



*Ascender- Newsletter
September 2020- Volume 9, No. 2*



Hispanic Heritage Month Magnifies Importance of Hispanics to U.S. Future

Hispanic Heritage Month spans from September 15 to October 15, and as we celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of U.S. Latinx and Hispanic communities, we must consider how the disparities of COVID-19 will affect the vital future contributions by Hispanics to our state and nation's economy.

“There are few groups more important to the health of the U.S. economy overall than Hispanics. In both Texas and California, Hispanic households had more than \$125 billion in after-tax income in 2015, accounting for more than one of every five dollars available to spend in each state that year. Hispanics overall contributed \$101.8 billion to Social Security and \$25.3 billion to Medicare; these contributions were largest in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Studies indicate that from Medicare in particular, immigrants draw down far less than they put into the trust fund each year, making such tax contributions particularly valuable.”

http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/12/Hispanic_V5.pdf

This large and essential workforce is growing rapidly. Between 1970 and 2014, the number of Hispanics living in America grew by a factor of roughly seven—or by 592 percent. The overall U.S. population increased by just 56 percent during the same period. In Texas, the Hispanic population has grown by more than 2 million since 2010, and the state's demographer now predicts that Hispanics will be the state's largest population group by mid-2021. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/06/25/texas-hispanic-population-grows-2-million/>

However, evidence shows that the pandemic, which has led to the highest unemployment rate nationwide since the Great Depression, has more severely affected Hispanic communities.

“The unemployment rate for Hispanics increased from 4.8% in February to a peak of 18.5% in April. Hispanic women have experienced an especially steep rise in their unemployment rate, which jumped from 5.5% to 20.5% between February and April 2020. About 59% of Latinos in May said they live in households that have experienced job losses or pay cuts, with a far lower share of U.S. adults (43%) saying the same.”

<https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/04/>

Facing a future where the long-term effects of COVID may be even larger than the near-term effects, HACU Ex-Officio President Dr. Antonio Flores' comment, “Our nation's economic and social success rests on the level of skills and knowledge attained by Hispanics” is a statement of fact.

CTN is acutely aware that education is indisputably the key to helping Hispanic youth succeed as both earners and taxpayers and we know the importance of their success in connection to the future of Texas and the nation. We remain committed to our mission to increase the educational attainment for Latino youth.

ACCTV Airs First Bilingual Latinx Talk Show with Hosts Polcik & Diaz

By Megan Diaz and Diana Martinez

After a long time of preparation, just in time to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, the first-ever bilingual Latinx talk show, "Ready, Set, Ascender!" aired on ACCTV. The purpose of this new initiative is to inform the community about resources that Austin Community College offers and share experiences, performances, and discussions of current events and relevant news of the Ascender familia. This new bilingual talk show will hopefully inspire and entertain the community, and inform them about the program that is available for students city-wide.

Alejandra Polcik, Manager of Hispanic Outreach Projects, and Megan Diaz, Ascender Outreach Specialist, are the hosts of the show, and are currently filming everything virtually, while staying safe at home. The first pilot episode briefly talks about what Hispanic Heritage Month stands for and how ACC organizations have adapted to the new environment by hosting different celebrations, such as informative online DACA sessions, to continue to increase inclusivity and diversity within the college. To tie the show together, they open the platform to students, faculty, and staff, by allowing them to share their experiences to continue to motivate and inspire the community.



The Ascender team at ACC shared student success stories from two 2019-2020 Ascender students. Jennifer Rodriguez, an Ascender student in her second-year at ACC, shared her personal experience as a Danza Azteca or "Matachines," and the meaning behind this performance, which she got involved in because of her culture and religion. Jennifer also explained that ACC has fostered a sense of support, "ACC is there to support you and help you out through difficult times. 'It doesn't matter if you don't know English, someone is there to help you, you are not alone,'" she commented. Isaiah Castillo, a second-year Ascender student, and his Ascender mentor, Jorge López-McKnight, shared how Ascender has made them feel more connected to the campus, since both were new to ACC at that time. Isaiah also went into detail how mental health is important to be discussed, especially in the Latinx world, "One thing I do like to talk about is mental health, the Hispanic culture I grew up in, [mental health] was very difficult to talk about. In Hispanic culture, they don't like talking about mental illnesses, because it's very taboo," he said. Isaiah went on to explain that having his Ascender mentor helped him feel connected to his culture and community, as he was new to Austin.

This show will continue to educate the community about important events that are taking place at ACC, will feature more Ascender familia who will share their stories, and will discuss important topics that impact the community. "Ready, Set Ascender!" hopes to encourage students to be involved in virtual events, give back to their community, and to stay motivated in school!

To view the show, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqeAfZOJIDQ&t=23s>

CTN Offers Fall Ascender Transfer Motivational Conference

CTN hosted a virtual Fall Ascender Student Transfer Motivational Conference on Friday, September 25th. The theme for the seminar was Aspire, Inspire, and Motivate (AIM). Over 65 participants attended with all CTN colleges represented. The seminar began at 9:30 with a welcome and introduction by CTN staff which was

followed by a session with CTN, CEO Dr. Maria Chavez who shared her educational journey and emphasized the importance of an education.

After a short break with door prizes, ACC Master AOS Advisor, Ariel Flores introduced Trish Welsh, Ram Vela and Shantelle Harper from ACC's Center for Student Services, who provided information and advice on careers and transfer, including top majors and occupations. Flores then led a discussion about the impact of COVID on careers based on degree of education, ending with the question "How do you think the pandemic will change the future of where and how we work?"

Next Stacy Ybarra, CTN's Director of Student Engagement, shared scholarship and financial information and opportunities in her presentation titled "Where's the Money?" She shared specific websites and showed participants strategies for searching using google.

After a lunch break, Dr. Anna Alaniz introduced keynote speaker, Dr. Tomas Gonzalez who is a radiology resident at the Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Gonzalez shared his educational journey which began in Mexico. At the age of 13, he moved to Roma, TX, where he had to repeat the 7th grade. He said it was a difficult transition because of language and cultural barriers, and he failed his math class. However, in eighth grade, he was named the Middle School Top English Student and transitioned from ESL classes to regular classes. In high school he was active in various extracurricular activities including UIL science competition which he said helped prepare him for college-level science courses. Towards the end of his high school career, his family worked as migrant farmworkers. His boss commented that migrant work was honorable work, but Tomas had a chance to go to college, which many of them did not, and he should take it.

Gonzalez graduated 7th in his high school class and went on to attend The University of Texas at Austin. At UT Austin, he majored in biology and was active in several extracurricular activities. He received the UT Austin Outstanding Student Award and graduated in the top 4 percent of his class. He then attended medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center and is presently a resident with the intention of becoming an interventional radiologist.

He offered advice throughout his presentation which included "Watch out for the naysayers. Don't let them get on your path" and "you are your best competition."

After the final break with door prizes, Dr. Alaniz asked CTN's alumni panel to introduce themselves. She then asked them questions about their obstacles, their role models, and the way the program helped them. She also asked them how better prepared they were than others to face the pandemic.

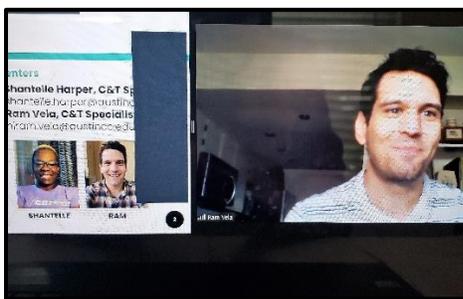
Next in breakout rooms, participants and alumni shared their "powerful why" and found similarities which they shared when everyone returned to the group. Alumni Farah Guerrero shared this message with participants, "We are here to help you reach your dreams and that you can see through us it is possible!! Never give up."

Conference participant Victoria said, "This conference has given me so much motivation to follow my dreams no matter the problems that I come across. Such awesome and successful people who had struggles and no matter what, they did it. I have faith that I will become what I want." Another conference participant Siobhan commented, "I am very thankful that I am now a part of all of this support."

Dr. Alaniz ended the conference with these remarks "We want to send you off with our blessings and know that we are your familia now and that we are here to see you succeed *porque si se puede.*"



Dr. Tomas Gonzalez shares his journey.



ACC's Center for Student Services



Alumni Gonzalez encourages students.

CTN to Host Ascender Virtual Fall Conference

CTN will host the second in its series of professional development trainings for new and returning Ascender instructors on October 16 beginning at 9am. The conference will start with a discussion of topics that participants would like to see addressed at this and future professional development offerings.

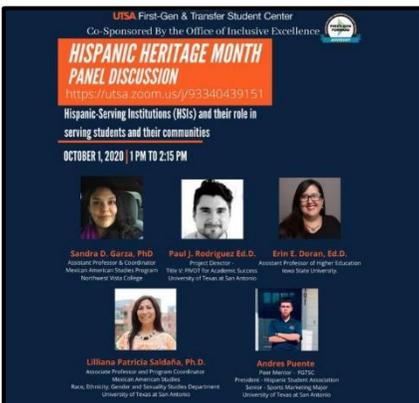
Morning sessions will feature a number of engaging topics including “Crafting Relevant Curriculum for an Uncertain Future,” presented by Allegra Villarreal, CTN Director of Professional Development; Engaging Math Students with EnLearn’s Adaptive Platform, “ presented by John Mullin, CEO EnLearn; “ Community of Practice,” presented by Erin Doran, CTN Director of Research and Development; “Latino Males: Improving Retention and Completion in Higher Ed,” presented by Victor Saenz, Department Chair and Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, UT Austin, and “Mental Health in Trying Times,” Presented by Rosa Rodriguez-Alvarez, Associate Dean, Counseling, ACC.



Julia Preston

The first afternoon session will be presented by Julia Preston, contributing writer for the Marshall Project and former *New York Times* national correspondent. Her session will explore the nature of truth in reporting and is titled “Facts vs Truth in News Reporting: The Case of DACA.” Preston’s session will be followed by breakout sessions and then campus team time.

CTN Staff, Doran, Joins Panel Discussing HSIs’ Role in Serving Students



Erin Doran, CTN Director of Research and Development, was one of the speakers in a panel discussion sponsored by UTSA First-Gen and Transfer Center on October 1st at 1 pm. The discussion session was titled “Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) and their role in serving students and their communities.” Speakers discussed the role of HSIs in creating racial and educational equity for Mexican Americans and Latinas/xs/os and the academic and social justice culture that HSIs can create to better serve students and their communities. Other speakers included Dr. Sandra Garza (Northwest Vista College), Andres Puentes (Peer Mentor, First-to-Go-and-Graduate, UTSA), Lilliana Patricia Saldana (Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, Mexican American Studies, UTSA), and Dr. Paul Rodriguez (UTSA).

CTN Board Chair, Rogelio Saenz, Speaks at Latino Leadership Symposium



CTN Board Chair, Dr. Rogelio Saenz, spoke at the Lideramos' National Latino Leadership Symposium which took place Sept. 24-25. His presentation was "Numbers Don't Lie!: Leveraging Demographics to Empower and Activate Latino Leaders." The symposium's title was *¡Aquí! ¡Ahora! Nuestro Poder! Increasing your Power, Impact, & Internet Savvy During Virtual Times*. Its purpose was to assist participants to be more impactful during COVID-19 and beyond. Sessions included using technology tools such as Zoom and YouTube and how to use these to promote leadership and activism in the community. Additionally, there were sessions on culture, Latino issues, and Black-Brown collaboration intended to advance participants' leadership capacity.

TACHE Selects CTN Staff, Juan Higa, for Technology Committee

CTN Operations Manager, Juan Higa, has been selected to serve as Co-Chairman of the Technology Committee for the TACHE 46th Annual State Conference. Higa will serve with Dr. Nancy Garcia.



The Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) State Board is proud to announce the 46th Annual State Conference theme: *La Lucha Sigue*: Continuing the Fight for Dignity, Education and the Chicano Identity. The conference will be held in Fort Worth, TX, May 15-19, 2021. Conference Chair, Mayra Olivares-Urueta, Ph.D., shared that the theme was selected among several others considered by the committee. “This theme is very personal for Chicanos across the state as we continue to fight for equity for our students, faculty, and staff,” said Dr. Olivares-Urueta.

Teaching and Learning for Student Success Webinars

October’s Webinar to Feature C. Prieto and S. Manna

October’s webinar is scheduled for Thursday, October 15th from 3-4pm and will feature Dr. Catherine Olivarez Prieto and Dr. Sharon Manna from Dallas County Community College and is titled “Faculty Challenges in Implementing Guided Pathways.”

This will take place via Zoom: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83144530653>

If you have any questions, please email Erin Doran at erin.doran@catchthenext.org.

In case you missed previous sessions or would like to review the resources, check out our [Teaching and Learning for Student Success Monthly Webinar playlist](#) on the Catch the Next YouTube Channel.

CTN College News

Palo Alto College Receives Federal Grant to Serve Hispanic Students

CTN partner college, Palo Alto College, was awarded a \$599,007 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program to serve its Hispanic and underrepresented student. Effective on Oct. 1, the grant will fund Project Listo – Spanish for “ready” – which will increase student support, internships and service-learning opportunities. The program will also integrate career readiness and industry competency into program curriculum through the creation of a one-stop Center for Career and Experiential Learning. The college anticipates more federal grant funding in the same amount over five years for a total of \$2.9 million.

“Our goal has always been that our students leave Palo Alto College with the knowledge and experience to enter high-wage, high-demand careers that will lead to upward mobility,” said [Robert Garza](#), president of Palo Alto College. “We are excited by how this funding will enrich our students’ college experience through hands-on, real-world experience and long-term goal setting.” (<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2020/09/09/>)

CTN Peer Mentor News

CTN Peer Mentor, Troncoso, Wins International Latino Book Award

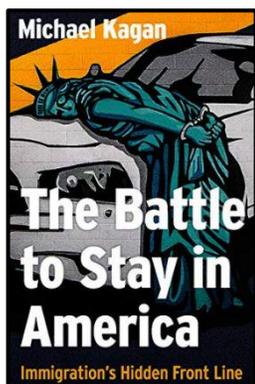


CTN peer mentor, Sergio Troncoso’s book, *A Peculiar Kind of Immigrant’s Son*, won first place for Best Collection of Short Stories (English/Bilingual) at the International Latino Book Awards, which honors authors, translators, and illustrators for their books written either in English, Spanish or Portuguese. The judges called the collection “poignant and powerful; a tour de force!”

Troncoso has two forthcoming books in 2021: a new novel, *Nobody’s Pilgrims*, (Cinco Puntos Press) and *Nepantla Familias: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature of Families in between Worlds* (Texas A&M Press), for which he is the editor.

CTN Peer Mentor, Julia Preston, Publishes Review in New York Review of Books

CTN Peer Mentor, Julia Preston, published a review of two books in the *New York Review of Books*, a semi-monthly magazine with articles on literature, culture, economics, science and current affairs. In her review of *The Battle to Stay in America* by Michael Kagan, she says “Kagan, a law professor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, tells stories of his neighbors and of clients at the university law clinic he runs. He provides an unusually accessible primer on immigration law and a valuable guide to the ways it currently works to perpetuate an excluded immigrant underclass with diminished rights.” Her review of *The Deportation Machine* by Adam Goodman, states “Adam Goodman, an assistant professor of history and Latin American and Latino studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, comprehensively recasts the way we think about expulsions from the US and their effects. Although formal deportations—those ordered by an immigration court or other federal authority—have become a dominant means of enforcement only since the 1990s, Goodman shows that coerced departures by various means have been a powerful form of immigration control, exercised by federal and sometimes local authorities, since at least the late nineteenth century.”



To see both reviews, go to <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2020/10/08/deportation-nation/>

CTN Peer Mentor, Nazario, on *Parade Magazine*'s List of Most Influential Women

CTN peer mentor, Sonia Nazario, was selected by *Parade Magazine* as one of the 52 most influential Latina women in history. She was joined on the list by 51 other “revolutionaries that have shattered barriers and proven time and time again that “si, se puede”—a term coined by Latina civil rights activist Dolores Huerta.”

The article continues, “these women have made strides in civil rights, politics, entertainment, and even gone to space. We’ve included the woman who wrote the original lyrics to Puerto Rico’s national anthem, the Latina who fought to desegregate the school system, and the Latina author who was the first person from Latin America to win a Nobel Prize. Furthermore, it was a Latina who helped farmworkers receive U.S. labor rights, a Latina was the first female Surgeon General, and a Latina is one of the all-time greatest female golfers.”



“We are in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Month, and there's no better salve for impostor syndrome than making *Parade Magazine*'s list of 52 influential Latin-American women. I love this list of women who have brought Latinx stories to music, media, politics, and more, like journalist María Elena Salinas and Maria Hinojosa, actress and activist America Ferrera, and author and philanthropist Isabel Allende,” commented Nazario.

Read the full list [HERE](#).

Student Resources

Texas A&M Offers Summer Research Opportunity

The purpose Texas A&M College of Medicine’s Summer Research Program is to give undergraduate students from any institution who have an interest in pursuing a future career in biomedical research the opportunity to work in a laboratory and perform a research project during the summer. The 10-week program consists of students working closely with Texas A&M University College of Medicine faculty on research projects in basic or clinical science disciplines. Selected participants are matched with a faculty mentor in their area of interest and will assist with a research project gaining insight into the development and implementation of biomedical research. The program also features group activities including weekly meetings in which principles of scientific investigation, ethical aspects of human and animal experimentation, and career development will be discussed. Students will also attend scientific seminars and workshops. Faculty mentors are located on the College of Medicine campuses in Bryan-College Station and Houston.

The Summer Research Program application is located on the Texas A&M University Health Science Center's [BAMF system](#). Select applications then add Admissions - Summer Research Program 2021.

Undergraduate student applicants are required to submit official transcript(s) and two letters of recommendation in addition to submitting the online application. The deadline for receipt of the application, transcript(s), and letters of recommendation is Feb. 9, 2021.

It is the applicant's responsibility to have official transcript(s) and two recommendation letters (signed and on letterhead) sent to the following email or address by Feb. 9, 2021.

Organization Offers Resources for Financial Literacy

Annuity.org believes when students learn financial literacy at an early age it helps them to make astute decisions about their personal finances, smart financial behavior leads to financially secure lives. Now, more than ever, is a great time for students to hone in on this skill while they are learning from home. Their site covers things like:

Budgeting -Filling out a FAFSA request for college; How Student Loans Work; and Financially planning for your future and more.

Please take a look at our student resource here:

www.annuity.org/financial-literacy/stu+dents/

Soros Offers \$90,000 Graduate School Fellowship for Immigrants

The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans is offering a \$90,000 graduate school fellowship for outstanding immigrants and children of immigrants who will go on to make a significant contribution to United States society, culture, and/or their academic field. Those interested can join the program's Deputy Director Yulian Ramos and the Communications Director Nikka Landau, as well as recent Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow Norma Torres Mendoza, and My Undocumented Life's Carolina Valdivia for a webinar information session focused on DACA recipients and undocumented applicants. The session will cover the history of the fellowship, the alumni community, funding, eligibility, selection criteria, and the application process.

The Fellowship is open to DACA recipients and any immigrant who graduated from both high school and college in the US, regardless of status. In addition, naturalized citizens and green card holders are eligible, as well as US-born citizens who are the children of two immigrants. If you are applying in the fall of 2020, then you must be planning on being enrolled in graduate school full-time for the full 2021-2022 academic school year and you must be 30 or younger as of the application deadline (October 29, 2020). The Fellowship supports all types of accredited degrees, including MBAs, PhDs, JDs, MDs, and master's degrees of all types. For information go to:

<https://www.pdsoros.org/> Online programs, part-time programs, and executive programs are not eligible.

Ford Foundation Accepts Applications for Fellowship Program

The Ford Foundation is now accepting applications for its pre-doctoral fellowship program, which provides awardees with an annual stipend of \$27,000 for three years beginning during the fall of 2021. In addition to financial support, this fellowship opportunity provides awardees with a wide range of resources, a support network, and presentation opportunities at its annual gathering. Note: This fellowship is open to "individuals with current status under the DACA Program, as well as individuals whose status may have lapsed but who continue to meet all the USCIS guidelines for DACA."

The deadline to apply is **December 17, 2020 at 5pm EST**.

For more information and to apply, please visit their official website: [2021 Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship](#)

Professional Opportunities

NISOD Offers Series of Online Convenings

NISOD is excited to announce that we have incorporated our annual Virtual Conference into a new series of Online Convenings. These Convenings offer some of the most salient topics concerning community and technical college educators today.

- Improving Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Overcoming Food and Housing Insecurities
- Successful Faculty Professional Development Models
- Effective Online Teaching Practices

To find out more, go to <https://www.nisod.org/online-convenings/>

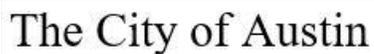
Report Provides Best Practices for Financial Literacy

The U.S. Department of the Treasury released a report on behalf of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC). The report, *Best Practices for Financial Literacy and Education at Institutions of Higher Education*, provides recommendations for higher education institutions to deliver effective financial literacy education and resources to help students make informed decisions and avoid pitfalls associated with financing education. [Read more](#)

Opportunities for Fully Funded Masters and PhD Scholarships

FULLY FUNDED BACHELORS MASTERS & PHD SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED AROUND THE WORLD FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2017-2018						
#	Scholarship Name	LEVEL	University	Country	Fields	Deadline
1.	Fulbright Scholarship	Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities	USA	All Fields	Feb-Oct of every Year
2.	Austrian Scholarships	Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities	Austria	All Fields	January of every year
3.	Aga Khan Foundation Scholarship	Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities	Aga Khan Foundation	All Fields	March of every year
4.	Chevening Scholarships	Masters	All Universities of UK	UK	All Fields	November of every Year
5.	Endeavour Scholarships	Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities in Australia	Australia	All Fields	June of every Year
6.	OFID Scholarship	Masters	Any accredited University/College around the world	Any Country	Science and development	May of every year
7.	Australian Development Scholarships	Bachelors & Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities	Australia	All Fields	April of every year
8.	Swedish Scholarship	Master's Degree	Swedish Universities	Sweden	All Fields	Jan-Feb of every year
9.	VLIR-UOS Scholarships	Training & Masters	Belgian Flemish university & university college	Belgium	Multiple Fields	October of every year
10.	NZAID Scholarship	Masters & PhD	Multiple Universities	New Zealand	Multiple Fields	March of every year
11.	DAAD Scholarship	Masters & PhD	German Universities	Germany	All Fields	Aug-Oct of every year
12.	Singapore-Industry Scholarship	Undergraduate	Top Universities of Singapore	Singapore	All Fields	March of every year

Catch the Next Program Partners



Catch the Next Colleges



South Texas College
Mid Valley Campus, Weslaco
Pecan Campus, McAllen
Starr Campus, Rio Grande City
Alamo Colleges, San Antonio
Palo Alto College
Northeast Lakeview College
San Antonio College
Austin Community College, Austin
Highland Campus
Riverside Campus
Hays Campus
South Campus
Northridge Campus

About Our Newsletter



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Submissions are welcomed. Please send all information to:
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Submissions: maria.chavez@catchthenext.org
debra.mcbeath@catchthenext.org

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Support CTN by donating to our organization, bringing CTN to your campus or joining us for training. For more information, go to <https://www.catchthenext.org/>

