level of familiarity with technology that breeds a level of expectation for availability of services and information at any time and in any place.” (p. 88). Students do not always have access to physically go to the career center at a university. However, most students do typically have technology present in their life. There are many ways to reach students over career needs using technology such as email, discussion boards, podcasts, videos, and websites. When wanting to reach all students it is important to consider factors that are barriers for them from utilizing career services (Venable, 2010).

**Culturally Engaging Campus Environments**

For this project, the research team chose to approach their research through the lens of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model. This model attempts to “explain the ways in which campus environments shape the experiences and outcomes of diverse student populations in college” (Museus, 2014). By taking this approach the research team will be able to address the various components in the success of a career services office (external and internal factors, as well as pre-college and post-college success metrics), while still remaining focused on how IUPUI career services offices are, or could be, culturally engaging environments for Latinx students. The focus for the CECE model will be mainly on two of the CECE Indicators: Cultural Familiarity, and Proactive Philosophies (Museus, 2017). Both of these indicators explain the contribution that culturally engaging and relationship-oriented environments have on college students.

One of the CECE Indicators (Cultural Familiarity) explains “that the extent to which college students have opportunities to physically connect with faculty, staff, and peers with whom they share common backgrounds on their respective campuses” can be directly connected to their success in college (Museus, 2017, p. 210). Environments like this will make the student feel comfortable sharing their struggles and desires that are in relation to their authentic self. Career services at universities must make it their mission to create environments that are welcoming to students of all backgrounds and races. This indicator aligns clearly with CECE Indicator #8: Proactive Philosophies (Museus, 2017). This indicator focuses on how “when faculty and staff go beyond making information and support available to making extra efforts to bring that information and support to students” they
are contributing to higher success and retention rates to a diverse population of students (Museus, 2017, p. 213). To incorporate this framework into the research, the research team examined literature that discussed proactive methods of engaging with students and the role that cultural familiarity plays in a student’s success in an undergraduate career. In addition, research, survey, and interview questions were formed with the CECE indicators in mind.

**Career Services and Latinx Students**

In 2018, Latinx individuals made up about 18.1% of the US population and this percentage is likely to continue to grow (Hispanic Heritage Month 2018, 2018). However, Latinx students are not being proportionally represented within higher education due to various barriers. As this project is focusing on the Latinx population specifically, the research team has decided to utilize research by Castellanos and Gloria (2017) in conjunction with the CECE model. Castellanos and Gloria (2017) address how Latinx students are succeeding in universities through graduation, despite barriers within the institutions. The authors stated a need for “exploration of the psychological (e.g., self-beliefs, attitudes, perceptions), social (e.g., networks, connections, role models, mentors), and cultural (e.g., values validation, meaningfulness) dimensions within the university context” in order to better support Latinx students (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007, p. 383). This reevaluation applies to universities as a whole, but also to functional areas such as career services. The psychological, social, and cultural framework, combined with CECE, assisted the research team in framing interview and survey questions to gather a more holistic view of the Office of Career Development, the staff, and the students.

Although it is important for students to make the effort in working with career services at their university, it is also important for career services to reach out to students and work with employers to make sure they are prepared to actively and effectively recruit from a diverse student population. Horton (2018) stated that “Corporate leaders need to be more knowledgeable and sophisticated in seeking to diversify their workforce” (p.1). It is important that the Latinx population receives the attention they deserve to help bridge the gap of Latinx graduates versus other races in employment after graduation. Horton (2018) explains how young Latinx students today could benefit from staff guidance to break through the glass ceiling and achieve career success. It is up to universities to have well-equipped staff that are prepared to provide this student population with the resources they need to have the same type of opportunities as others in this country. Further research by Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, and Ruder (2006) showed how Latinx students approached seeking academic information. While slightly different than career services, these research conclusions can be translated to similar methods used by students to locate career information. Their research came up with major themes, such as students relying on personal relationships and outreach materials, and students waiting to be told information by advisors (Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, & Ruder, 2006). Thus, traditional approaches to career services where students are expected to know what resources are accessible and to seek them out on their own are not the most effective.

There are various research studies that propose different ways for a career services office to engage and better support their Latinx students. Clark, Severy, and Sawyer (2004) encouraged the use of a postmodern approach that focuses on
students’ individual narratives. In their study, career counselors utilized group counseling that encouraged storytelling and a narrative approach amongst small groups of students. This method allowed students to feel understood by their peers, and see that other students were dealing with similar barriers in their career search (Clark, Severy, & Sawyer, 2004). Another study by Ludwikowski, Vogel, and Armstrong (2009) emphasized the need for “career-related interventions that address the larger social support network of students to promote their use of career services in academic settings” (p. 7). Multiple studies emphasized the powerful role that peer mentors can play in encouraging Latinx students to find and utilize career services, as well as increase their leadership experiences on campus (Rios-Ellis, Rascón, Galvez, Inzunza-Franco, Bellamy, & Torres, 2015; Berrios-Allison, 2011; Zalquett & Lopez, 2006). Overall, it is clear that cultural awareness must be included in how career service offices approach their services and outreach.

Methods

For this project, the research team utilized a mixed-methods approach to provide an in-depth and effective assessment of the career services at the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. The research team has identified the following methods for conducting this study:

Review of Existing Data

A review of existing data was conducted to evaluate the office from a holistic lens. The IUPUI First Destination Survey, Diversity Report, and School of Liberal Arts Office of Career Development check-in survey and satisfaction survey were consulted.

Student Survey

A short Qualtrics survey was created to gain an understanding of how students in the School of Liberal Arts feel about their career services office. Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool used to conduct research, and the researchers used this platform since it is commonly used within IU institutions (“About Qualtrics at IU,” 2018). While the survey was anonymous, the researchers did develop this short survey to collect demographic data, such as race/ethnicity, major, and year. The survey asked scaling questions to identify what students find valuable in their career services office and what would encourage them to use those services. There was also an option to submit their email address to collect interest in participating in an individual interview about their experiences.

The research team worked with the Office of Career Development staff to email the survey to all current students and request that they complete the survey. All survey responses were analyzed by the research team and shared with the Office of Career Development.

Individual Interviews

The research team finds value in the ability to hear students share their individual experiences with career services, their anticipated career outcomes, and interactions with their school through an individual interview. As Schuh, Biddix, Dean, and Kenzie (2016) note, qualitative assessment is valuable in understanding the meaning-making process for students, asking follow-up questions for clarification, and hearing the experiences of others. An individual interview allowed for a well-rounded understanding of the themes identified through the First Destination Survey and IUPUI Diversity report data, as well as data gathered in the initial intake survey. The individual interviews were a single occurrence, utilizing a semi-
standardized format to ground the interview in targeted questions while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions.

**Interview Protocol**

The individual interviews conducted with students used a semi-structured format with a standardized interview protocol for the researchers to follow. Interviews were held with one researcher. Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes to allow for reasonable time to collect data. Interviews were conducted face-to-face on the IUPUI campus to provide accessibility to participants. Face-to-face communication provided an opportunity for the researcher(s) to identify nonverbal communication that may contribute to follow-up questions. The researcher(s) began each interview by explaining the purpose of the study, covering the following information:

**According to First Destination Survey data for the School of Liberal Arts, Latinx and Hispanic-identifying students have the lowest full-time employment rate, and the highest part-time employment rate post-graduation. We’d like to learn more about how the career services office for the School of Liberal Arts has impacted your student experience at IUPUI, and how they could potentially be more beneficial for you to achieve your desired career outcomes, whether it’s full-time employment, graduate school, part-time employment, a service or volunteer opportunity, or choosing to not seek employment. We will be providing overarching feedback gathered from these interviews to provide your school’s career services office with constructive ways to improve services for the Latinx population and other students in the School of Liberal Arts.**

After covering the purpose of the study, the researcher(s) delved into the pre-designed research questions. The researcher(s) informed the person being interviewed about recording by covering the following information:

*We’d like to record the audio of our conversation to make sure we’re accurate in capturing this interview and your thoughts. This recording will only be kept until we transcribe the information, and no identifying information about you will be connected with the interview. Are you okay with us recording?*

**Interview Questions**

The researchers asked five questions during the interview that are expanded upon below. These questions assisted the team in answering the three research questions established for the study.

**How did you decide on your major or academic program at IUPUI?**

This question will be used as a method for encouraging participants to feel comfortable speaking with the researcher(s), and allowing time to establish rapport. The researcher(s) had an opportunity to hear more about why the participant decided on a major within or the School of Liberal Arts which provided more context to future questions.

**What are your aspirations post-graduation academically or in your career?**

A natural build from discussing their program or major is learning more about what their desired career outcomes are. The First Destination Survey data the research team used to inform their research interests provides data on what career outcomes students achieved post-graduation, but does not provide context for what students’ desired career outcomes were when pursuing this education. While this study does not follow students to graduation, learning what students’ intended career outcomes are can contribute to further research on potential disparities between desired outcomes and actualized outcomes.
How could your school’s career services office assist you in meeting your post-graduation aspirations?

This question assisted the researchers in answering the research question: What expectations do Latinx students have for their career services office? This question also encouraged participants to think within the context of their desired career outcomes, which the research team hoped would encourage more thoughtful responses or more tangible suggestions for improving the office’s services. Asking this question also centered the desired career outcomes for the student, as the researchers wanted to learn more about what could assist them in achieving their goals, not just thinking about what could make the office better.

How could your school’s career services office encourage you to use their services more frequently?

This question also answers the research question about expectations Latinx students hold for their school’s career services office, but through a different lens. While this question could have elicited more responses about ways the career office’s services could improve, this question could also encourage participants to think more about the career service office’s outreach methods and student interactions. This question was also developed to help gather data connected to CECE indicators about holistic support.

How do you feel that your ethnic identity is supported or not supported by the career office through their services, outreach, and environment?

Our final question sought to answer the research team’s final research question: To what do students and staff attribute the disparity in Latinx student career outcomes in the School of Liberal Arts? This interview question was also potentially the most uncomfortable or difficult to consider for respondents, which is why it was asked last. Asking this more complex question when rapport has been established between the researcher(s) and the participant was intentional, as the researchers hoped it would improve responses (Harvard, 2018). Allowing participants to feel either negatively, positively, or somewhere in between about their experiences with their career services office encourages honesty from the participants. This final question also connected fully to the purpose of this research: understanding how career services within the School of Liberal Arts can improve their services to provide more promising practices for Latinx students, and connect those students with their aspirations post-graduation.

Staff Focus Group

The staff focus group was an opportunity for staff to engage in discussion regarding the research questions. In particular, the staff focus group helped the research team answer the third research question: To what do staff and students attribute the disparity in Latinx student career outcomes in the School of Liberal Arts? The staff were able to engage in dialogue about the results from the IUPUI First Destination Survey that provided the research team a better glimpse into the context surrounding the data points. Due to the short timeline of this project, utilizing a focus group provided the best opportunity to meet with multiple staff members. Additionally, the goal of this focus group was not to reach a particular consensus but to hear the opinions and thoughts of the staff (Kruger, 2014). By using open-ended questions, the research team prompted a dialogue amongst the staff while serving as moderators and listeners (Kruger, 2014).

Two members of the research team were present at the focus group to help facilitate and prompt discussion. The focus group was 45 minutes long and held during
the office’s staff meeting to increase the quantity of participation. The staff members were informed of the main topics to be discussed in the focus group prior to the meeting. Like the individual interviews, the focus group was a single occurrence event and the research team used a semi-structured model to provide guidance but keep flexibility for follow-up questions and deviations in conversation. The research team did not record the focus groups as the team believed that a video recording would be necessary to know who was speaking. Additionally, a video recording could negatively influence the participation of staff members in the dialogue.

Analysis

When the data collection process was complete, the research team examined the data for common themes from each survey question. The researchers used these themes to help create follow-up questions and to gain a contextual background of students experiences before in-person interviews. When conducting the in-person interviews the researchers made sure that all of the gatherings were accurate. Interviews were recorded by using an electronic device, such as a cell phone with recording options and then transcribed. Only the interviewers listened to the interview and read the transcription of the interview. The interviewer transcribed the audio for the research team and then deleted the interview off the cell phone to protect the students’ identities. All of the transcribed interviews were saved as pseudonyms to protect the identity of the students and staff involved.

After transcribing the interviews, the research team coded data by determining themes after reviewing all qualitative data sources. These codes were analyzed within the conceptual framework, the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model, to provide suggestions for further research and findings about the relationship between Latinx students and career services. The research team identified these methods as important to completing the study and achieving a holistic view of the relationship between Latinx students and the Office of Career Development at the School of Liberal Arts. The main focus of the study, the student-centered approaches, allowed for the research team to identify essential themes to improve career services for Latinx students.

Results

The section breaks down the results of the qualitative and quantitative methods employed by their categories. Due to the mixed methods approach, the results come from a variety of sources and are described by each method.

Review of Existing Data

The research team began data review process by analyzing existing data from the IUPUI Diversity Report, First Destination Survey, and from websites developed by the School of Liberal Arts. The IUPUI Diversity Report of 2018 shows a slight increase in the percentage of Latinx students enrolling at IUPUI since 2012 (5% to 7%). When reviewing the data from the IUPUI First Destination survey, the research team noted that Latinx graduates from the School of Liberal Arts had the lowest full-time employment rate (50%) and the highest part-time employment rate (16%) compared to other racial/ethnic groups (IUPUI, 2018a).

The check-in survey showed that students typically came for scheduled appointments while the number of drop-ins was significantly less (858 students as compared to 110 students). Additionally, this data showed that students primarily came to the career office for assistance with resumes/cover letters (31.54%), career and
major explorations (12.7%), or for their career course (11.59%). Other services, such as mock interviews or interview prep, are utilized much less (1.71% - 2.81%) (Check-in Survey, 2018).

The student satisfaction survey gives insight on students’ thoughts after meeting with a member of the Office of Career Development. Not every student who visited the office actually completed the satisfaction survey (125/900+ visits). These data show a higher number of students saying they received help such as mock interviews (7.22%), but resume/cover letter assistance was still the top conversation topic (31.67%). Students stated that, as a result of these services, they “had a successful interview,” were “able to apply for the appropriate position,” and were able to “better understand my own career interests and/or goals.” Most of the qualitative feedback given by students who completed the survey was positive and emphasized that “this office has help build my confidence in my career search” and that students “felt more confident” as a result of their meetings. Only one student who left qualitative feedback was critical, writing “I did not find the meeting helpful at all.” The data from these three sources informed the additional method selection and provided valuable context for approaching the assessment (“Satisfaction Survey,” 2018).

Staff Focus Group

The researchers met with the staff of the Office of Career Development to have a discussion on the main overarching question: to what do staff and students attribute the disparity in Latinx student career outcomes in the School of Liberal Arts? Throughout this discussion, the staff emphasized that they are working diligently to provide great amounts of support to all students and to promote a supportive and inclusive environment. The staff expressed their eagerness to learn about the results of this research to gain constructive feedback and to learn ways to better support the Latinx student population at IUPUI.

During the staff focus group, the staff agreed that their marketing was very effective and constantly displays students from all ethnicities and backgrounds. The Liberal Arts Office of Career Development does most of its marketing through fliers and brochures outside of the office, the weekly newsletter, Instagram, and Facebook. The staff ensures that there are diverse faces on their marketing materials so that every Liberal Arts student can see themselves within this school. The office’s social media pages promote for other organizations, specifically organizations focused on certain identities, to show students that this office fully supports them.

Currently, there are not any specific programs tailored to Latinx students within the IUPUI School of Liberal Arts. One of the staff members stated that the office aims to be inclusive and have a wide range of events. The office focuses on partnering with other offices on campus, such as the multicultural office, to promote events for a variety of student populations. For example, both offices recently partnered on an event focused on the Latinx population and discussed career preparation.

Throughout the staff focus group, the research team probed the staff to consider what types of support they believe this student population needs. The staff discussed how it may be helpful to know what many of the common values are for this population because some of the staff members have noticed that family seems to be an important factor to the majority of these students. Also, the staff discussed how it may be helpful to learn more about current events within the news that affect this population, an example of this is news related to DACA. The main theme that the
staff believed would be helpful for this student group would be to find ways to inform these students that there are many other resources on campus that are crucial for the success of these students.

**Student Survey**

The research team chose to also include an electronic survey (referenced in Appendix A) that was distributed via email to all the students within the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. The survey was created using the Qualtrics program. After reviewing the all survey responses only five of the 98 participants were Latinx students, where the School of Liberal Arts has 142 Latinx undergraduate students total. Although the researchers did not receive as many Latinx student participants as other ethnicities the survey information is still valuable to share. All five of the Latinx students who answered the survey agreed that all the career services that were mentioned throughout the survey were important or very important to them. However, 60% of these students have never used career services through the School of Liberal Arts. This is alarming because all the students view these skills important, but most Latinx students are not utilizing them according to the survey. The Latinx students who knew about the office did share that they heard about these services through their interviewing class, peers, faculty and staff, marketing materials, and the website.

Most of the 98 survey participants were white students at participation rate of 73%. The survey had a response rate of 75% for women participants and most students who participated in the survey were in their fourth year of college. According to the survey, 51% of participants have never used the services or resources that are provided by the Office of Career Development. Students who have not attended the office mentioned that the they did not feel the office was geared towards their future career path or that visiting is not a priority due to their busy schedule. Many of the other participants shared that they were not aware of the resources. However, 80% of the participants mentioned that the resources provided through the Office of Career Development are important or very important for them to receive as students. In the survey, 87% of participants shared that resources such as field visits, informational interviews, internships, shadowing experiences, summer/part-time jobs, and cooperative education are important or very important for students to receive help and resources on.

Although many students mentioned they have not used the Office of Career Development within Liberal Arts, most students do feel that the office has encouraged their interest in graduate/professional school and/or obtaining employment. According to the survey, most students (41%) are finding out about the Office of Career Development through faculty and staff. Only 16% of students claimed to find out about the services through the marketing resources. One student shared an extended response in the survey explaining, “I’m not sure if it’s offered or not because I haven’t explored the office and their resources, but I’m currently researching and am very interested in learning more about how students can ‘sell their skills’ for a career not necessarily related to their degree”. The survey shares that the interest and need for career services within the School of Liberal Arts does exist. Many students are finding out about the office’s resources through faculty and staff. The survey shares the importance of relationships and how strengthening relationships can bring more students to the office to receive resources.

**Student Interviews**
The research team conducted three types of student interviews that were used as a foundation for the future recommendations for the Office of Career Development within the IUPUI School of Liberal Arts. The first student interview was a small focus group with the Latino Student Association (LSA) which included a female student, Kate, and a male student, Will. LSA is a Latino student organization at IUPUI with the goal of promoting academic excellence within their community, in addition to developing the knowledge of oneself. This student focus group included two members of LSA who were asked questions surrounding their values, experiences on campus, and their thoughts on the career services support at IUPUI.

Throughout the focus group, LSA provided constructive feedback on ways that the Office of Career Development could be more impactful to Latinx students on campus. When discussing strategies that the office could use to attract students, Will stated, “I would say to have more publicity on campus. For example, if I see a nice poster that promotes something and it interests me then I will make sure that I go to the event. So I think they need more of that.” LSA mentioned that students may be more prone to visit the office if they knew that it existed. The research team was also informed that LSA has a strong belief that Latinx students are passionate about reaching their career aspirations, in addition to receiving guidance regarding professional development. LSA discussed how their organization had a resume workshop for students that was facilitated by the LSA executive board. Kate stated that there were only six attendees to this event, however the participants believe that the number would have been exponentially greater if students knew a professional career services staff member was in attendance (Kate, personal communication, November 19th, 2018).

LSA expressed a strong interest in partnering with the Office of Career Development and believed that the office should partner more with other organizations to increase the marketing efforts on campus. LSA believes that, overall, career services offices on campus should increase their campus marketing and provide more motivation to students. When discussing ways the office could improve overall, Will stated, “I think that they could have more events towards the end of semester. During that time is when we need more support and motivation. I think the motivation is the most important part.”

The second type of interview was with a Latinx male freshman student on campus, Sam. Sam described how he believed the Office of Career Development at IUPUI needs to have more events that connect Latinx students with students from other marginalized groups. Sam strongly believed that this would encourage students to create a support group as they aim to develop as young professionals with similar experiences. Sam also expressed that he believed a better strategy for the staff to outreach to students was through student organizations’ social media platforms. “I know that the Latino Student Association would post announcements on their Snapchat and Instagram saying what they have going on, so the office could probably do that as well. Or you can also post flyers in Spanish because there could be some kids that have a difficulty speaking English too.” Sam believed that the Office of Career Development could have a better attendance rate from Latinx students if LSA and other student organizations publicize the events as well. Additionally, Sam’s suggestion of having flyers on campus in Spanish would create a more welcoming environment on campus for Latinx students and may increase their likelihood of attending the event. In regards to the events promoted,
Sam suggested, “The office could probably do something with the Latino Student Association. I know the Latino Student Association did a resume workshop event, so they could partner with them. It could be an event where we come for a resume workshop in Taylor Hall.” This recommendation aligns with the proposal made by the LSA member who also suggested partnering with the Office of Career Development on resume critiques.

The final student interview was with a female senior-student named Allison, who is a former student employee at the Office of Career Development, who also identifies within the Latinx population. Allison stated that throughout her time in that office, she could not recall seeing a single Latinx student in the office. Allison stated:

“So even with the companies that we were partners with to help students get into a position, I never really did see anything where I can be like, okay, the students can relate to them. There was no Latin representation, even with the recruiters at the outreach programs or events, and there wasn't any Latin employees that students could come to and talk to. The Office of Career Development staff was diverse, so that was good, but it just, it was hard to really relate to. I felt like that’s why the students didn't come into the office because there really wasn’t many people that they could come to and ask specific questions like related to them, if that makes sense.

Allison continued to elaborate on how she believed the office could be more appealing to the Latinx student population. Allison stated, “I know that it’s important to talk about it how we have to represent ourselves and even by our cover letters and resumes. All of that just has to be that much better than others, and even breaking it down further for minorities. For example, stating what you really need to emphasize or bring out to show your skills.” Allison also mentioned that the first thing the office could do for the students was actually get these students into the office, and she believes that the office should find better strategies to outreach to students. A few of her suggestions were to host events around Latin holidays or events that include Latin food. Allison stated:

“I think that the biggest thing is that they need to outreach. I know that a good thing would be if they were to partner with the multicultural center. I know that the multicultural center had a lot of events with Latinos. If the Office of Career Development could partner with them, then I think that that would help gain Latinx presence and that would be better. I think that is what it's lacking. I think that that's the reason these students never came in because I don't know if your research has showed, but the people that came to the office more often, ended up being further along in their career than the people that never heard about us.

A big takeaway from this interview was that Allison believed that the Office of Career Development has services that could greatly benefit the Latinx student population, but the students needed to become more aware of those benefits. Allison also shared that more jobs and internships being promoted by this office should be for positions with whom this student population would be interested in working.

**Discussion**

The results from our study were consistent with existing literature on career services. Fouad et al.’s (2006) study on
importance and usage of career services revealed that while many students recognize the importance of career services, only about half access those services. This is consistent with these survey results, with a majority of students marking getting help with various aspects of career services as important or very important, while only 51% have actually used the Office of Career Development’s services. Additionally, Torres et al.’s (2006) findings on the ineffectiveness of traditional methods of outreach are consistent with the results of student interviews and the focus group. Traditional often refers to methods that are grounded in dominant narratives, and particularly methods that are built around and for the success of white students. Latinx students are requesting more active and innovative outreach from the Office of Career Development to fully promote their services and get more Latinx students into the office.

The results from this study were examined through the Cultural Familiarity and Proactive Philosophies indicators of the CECE model (Museus, 2014). Student interviews and the focus group reveal a desire for marketing materials in Spanish, more Latinx staff in the office, and Latinx recruiters at career fairs and other events, which reaffirms the importance of having staff and resources that represent the Latinx identity and culture of students. Additionally, a major finding stems from the lack of awareness students have about the Office of Career Development. Through analyzing the results, it is clear that the Office of Career Development has marketing materials and a brand that is well designed and represents visually racially diverse students. However, these materials have not been effectively promoted to students to influence their awareness of the office or decision to visit the office. By shifting away from more traditional methods and moving toward considering more active outreach tactics, the office will enact a more proactive stance.

Finally, the results demonstrated the assets of working with students in career development to center them in decision-making. Student interviews revealed a desire to partner with student organizations as a way to get connected to the office. Students can act as a vital promotion piece for the office while ensuring that decision-making is student-centered and most effective for the use of resources.

**Limitations**

Before addressing the recommendations for the Office of Career Development, it is important to highlight some of the limitations of this research. The first limitation is that the results of this report are not necessarily generalizable to every career services office, as the recommendations are directed towards this specific office. However, this report does highlight the limited current research on the role of career services for Latinx college students. Second, Latinx students were underrepresented in the survey, as at IUPUI, where approximately 8% of students are Latinx and only 5% of survey respondents were Latinx students. While the survey results helped develop a more holistic review of the Office of Career Development as a whole, more data from Latinx students would have been impactful.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

Based on the IUPUI First Destination Survey, IUPUI Diversity Report, the review of literature, and analysis of student collected data, the research team developed a few recommendations for the Office of Career Development in order to more purposefully engage with the Latinx
student population. A major theme throughout the literature and survey responses was the lack of awareness of the office and the services that it offers. One recommendation for the office is to focus on inclusive marketing. This marketing should include more than pictures of a diverse student population, but also consider marketing in different languages such as Spanish. Outreach should include partnering with student organizations, such as the Latino Student Association (LSA). Partnering with student organizations is a way to reach a new population of students to encourage them to participate in events that will be helpful to them, while also giving them more agency in the career process. The LSA explained their interest in career services and how they believe the partnership would be beneficial to their members. Most students who answered the online Qualtrics survey explained that the main reason they knew about the Career Development Office was because of a faculty or staff member. Partnering with faculty is another recommendation to the office. This can be done by providing them with the information they need to promote the office, or by asking faculty to allow short class presentations to promote the office and explain their services. By partnering with faculty, student groups, and developing new strategic marketing, the researchers hope that the Office of Career Development will be able to reach a wider population of students.

Since students have interest in career services, this can be a great way for students to get involved and become peer mentors. Peer mentors would provide students with peer-to-peer learning on a variety of topics. The students would give resume critiques, lead career skills workshops, and provide interview advice. It would also be a developmental opportunity for students to act as a mentor. Peer mentors would provide the office with an additional resource so they are able to meet with more students. After conducting this research project, it is clear that the office is in need of additional resources. To accommodate for the recommendations of stronger marketing materials, valuable partnerships, and a peer mentor program, it is necessary to have more professional staff in the office. It is important that all the professional staff are on the same page with an emphasis on collaboration and outreach to the Latinx student population and more students in general. If the office hires more professional staff, they would be able to increase the number of workshops and partnership events that they plan throughout the semester.

Another recommendation is to consider the physical environment for the Office of Career Development. This office's space is very tight with only two small offices besides the lobby area. To be most successful with the recommendations, a larger space would be essential. A larger office space would allow for meeting and workshop rooms so students could meet at the Office of Career Development instead of a different location. This would create less of a barrier for students to find events and meetings they have. A larger space would also allow for the opportunity to make the office welcoming and collaborative. As of now the office is cramped but could be made into a much more inviting area and stress-free environment. Students may be more likely to come in and see what is going on in the office if it were to be larger, which could lead to many great career conversations. Overall, the Office of Career Development is dedicated to their students and invested in providing the best and most effective services possible. The research team believes that by developing their marketing, outreach, student engagement, and human and physical resources, the office would be able to continue the important work they are
doing with a larger portion of the student population.

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Elizabeth Wall is a 2019 M.S.Ed. graduate of Indiana University. Born in Virginia, she graduated from Christopher Newport University in 2016. At IU, Lizzy held an assistantship in academic advising with the Hutton Honors College and an internship in career services with the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies.

References


Appendix A - Survey Instrument

This survey will collect the demographics of survey respondents, in addition to assessing the experience and expectations of students within the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. The survey link will be sent as an email for students to complete.

1. How often have you visited career services, accessed its resources, or used its services?
   - □ Many times (6+)
   - □ A few times (2-5)
   - □ Once
   - □ Not at all

2. If you have not used career services at all, indicate the reason(s) by checking the items below.
   - □ Unaware of services
   - □ Know what I want to do and how to do it
   - □ Not yet a priority for me
   - □ Getting advice/help from someone outside career services
   - □ Office seems uninviting
   - □ Inconvenient location
   - □ Inconvenient office hours
   - □ Heard career services isn’t very helpful
   - □ Services seem oriented to other majors/students
   - □ Services seem oriented to seniors
   - □ Others (please specify) ____________________________

3. How important to you is it to receive help with each of the following services?
   a. Help in finding and researching career, educational and employment information
      - □ Very important
      - □ Important
      - □ Somewhat important
      - □ Not important
   b. Help in establishing and planning career goals
      - □ Very important
      - □ Important
      - □ Somewhat important
      - □ Not important
c. Help in understanding my interests, skills, personality, strengths and values and relating them to career choices
   - Very important
   - Important
   - Somewhat important
   - Not important

d. Help in exploring career options through field visits, informational interviews, internships, shadowing, experiences, summer/part-time jobs, and/or cooperative education
   - Very important
   - Important
   - Somewhat important
   - Not important

e. Career services has encouraged my interest in graduate/professional school and or obtaining employment.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

4. How did you hear about career services?
   - Faculty/staff
   - Website
   - Marketing material
   - Another IUPUI student
   - Other, please specify __________________________

5. My overall experience with the career services office was
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor

6. Are you over 18 years of age? □Yes □No

7. Race/ethnicity (mark all that apply):
   - African American
   - Asian American
   - Caucasian
   - Hispanic
   - Native American
   - Other, please specify __________________________

8. Gender: __________________________

9. Class Standing (selecting one):
   - First Year
   - Second Year
   - Third Year
   - Fourth Year
   - Fifth Year +

10. Major:
    - Liberal Arts - Africana Studies
    - Liberal Arts - American Sign Language/English Interpreting
11. Please submit your email below if you are interested in participating in an individual interview about your awareness and/or experiences with career services at IUPUI.

___________________________________________