

Q-VO NEWSLETTER

CHICANAS/CHICANOS AND LATINAS/LATINOS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

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Director's note



As we close another school year we are faced with many challenges. Most straining is the continuous financial struggles affecting higher education that are the result of the state budget woes. Our students will feel the impact with tuition increasing at an alarming rate, even though EWU has the smallest increase of the state universities and colleges, it is still a whopping 11% increase. The budget reductions also mean smaller operating budgets for entities such as the Chicano Education Program. As difficult as these economic times are, we at the Chicano Education and College Assistance Migrant Programs continue on with our mission of providing opportunities for our students.

Overall, we have had a successful year with the Chicano Education Program continuing to increase its curriculum and student enrollment in our courses has increased nearly 15% in the last year. CEP also has had a vibrant programming year with a variety of speakers coming to campus and engaging our community on important topics and issues. Our CEP recruiter, Jennifer Nunez, continues to do an excellent job in the field. Jennifer also organized another great student/parent conference with over 250 students and parents in attendance. Our Chicano students remain engaged at all levels of commitment and activism that range from attending important leadership conferences such as LEAP to EWU MEChA organizing a conference and bringing in best-selling author Victor Villasenor of Rain of Gold fame.

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Our CAMP Program also had a very successful year with all 41 students completing the year. CAMP is specifically designed to meet the needs of students who come from an agriculture background and meet other eligibility requirements. CAMP provides a wide array of support services for our students with the goal of empowering the students with the necessary tools to complete their first year and to successfully continue with their education. Throughout the year students in CAMP are engaged with many facets of university life, but with intense academic rigor in the form of classes, tutoring, cultural events, and leadership conferences that help them become the best students and leaders for our communities.

CEP also awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships to Chicano and Latino students through the generous contributions of our alumni, friends, and allies. CEP continues its outreach to a variety of organizations and groups as partners to provide additional opportunities to our students. One great example is SEAMAR Community Health Clinics of Seattle, Washington. CEP and SEAMAR have partnered to provide internship opportunities for students and the first cohort will intern with SEAMAR this summer. SEAMAR has also awarded 10 of 22 scholarships of \$1000 to EWU Chicano students. We are very excited for our students and none of this could have been possible without SEAMAR's commitment to our Chicano and Latino students and our Chicano Education Program.

Lastly, I hope you enjoy reading the spring/summer quarter's QVO, which explores the issue of identity for our Chicano and Latino community. The issue is rich with information and provocative articles that we hope will raise more questions. The QVO staff: Nancy Munoz, Jereny Mendoza, Katalina Chacon, and Beto Lopez have done exceptional work this year on all three issues of the QVO. Please enjoy!

Dr. Jerry Garcia, Director
CEP and CAMP

National Cesar Chavez Blood Drive Challenge

The National Cesar Chavez Blood Drive Challenge, a service learning initiative, aims at providing a means for students to honor Cesar Chavez's Legacy as a civic leader through a campus-wide blood drive—that promotes health education and civic engagement while saving lives.

Since 2009 all the College Assistance Migrant Programs (CAMP) in the country have participated in this challenge. This year, the blood drive was held on Eastern Washington University's (EWU) campus on March 31 (Cesar Chavez's birthday) and April 7. EWU's CAMP (CAMP) students collaborated with the Inland Northwest Blood Center to plan, coordinate, and implement the drive.

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The student planning committee consisted of: Jesenia Murillo (lead organizer), Veny Garza, Eduardo Renteria, Yuri Reyes, and Amanda Rosales. Each of the 41 CAMP students served on a committee, and each person played a vital role in the success of the drive. Some of their responsibilities included attending many club/organization meetings to promote the drive and sign up donors, disseminating flyers across campus, and working with marketing departments to promote drive in newspapers, EWU's website, and daily campus newsletters.

For the first time, CAMP students coordinated a health fair in conjunction with the blood drive. Yuri Reyes and her committee recruited EWU's Health & Wellness Office, Pre-med/Pre-dent Society, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and Green Dot, a violence prevention program, and many others to participate in the health fair.

In 2009, CAMP placed 10th in the blood drive challenge. In 2010, CAMP placed 3rd. In 2011, CAMP won the national championship title. CAMP students recruited and registered 236 donors and collected 165 pints of blood—this counted for 215% of the overall goal of the blood drive.

For receiving first place, CAMP received the traveling trophy from the defending Champions Texas A&M International University, a plaque, a pizza party, and national recognition. Congratulation to all the CAMP students, departments and organizations, and people for all of their hard work and donations.

Melissa Martinez, Coordinator/Retention Specialist
College Assistance Migrant Program

The influences that affect the lives of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os

Does identity define us or do we define identity? This article is not meant to put a label on Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, but it will serve as a basic understanding of the Latina/o culture that influence and shape the Chicana/o and Latina/o identity. There are many aspects in the Latina/o community that makes us who we are, who we become, and who we want future generations to be like. There is pride in being Latina/o or Chicana/o because it puts us apart from others. We look around and notice the difference between a Mexican-American and an Anglo-American. The color of skin, eyes, height, hair, culture, language, and the list goes on. Why are we so different? Why did we become who we are? In the following passages, we will look at several general aspects that influence the lives of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os.

Family plays an important role in shaping Chicanas/os and Latinas/os growing up. There are always those patriarchal inclinations that quickly influence Chicano men and Chicana women to separate each other to adapt the machismo male duties and

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female household duties. Family is the foundation to identity because we learn from our elders as we grow up and as adults we are a lot like our parents. If our family is very supportive to our education, then it is likely we will be pushed on the road to success. However, if the family is not familiar with the education system, then the children won't feel the need to educate themselves. The cycle continues and Chicana/os are affected by the roles played in their household.

Many Chicanas/os and Latinas/os grow up in barrios that strongly influence future careers. To some Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, growing up in the barrio or colonias is the path to drugs, sex, and violence, the life of a cholo. Even when Chicanas/os and Latinas/os refuse to be pulled into the world of gangs, the barrios still plays an important part in the influence of their identities. Many Chicanas/os and Latinas/os growing up in the barrios choose not to attend school, enter the work field, marry, or have children. They never move away from the streets to explore the possibilities and pursue a higher education. On the other hand, there are those who choose to make something out of their lives. Instead of the barrios becoming a barrier, it gives them the strength to overcome the obstacles and pursue a higher education. The life of the barrio is not what they want to become, and it influences them to strike back in positive ways.

Education is an essential factor that encourages the development of our identity. Many Chicanas/os and Latinas/os striving for a higher education learn that there are many opportunities out there than what they saw around them while growing up. In many situations, we only dream of someday "hitting the jackpot" to live the wealthy life of the American dream. Many times Chicanas/os and Latinas/os fail to understand that education is the key to bettering themselves. When we break the cycle and choose to educate ourselves, we open the doors to other Chicanas/os and Latinas/os.

Katalina Chacon
Co-editor

Jessica Alba: Don't Call Me Latina!

Several Latinas/os have experienced feelings that make them unable to truly connect with their cultural roots or with the American culture. These Latina/os may go through their lives feeling no real sense of belonging to either of the cultures presented in their lives, and may find their own ways of adapting to their surroundings. Many may argue that Chicanas/os and Latinas/os that do not fully relate to their roots are ashamed of their cultural background. Yet, could it also be the case that these Chicanas/os and Latinas/os just never felt fully accepted in their own culture. Jessica Alba is a well-known actress whose tan, vibrant skin and exotic looks have gained her much popularity in Hollywood. Although she is of Mexican descent, she has debated with the media labeling her as a Latina actress.

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Alba explained that although she is proud of her last name, she feels she does not view herself as a Latina. "Alba is my last name, and I'm proud of that. But that's it. I may be proud of my last name, but I'm American. Throughout my whole life, I've never felt connected to one particular race or heritage, nor did I feel accepted by any... Before I always felt like such an outcast and now I feel like people are more diverse ethnically. I was always self-conscious of my puffy lips and darker skin when I was a kid, because I felt like I didn't fit in. And now it's mainstream, and color isn't as big of a deal and if anything it's better."

The young actress felt that being third generation and being brought up in the United States made her feel more American than Latina. She also stated that the only reason she was being labeled Latina was for her darker complexion and exotic features. "I had a very American upbringing, I feel American, and I don't speak Spanish. So, to say that I'm a Latina actress, OK, but it's not fitting; it would be insincere. If you break it down, I'm less Latina than Cameron Diaz, whose father is Cuban. But people don't call her Latina because she's blonde." Here, Alba's comment about the media's tendency to base labels on physical appearances can stir up some contradictions. Cameron Diaz's blonde hair and blue eyes could sway others to overlook the fact that she is Cuban. It may be that in the American Society, Latinas/os or Chicanas/os that have more of an Anglo physical appearance might be more accepted than Latinas/os or Chicanas/os with more ethnic features.

These types of situations where individuals do not identify as Latina/o or Chicana/o are very common. They might feel stuck in between the two diverse communities, feeling they will never be brown enough or white enough to call themselves truly Latina/o, Chicana/o or American. It is crucial that as a Latino Community we accept those who feel lost and unaccepted. For to be Latino/a or Chicana/o should not be based on how brown a person is, or if he/she listens to Mexican music 24/7, or loves beans and rice, or even he/she speaks or doesn't speak fluent Spanish, but what one feels inside—the pride they feel of their ancestral roots.

Latina/o communities should not punish or reject people caught between worlds. Instead, we should guide them and welcome them to embrace their culture. As for those Latinas/os and Chicanas/os who deny their roots and where they come from, they should recognize that we are all immigrants that have helped build this country we call America. Chicana/o or Latina/o celebrities should not feel they should sweep their heritage under the rug to become as famous as the Anglo-Saxon celebrities. Jennifer Lopez and George Lopez have dark, brown skin, dark eyes, and dark hair and are two of the most famous Latina and Chicano celebrities in the United States. They have embraced their heritage and their brown features and become successful.

We do not have to erase our culture and deny where we came from to be respected. We should never be ashamed of our roots and the hardships that our families and people have gone through to give us the life that we have now.

Nancy Munoz

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The Unjust and Stereotypical Portrayal of the U.S. of the Latina/o and Chicana/o Communities

The media in the United States tends to misrepresent Chicana/o and Latina/o communities through distasteful and degrading images. The U.S. media depicts these communities in a racist and inaccurate manner. Mainstream society grasps on to these ideas that the media feeds them. Mainstream society interprets these views as common norms. These types of norms lead to the various stereotypes and lies that are placed on the Chicana/o and Latina/o communities. In this manner, society is flooded with hundreds of negative images through the use of popular culture and outlets like television, film, and print media. The U.S. media has immense power over what is seen and what is viewed as acceptable in society and what communities are viewed as worthy to be depicted as "heroes" or as "villains." Thus, Latina/o communities are often branded as illegal immigrants, criminals, gang members, or low class citizens who come to this country only to steal jobs and reproduce to one day take over the United States.

Latinas/os and Chicanas/os are depicted on television as exotic creatures, drug dealers, teen mothers, illegal immigrants, criminals, lazy, unable to speak English, or speaking coarse English/Spanglish slang. Rarely does the media portray on television or in film a Latino character without a heavy accent or positively contributing to society—no other minority group is represented so recurrently or fanatically in such a negative and careless manner than the Chicana/o and Latina/o communities.

Majority groups view these stereotypes and begin to buy into the ideal that minority groups are all criminals and should not be trusted. Yet, the majority are not the only ones that begin to accept this misrepresentation. Latinas/os and Chicana/os may also validate these stereotypes of their communities and their culture to be the actual truth. The media often reminds Chicanas/os and Latinas/os of their negative portrayal and the repetitiveness of these depictions normalizes the negative images.

A report from the Latinos on Prime Time by National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts stated that while making up over 12.5% of the population of the United States, Latinos were placed in only 4% of the prime time roles in the 2001-2002 prime time season. These characters comprised only 2% of the main frequent roles and four out of five Latino roles were secondary or tertiary.

A similarly vital matter is the development of not hiring Latino professionals as media creators or executives. Without representation in higher positions, there are no professionals to enforce the fair treatment of the actors and the just portrayal of the characters. This is a typical example, both at the executive level and at lower levels,

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of underrepresentation causing misrepresentation. With such a low percentage of Latinas/os, it seems inevitable to fully remove all the negative depictions that the media has over these minority groups. There is a dire need to have Chicana/o and Latina/o representatives in the media to create new positive ideas and try to eliminate the unjust and stereotypical ideas that are spread by media. If we do not create change regarding the U.S. media portrayal of these communities, than it will only prove that United States wishes to keep Chicanas/os and Latinas/os below the majority groups.

Nancy Munoz
Co-editor

Interview: Yoni Rodriguez

First Name: Yoni Last Name: Rodriguez Age: 18

Eastern Washington University: freshman/CEP & CAMP student

Interviewer: Nancy Munoz

Topic: Common labels given to the Chicana/o Latina/o Communities

NM : What first comes to your mind when you hear the word Latino?

YR: When I think of the term Latino, I see an educated Mexican. A Mexican that is accepted in society and educated. I picture them on television as reporters, talk show hosts, or someone in a suit—not an everyday Mexican. I see Latinos as people who are successful people who gone beyond the stereotypical labors. I see the term Hispanic as a certain term to filter out people who are non-white. To me they do not seem like Mexicans. Chicano/a, I do not necessary like the term because it sounds rebellious. I picture low riders, bandanas, and gangs. I also see MEChA, Chicano classes, people trying to go against the wave. I see someone who is hard headed. When I hear the word Mexican, I imagine field workers—people who always have to work hard to survive.

I also think of one who is limited, does what he can but doesn't strive to do more. Accommodates with what society labels him. A person who has not been exposed to anything else.

NM: How would you label yourself? Why?

YR: I label myself as Oaxacan. I feel I can relate to all these terms in a way. At certain times I feel Latino because of my success, Chicano because I am American and Mexican, Mexican for my hard work and family descent. Oaxaca is where I come from and it's who defines me as a person. If I wasn't in school, I would just be seen as another Mexican or Chicano. Since I am in school, I feel like I could be seen as a successful Latino.