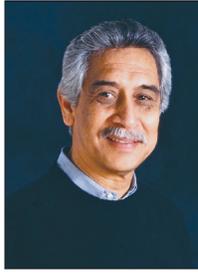




VOLUME 8
ISSUE 1
FALL
2010

CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Noticias



Dr. Tatcho Mindiola

FROM THE DIRECTOR

In this issue of Noticias we present essays by six CMAS students who are members of the Academic Achievers Program (AAP) and who were selected to participate in the inaugural Latino Leadership Initiative (LLI) sponsored by the Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School of Public Service at Harvard University. LLI was the brainchild of David Gergen, Director of the Center for Public Leadership and Walter Ulloa, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Entravision Communications Corporation. The impetus for LLI is the growing Latino population and the development of leaders whose services the country needs.

CMAS was invited to nominate ten students and a committee at the Center for Public Leadership made the selections. When asked how they heard about CMAS, they said several people had mentioned our successful work with students. We take pride in this recognition. Other nominating institutions were the University of

Massachusetts, Texas A&M International, the University of California at Merced, and Loyola Marymount.

A total of twenty-eight students took part in an intensive week of workshops, study, and discussions centered on leadership. The workshops, as the student's essays attest, were conducted by dynamic speakers and experienced leaders. Mrs. Rebeca Trevino, the AAP-UH Program Manager, and I travelled to Harvard for the last two days of the conference. We attended workshops and the dinner which marked the end of the conference. We listened to the students express gratitude for the experience. The entire expense of LLI was borne by the Center for Public Leadership whose committed staff raised the funds from the nationwide community. Special recognition is given to Dario Collado, the dynamic LLI Program Manager.

The students now must use their leadership skills and the knowledge they learned to conceive, develop, implement, and evaluate a project. Then they will submit a report to LLI. Our students are

Continued on page 11

Steve Harter: Supporting CMAS, Advocating Education

Steve Harter arrived in Houston in 1984. His All American honors in Football and Wrestling, and his B.B.A. in Accounting coupled with being distinguished as an Academic All American left him uniquely positioned to join Houston's entrepreneurial fray after his initial position in the audit division with the accounting firm of Arthur Andersen and Co.

In many ways, Harter exemplifies the epitome of the American Dream. He rose from poverty in Ohio, and through hard work and smarts has become a recognized innovator in the venture capital arena. He presently serves as the president of Notre Capital Ventures, L.L.C., a venture capital company in Houston, specializing in identifying opportunities and needs within various industries, and providing the resources, management and knowledge to capitalize on those concepts. With the formation of Notre Capital Ventures in the nineties, approximately \$550 million was raised. Harter has served as the founding director and president of each of the



Steve Harter

companies during its formation.

One of Harter's unique characteristics is his belief in the power of education. Harter has already demonstrated the effectiveness of a program at John L. McReynolds Middle School where he established and funded a mentoring program to bring middle-class educational/extra-curricular amenities to a non-middle-class school. Harter's Yellow Cab/Taxis Fiestas' employees have mentored approximately 100 students at McReynolds each academic year for the last six years. Coupled with additional activities, such as a soccer program,

after-school programs, and computer labs funded by Harter, these efforts have been praised in helping bring the lowest ranked HISD middle school to one of only twelve recognized HISD schools. The school was awarded one of the state's highest academic ratings as a TEA recognized campus.

As a young student who was not tracked for

Continued on page 11

CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES EXCELLENCE ENDOWMENT/ ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Rosanna Gomez Moreno, J.D.

Executive Director

International Business Development

Memorial Hermann, Texas Medical Center

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

E. Fred Aguilar, M.D.

Owner/Surgeon, Ermosa Centre for Aesthetic Surgery

Carol Alvarado

State Representative, District 145

Minerva Campos, M.D.

Family Practice Physician

Musa Dakri

President & CEO, Wallis State Bank

Enrique “Rick” Dovalina

Dovalina & Eureste, L.L.P.

Lupe Fraga

President & CEO, Tejas Office Products, Inc.

Jorgina A. de Franzheim

Community Activist

Sylvia Garcia

Commissioner, Harris County Precinct Two

Antonio R. Grijalva

President, Grijalva & Allen, P.C.

E. Javier Loya

President, CHOICE! Energy

Graciela Martinez

Community Activist

Trinidad Mendenhall Sosa

Founder, The Trini and O.C. Mendenhall Foundation

Alex López Negrete

President & CEO, Lopez Negrete Communications, Inc.

Rick Noriega

President & CEO, AVANCE, Inc.

Bob Perry

President & CEO, Perry Homes

Robert Rodriguez

President & CEO, Southwestern Capital Markets, Inc.

Rogelio A. Rodriguez

Senior Vice President and Department Head,

Capital Markets–Public Finance, Frost Bank

Gracie Saenz, J.D.

Attorney, Saenz & Associates

Carlos Sharpless

Managing Director, Sterne Agee

Massey Villarreal

President & CEO, Precision Task Group

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rafael Longoria: Re-imagining Urban Neighborhoods	3
Public Speaking by Alice Valdez	4
The Art of Negotiation by Ricardo Saldaña	5
Creating a Public Narrative: Self, Us, Now by Cynthia Medina	6
The Personal Leadership Development Plan by Priscilla Benitez ..	7
The Importance of Teamwork by Eva Briones	8
An Overview of the 2010 Latino Leadership Initiative by Pedro Cervantes	9
Latino Leadership Initiative Program at Harvard Kennedy School ..	10



CMAS Staff

Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D.

*Director & Associate
Professor of Sociology
tmindiola@uh.edu*

Myra Torrez

*Secretary II
mtorrez@uh.edu*

Lorenzo Cano, M.A.

*Associate Director
cano@uh.edu*

Laura Adame

*Events Assistant
ladame@uh.edu*

Mary Helen Meza

*Department Business Administrator
mmeza@uh.edu*

Angela Leal

*Academic Achievers-UH
Program Coordinator
aleal3@uh.edu*

Rebeca Treviño

*Academic Achievers-UH
Program Manager
rtrevino@uh.edu*

Alejandra Castellano

*Financial Coordinator I
acastel3@central.uh.edu*

Fely Aguilar

*Special Programs Counselor
Academic Achievers-High Schools
Faguilar@uh.edu*

Sarah Cortez

Editor

MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Houston was established in 1972 as an interdisciplinary academic program encompassing the liberal arts, education, and social sciences focusing on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the U.S. Its mission is to advance knowledge, promote critical thinking, and foster the value of service to the community. This involves designing a broad spectrum of public and scholarly programs. Located within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CMAS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: teaching, research and publications, recruitment and retention, leadership training, academic advising, and community service.

Rafael Longoria: Re-imagining Urban Neighborhoods

When Rafael Longoria arrived in Houston to begin college at Rice University, no one could have predicted that he would eventually settle here, leaving his hometown of Laredo, leaving behind Austin where he completed graduate studies in Real Estate and Urban Land Development at The University of Texas, leaving behind San Antonio where he worked for the legendary architect O'Neil Ford, who created a "Texas Modernism."

Now, Longoria is the ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture at UH and a principal of Longoria/Peters, a Houston-based architecture and urban design firm. The list of his awards and commendations from organizations such as the Black United Fund of Texas, the American Institute of Architects-Houston, the ACSA, and the City Council of Houston stretches through all the years of his career. He served from 2004-2005 as the president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA).

Longoria came to UH to teach in the College of Architecture. He brought his interest in real estate development and the issues associated with overlapping a more pedestrian experience on a sprawling city like Houston. His particular interests are the urban neighborhood, designing in response to climate, public spaces and cultural hybridity. Consideration of the issues involved ensures that Longoria's passion for urban design resonates to decisions, such as how can the shape of cities be changed for the better, and what decisions will give people more options for housing, life choices, and transportation.

Longoria is a founding editor of *AULA: Architecture and Urbanism in Las Américas*, and has served on the editorial boards of *The Journal of Architectural Education*, *Cite, Center*, and the Rice University Press. "The Green Braid: Towards an Architecture of Ecology, Economy, and Equity" is an award-winning book he co-edited with Kim Tanzer, architecture dean at the University of Virginia. These publications all speak to Longoria's ongoing dialogue and leadership within the field. In addition, his interest in improving Houston's quality of life has led him to serve on the boards of a host of non-profit organizations, such as the Rice Design Alliance, the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County, the Park People, the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, and the Memorial Park Conservancy.

The role of teacher is one that Longoria relishes. He notes that the UH College of Architecture has the highest percentage of Hispanic students of any UH college. His unique position as



Photo by Fernando Brave

Rafael Longoria, MBA

the only current Mexican-American faculty member has been part of his inspiration to create organizations such as AULA, now a thriving entity with its own conferences and publications. Longoria continues to be inspired by the proximity of Latin America and the diverse experiences of his students, and he is currently planning a summer program for students in Latin American architecture.

Longoria first encountered CMAS and Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. when he arrived at UH. In addition to grants awarded by the Center to study Mexican architecture.

Another level of deep personal satisfaction is Longoria's close working relationships with so many of his students. He explains that the studio-based methodology of teaching ensures that each professor spends a minimum of ten hours/week with his/her twelve students during the academic year. As the students progress, the relationship may evolve into a mentorship lasting decades. Longoria also enjoys studying Houston as a unique urban environment. He says, "One characteristic of our architecture program is that it is very focused on Houston. It's extremely rewarding to try to understand Houston as an urban environment."

Longoria is upbeat about Houston's future as an environment for living. He says he is "hopeful" about the rail system and its ability to give the opportunity for more choices of how to live in the city, such as new types of housing. Not surprisingly, his favorite parts of Houston are in the area originally purchased by the De Menils around Rothko Chapel and the central courtyard of St. Thomas University.

One of Longoria's projects is Wonderworks, a non-profit organization that provides high school students in the Houston area with pre-college learning experiences in fine arts, literature, and media. Founded in 2004 by concerned educators, parents and artists, the organization offers an amazing selection of courses to many students of special ability or interest who might otherwise be unable to explore selected topics in the art, literature, or media.

Longoria says that he loves what he does day-to-day. His passion for teaching dovetails with his desire to consider deeply those issues within our urban environment that affect society. He is engaged in dialogue with other scholars and students across the U.S. and throughout the Americas about issues that will affect all of us: sustainability, quality of life, housing, and land usage. We all should be glad that Longoria is looking out for us! 



Public Speaking by Alice Valdez

Throughout my life I have seen many people stand in front of an audience and give a speech. I have seen extraordinary speakers and speakers who put a whole room to sleep. If there is one thing that I have learned it's that it is not just about what you say, but how you say it.

At the Latino Leadership Initiative, we were surrounded by public leaders who gave incredible speeches that intrigued and inspired us to take action in the issues occurring in our community and the nation at large. Some of the speakers that stood out for me were Mr. Dario Collado, Program Manager for the Latino Leadership Initiative, Dr. David Gergen, Professor of Public Service and Director of the Center for Leadership, and Dr. Marshall Ganz, a lecturer in Public Policy who had also worked with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union.

I had taken a speech class in high school but it didn't prepare me for my academic career. I can honestly say that I learned more in the Public Speaking class in the Latino Leadership Initiative than I did in an entire semester of speech class in high school. Effective public speaking is a powerful tool that can influence so many people and we can see it used by a variety of people in our environment including our politicians, teachers, parents and salesmen. We all have a message in us but it is important that we are able to deliver that message effectively. Emerging leaders need to be able to express themselves and their causes to be able to have a chance to change our society.

Ms. Allison Shapira taught the Public Speaking class at the Latino Leadership Initiative. Ms. Shapira is an expert in this field. She has taught at public speaking clinics at Harvard, and she is also the founder and president of Allison M. Shapira Consulting, a boutique public speaking company based in Boston, Massachusetts.

The class session began by Ms. Shapira asking each of us to come to the front of the classroom and give a one-minute speech introducing ourselves. It was a really great way to get all of us comfortable speaking in front of each other and getting to know a little bit more about everyone in the room.

When it comes to the success of a speech, content and delivery go hand-in-hand. In the Public Speaking class, we focused on the delivery aspect. Ms. Shapira shared with us that the preparation done before giving the speech was particularly important because it helps avoid anxiety and insecurity during



Alice Valdez, UH AAP

a speech. Some of the things she discussed include analyzing the room/arena you will be presenting in, practicing your speech in the mirror, and creating small note cards of your speech, if needed. Stage fright and anxiety was often brought up throughout the lecture because many times people let their anxiety get the best of them and are not able to deliver effective speeches. Ms. Shapira told us that one of the easiest ways to work through the anxiety was to remember to breathe. It sounds like an easy task, but a person can get so nervous that he/she forgets to breathe and one's self. Creating pauses in our speech beforehand is part of the

preparation that needs to be done and practiced over and over again. Midway through her lecture, Ms. Shapira had us all stand up and practice breathing techniques together that could help us with the anxiety before giving a speech. I was surprised by how quickly I felt my mind and body relax by using her techniques, and they are definitely a strategy that I will continue to use.

We also took the time in class to examine common mistakes made during a speech. Many of us had heard that while giving a speech we should focus our attention on one spot in the room or picture everyone in the room in their undergarments. Ms. Shapira told us that neither one of these approaches has proven to be successful for public speaking. Instead she told us to look at the audience, scan the room. If we didn't want to look in the audience's eyes then we can look at their foreheads because it has the same effect: making my cause into our cause. By making eye contact with the audience, you are acknowledging them and making them part of your speech. Stance, facial expressions, hand movements, and voice projection are all topics Shapira touched upon. They are all small details that we take for granted but they can make a huge difference when giving a speech.

Public speaking is like playing sports, the only way you can improve your skills is with lots of practice. After the information provided for me at the Latino Leadership Initiative, I feel prepared to do effective presentations for my classes, for the organizations that I am a part of, and for advocating for issues within the Latino community. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to take part in this initiative and there is no way to measure the great impact it has had in my life. What I have learned in just one week is something that I will be using throughout my professional career. ❏



The Art of Negotiation

by Ricardo Saldaña

Classes in negotiation were a major part of the Latino Leadership Initiative. The classes were taught by Dr. Andy Zelleke, a vibrant lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Even though we had a hectic schedule, Dr. Zelleke's classes were pleasantly interactive. By the end of the program, I had a different perspective of what constitutes successful negotiation, as well as how challenging the negotiation process can be.

The night before our first negotiation class we had to learn two new terms: BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement), and ZOPA (Zone of Possible Agreement). The focus of our first lecture was on BATNA, the alternative of not negotiating. A good example of a BATNA is a current job. Let's say your current job pays you ten dollars per hour. You are approached by a representative from another company offering you a different amount of money. In this scenario, your best alternative to accepting the new amount would be your current job. The zone of possible agreement (ZOPA), is the range within both parties are willing to negotiate. If the representative offered you \$9, which is less than your current wage, but no more than \$12, then the zone of possible agreement is \$10-\$12.

In our first mock case we learned that negotiations are not as easy as the above example implies. The class was divided into ten groups of three people each. Each group had to negotiate the same issue. My group included Ismael from Merced, California and Maria from Boston, Massachusetts. Each of us represented a company within the same industry and we were competitors. The government was awarding a grant. At least two of the companies had to receive the grant. To keep things simple, the grant could only be negotiated in monetary terms, and we weren't able to add other incentives to the negotiation. Immediately after the negotiation started, Ismael and Maria began to put offers on the table with set amounts and estimated percentages. I soon joined them in the rampage of numbers, startling Ismael and Maria with the quickness in calculations that I have acquired through multiple engineering courses. Soon our negotiations became cumbersome, so Maria convinced Ismael to only negotiate with her, leaving me out of the picture. Knowing that my BATNA was walking away without anything, I decided to fight for a piece of the grant once again. At the end, I convinced my group to do what was



Ricardo Saldaña, UH AAP

best for the industry, which was to include all three parties. But we still had to find the ZOPA, a monetary range in which we all were willing to accept negotiations for splitting the grant. Ismael, who was representing the smaller of the three companies, and I were hoping to split it fairly. However, Maria's tenacious personality and the fact that she had the biggest company, led us to split the grant somewhat unevenly giving her the largest amount and Ismael the smallest.

Back in class, Dr. Andy Zelleke put the results from all the negotiations on an Excel spreadsheet and displayed it on a screen. It was obvious that the groups were well aware that the alternative to not negotiating was not a good choice, yet each group's numbers were not the same. Mr. Farouk Shami, an experienced business man, mentioned he made an offer to the smaller of the two competitors that included most of the grant money because he wanted to leave his main competitor out of the picture. Others attempted to split it three ways equally. We learned when it is wise to leave the negotiation table and when to accept a proposal. I also learned that effective negotiation requires you to know your goal and your options, and that there is not a specific way to end up with the best side of a negotiation. I now consider negotiation an art form that requires more than just knowledge and skills. It also requires a swagger, or persona, and the ability to not lose your focus.

When I returned to Houston, I began to wonder if I would ever use my newly developed negotiation skills. But within a week I was presented with an opportunity. Ben Medallo, president of the student organization MAES (Mexican American Engineers and Scientist) asked me, as vice president, to help him negotiate a potential donation from a local insurance company. When we met with the owners, Ben immediately began to explain the pros of donating to MAES. The owners seemed interested but not convinced. I was not aware of their ZOPA, but I could tell they were willing to negotiate, perhaps because they were not happy with their BATNA. I could only wonder. When it was my turn to speak, I took a different approach and negotiated from the heart. I told them that their donation, no matter how big or small, would be helping not only a student achieve a college degree, but show a positive reflection in the Latino community. A week later we received a check. ☒



Creating a Public Narrative: Self, Us, Now

by Cynthia Medina

“My initial thoughts about going to Harvard for a leadership program were that we would be taught how to become better leaders; how to speak in public, how to become well organized, how to create goals, etc.” I was not completely wrong, but I was not completely right either. Our workshops ranged from public speaking to negotiations. One of my favorite workshops was the “Public Narrative of Self, Us, Now” taught by Dr. Marshall Ganz, a current lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard University.

According to Dr. Ganz, leadership is “accepting responsibility to enable others to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty.” I cannot agree more. Being a leader requires being able to move others to become leaders as well, but how exactly do we do that? A true leader does not just tell others what to do. Instead, a leader must “move,” i.e. touch, motivate, and/or encourage others to achieve a common purpose. A leader does this through storytelling because it is through this device that a leader is capable of reaching out to others, sharing personal stories, choices, challenges, and goals. According to Dr. Ganz, “Stories not only teach us how to act, but they inspire us to act.”

Public Narrative can be considered a work of art, just like literature or music; it produces a way to affect our senses or emotions. It allows people to make a connection with you, the protagonist of the story, thereby allowing the audience to follow and feel the story through the protagonist’s eyes. Stories can teach us many things, from how to conduct ourselves, how to face challenges, and how to make choices; it is then that we are the protagonists of our own story. We live it day by day, by making choices and producing certain outcomes. According to Dr. Ganz, “By telling the personal stories of challenges we have faced, choices we have made, and what we learned from the outcomes, we can inspire others to share our own wisdom.” By personalizing the story, we make hypothetical solutions seem real to others, and we give a sense of values, not just a mere list of solutions, and we, as protagonists, give the audience the power to move others.

Public Narrative, or storytelling, is composed of three elements: the story of self, the story of us, and the story of now. The Story of Self explains why we have a calling, what is it that we want to do, and why do we want change? For instance, I have



Cynthia Medina, UH AAP

a calling to empower the Latino community to become better educated, and to give them awareness of the endless possibilities they have, and help prevent them from falling into dead-end stereotypes. This calling is illustrated by the fact that I am a first-generation college student, and I was able to take part in a prestigious program like the Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative. I did not let anyone’s comments or beliefs immobilize me and I will work for the betterment of my family, myself, and my community. In my case, sharing my personal story allows the audience to know the speaker, who I am, where I come from, and my personal challenges.

Through the Story of Self, we then build up to a point where the speaker and the audience connect through shared values, culture, and organizations. Then, this feeling of shared identity creates the Story of Us. The Story of Us has the purpose to bring everyone together as a community to join the given speaker in his/her causes, and it motivates people to take action. Programs like the Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative create a self-awareness of where we stand in this world and the power that we hold in our hands as an ever-increasing Latino population. We can start by educating ourselves, our family, and our friends. We need to let our voices be heard and let the voices of others be heard as well. That action is the challenge which is then the Story of Now.

The Story of Now allows us, after our audience has related to the cause, to challenge them to take action. This is where we ask for everyone to stand up and join us. As I look at myself now, I think about the day in that empty room thinking that I might not be eligible to participate in a program at such a prestigious university. Now, I just laugh; fortunately, I did not let these feelings affect my aspirations. I look back with pride at being able to respond to such a great opportunity, an opportunity that I believe I attained through hard work. We all took the opportunity to open up our minds, learn about other great leaders and came back with the purpose to create more leaders. Great leaders move people to join and lead as well. Now that we have come back from Harvard thinking like leaders, we have come back with a common goal: to give back and empower our Latino community. Houston, will you receive us with open arms? ❏



The Personal Leadership Development Plan

by Priscilla Benitez

The Harvard experience was a moment in my life that will always be treasured. Even though time has passed since the excitement of being present at Harvard, the real work is underway in Texas, Boston, and California. The six teams that were chosen from each university have a mission which is to change the world through a project. The project is a vision each team would like to see accomplished in their home city. We are composing the vision from scratch and making it become a reality. Being a part of the Inaugural class of the Latino Leadership Initiative was of great use in creating our vision. Of the many workshops and guest speakers, the one that was the most useful was the Personal Leadership Development Plan workshop by Dr. Loren Gary, the Associate Director of Leadership Development, Fellowships, and Public Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Dr. Gary gave us a worksheet to use as a guide when creating a plan. I will briefly discuss what the workshop entailed and the advice given to us pertaining to the creation of our own development plans.

During our sessions Dr. Gary explained the six steps to be followed when creating a development plan.

The first step was why. He wanted us to start thinking about what type of vision we would like to accomplish. This is important in order to achieve one's goals. However, when creating this component, one must also consider what achieving one's goals would mean to the rest of society.

The second step is to create a what. This step uses the SMART framework (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely). The goals should be "SMART" and created in accordance to the framework mentioned. Three goals must be crafted for how one would want to develop as a leader. One must address public narrative skills, the second should address power and influence skills, and the third should address skills related to leading teams or to group dynamics.

The third step is how. Each goal that was created in the previous step should be broken down into objectives that will be pursued over six to nine months. Once again the SMART



Priscilla Benitez, UH AAP

framework is used. This is important so that the goal will be simpler to accomplish.

The fourth step is anticipating pitfalls. It is important to identify and plan for overcoming the stumbling blocks that might be encountered. Not all plans go according to the initial plan, so planning for the unexpected is part of your vision.

The fifth step is resources. With the help of LLI colleagues, advisors, and friends, we may be referred to books, videos, or other programs that can be brought to bear on accomplishing the goals. We must remember to always use our strengths.

The last step is going public. We should be able to identify specific individuals or events to whom or at which we will be publicly acknowledged in our leadership development goals. The audience that our vision will be aimed at should be known beforehand. The reason is that we want to be able to grasp the attention of our audience and keep it so that our message will be understood. Thus, creating a successful message.

The Houston team is going to use these steps to create our own Leadership Development Plan. Our vision for the Houston community is still in the planning stages but we do have an idea of what we would like to see accomplished. We plan to create our very own Youth Leadership Program for local middle school students, particularly those in the eighth grade. Our main goal is to get them thinking about higher education. This is a great need because Latino educational levels are low and high school dropout rates are high. The value of a college education for Latinos should be and always be an ongoing public message since we are one of the least educated groups in the United States. In hopes of achieving our goal of keeping more Latinos in school, I am sure this Youth Leadership Program will attain its mission.

The Houston team is ready and willing to put the leadership, public speaking, and communication skills gained at Harvard into good use. It will be a learning experience and a huge success not just for ourselves but the for the Houston community. 



The Importance of Teamwork

by Eva Briones

The Latino Leadership Initiative (LLI) was composed of many topics, including teamwork. We learned that leadership is not just a word that means one leader, but it also contains the meaning of working with other people.

Among the many professionals present at LLI, Assistant Professor of Public Policy, Dr. Celia Maria Gonzalez spoke on the topic of teamwork. At the Kennedy School, Dr. Gonzalez is involved in research that addresses the elemental management question: What can groups, organizations, and institutions do to engage their members? She also teaches students to successfully use human capital in courses on strategic management, cross-cultural and international management, and managing people and teams.

Dr. Gonzalez defined teamwork as developing a matter where everyone is working together. However, she also taught that teamwork does not end there. Being a part of a team entails that everyone must be able to do their part. She asked us to list skills that promote teamwork. These were some of our responses: listening, justification, personal responsibility, compliments, and asking others when in doubt. We discussed that these skills were needed when working on a team. We thought these skills would enable the team to advance and get tasks done effectively. We then discussed some inhibiting factors when working in a team. These are when someone controls the discussion, uses negative reinforcements, is stubborn, has lack of clarity, or negative body language.

To me, teamwork is the ability to compromise for the betterment of the team and accomplish stated goals. When I work on a team, I have expectations that must be met. For instance, punctuality is important to me. I feel that it is crucial when having a meeting to complete items on the agenda in a timely manner. This does not waste time and allows for work to be accomplished. Another important factor is respecting each other's point of view and opinions. It is important to understand someone else's perspective and not just your own. "Agree to disagree" is a phrase that is often used and works well when an issue arises. People have a variety of personalities and one will



Eva Briones, UH AAP

not always be able to get along with everyone. Therefore, keeping a professional and business atmosphere is required when working in teams in order to get tasks done.

Upon completing the six-day Latino Leadership Initiative, our teamwork did not end. All six teams who participated are now back at home and working in their teams on a project. The Houston team knows that as a group we will be responsible for creating a project that will positively impact our community. Our project will not only involve ourselves but other leaders that exist within our community.

Our plan is to target 100 eighth graders in the Houston area and invite them to a Youth Leadership Program, where a variety of workshops will be presented. We have already divided the responsibilities into five committees. Cynthia Medina and Ricardo Saldana are part of the Recruitment committee, which will involve contacting four middle schools and reaching out to twenty-five students from each school. Alice Valdez and Pedro Cervantes will be working together on a Public Relations committee. They will produce flyers and create a presentation that will be presented to middle school administrators in efforts to obtain their approval of our project. Priscilla Benitez is the Programs chair, who is responsible in contacting potential guest speakers and setting up workshops to be presented to the students. I, Eva Briones, will be the Organization Event Coordinator. I will be in charge of reserving the room, ordering the food, and securing available parking for the day of the event.

Dr. Gonzalez mentioned that in order for a team to succeed each member had to contribute equally to the project. Then, chances are it would be a success. As one can already see, the Houston team has already split up the work that needs to be done in order to complete our objective. Our team has set a strong foundation that will keep us balanced and will allow us to reach our final goal. The LLI has brought us together to work with a common goal to better the community one person at a time by teaching the fundamentals of leadership skills, which we will pass on to younger generations. ❖



An Overview of the 2010 Latino Leadership Initiative by Pedro Cervantes

The 2010 Latino Leadership Initiative, hosted at Harvard University was designed with two goals: developing the skills of future leaders, and promoting community involvement. Within each of these goals are particular skills, which had to be learned or enhanced.

We were taught that by far the most important skill of a leader is communication. Although we all experience communication on a daily basis, basic public speaking skills are essential in order to inform, persuade, or move a leader's audience. A leader that is audience-centered is able to build a sturdy foundation that will lead to his/her success as an inspirational leader. A leader must also be able to make ethical decisions, take appropriate actions, and influence the members of his or her organization. Community involvement is also an integral part of being a successful leader.

Huey Long once stated to the nation, "We must share the wealth." Wealth in this particular case may be metaphorical for a materialistic item or figurative and represent more than power and money. In essence, by sharing the knowledge we gained at the Latino Leadership Initiative and by further educating others we are initiating change within the University of Houston and within the Houston area. Even the slightest of change will improve the skills and views of some within society, but change is only possible through commitment and action.

With that in mind, the students who represented UH at the Latino Leadership Initiative have discussed possible projects for the upcoming year. Each of the participating schools at Harvard is required to design its own project. Initially, we considered becoming mentors to local high school students. As mentors, we would discuss issues related to high school students such as college admission applications and how to maintain a high grade point average. This project was dismissed because it was more individual-based rather than group-oriented. We felt that as a group we would be able to give collective opinions and information rather than limited details based on one individual. Also, we discussed the issue of time availability. Because we did not want the students to suffer or miss important information because of possible commitments such as school, jobs, or internships, we decided that a group effort was more appropriate.

We decided to host our very own Initiative Program, based on the Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative, as a means of focusing on leadership and public speaking skills with middle



Pedro Cervantes, UH AAP

school students. We will also discuss how to be an effective communicator, how to overcome nerves, and how to use leadership in a beneficial way instead of in a tyrannical manner. Aside from the focus of leadership and public skills we hope to incorporate topics that are related to the transition from middle school to high school. We would forewarn the students about the importance of SAT and ACT preparation, enrollment into college preparatory courses, how to earn and maintain a high GPA as a means of continuing their education after high school graduation, and discuss the numerous options in college or universities.

Our focus during the program is public narrative, leading teams, and power and influence. Within public narrative, the basic purpose is to share the story of self, us, and now. Within each subtopic there are particular topics that are discussed. The Story of Self describes a particular experience that the individual has encountered within their life. The Story of Us shows a commonality between the audience and the speaker. Finally, the Story of Now is meant to motivate and inspire the audience into action.

For leading teams, the sole purpose is to lead by example. The goal is to provide individuals with the appropriate ways of leading teams which include being a good communicator, having some sort of authority, being stern but still remaining flexible, and giving consideration to the opinions of others. Lastly, with power and influence, the goal is to show people how to use their power but not abuse it.

The Latino Leadership Initiative, hosted at Harvard University, provided us with the foundation to becoming great leaders. The foundation was built around presenters such as: Dario Collado, Latino Leadership Initiative Program Manager, Andy Zelleke, Harvard Professor who discussed negotiations, Marshall Ganz, Harvard Professor who illustrated public narrative, and Mr. Farouk Shami, founding owner of Farouk Systems Group, who presented the topic of entrepreneurship. Within each lecture, we acquired skills we lacked, polished those we had developed through time, and perfected what we considered our strengths. With the foundation set, there is only one thing left to do, build within, around, and on the foundation. We vow to make a difference within UH and in the Houston area. We will do this in order to implement change, create ambition, and develop others' aspirations. ❏



Latino Leadership Initiative Program at Harvard Kennedy School



left to right: UH AAP students Alice Valdez, Pedro Cervantes, Eva Briones, Ricardo Saldaña, Farouk Shami, Executive Chairman and Founder of Farouk Systems Group, Cynthia Medina and Priscilla Benitez.



Keith Martinez (center), a Harvard student alongside UH AAP students (left to right) Eva Briones, Priscilla Benitez, Cynthia Medina and Alice Valdez.



Alonzo Cantu, President of Cantu Construction with UH AAP students (left to right) Pedro Cervantes, Alice Valdez, Eva Briones, Priscilla Benitez, Ricardo Saldaña and Cynthia Medina



UH AAP students (left to right) Carlos Cervantes, Eva Briones, Priscilla Benitez, Cynthia Medina, Ricardo Saldaña and Alice Valdez with Andy Zelleke (center) who lectured on Public Policy at the Leadership Initiative Program at Harvard.

Steve Harter *continued from page 1*

college until his athletic prowess became evident, Harter understands the difference a college education and degree make. In fact, it is Harter's youthful experiences as a laborer from sunrise to dark that have given rise to his empathy for first-generation college students, like many of those in the Academic Achievers Program.

Harter has given generously to many worthy causes in addition to CMAS. These organizations encompass civic, charitable and scholarship programs, such as, Child Advocates, the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, the Bell-Herron Scholarship, the Donald Montgomery Prize, the Neuhaus Young Readers Program, and the Junior Achievement Foundation, as well as many others.

Harter's first contact with CMAS was through an invitation by a student to the annual Noche Cultural Banquet. When he heard the stories of struggle to obtain an education by so many first-generation students and their successes, he became "enamored" with the program. He says, "I worked as a farmer and construction worker from age 10 to 21. I can identify with migrant farm labor; I appreciate the issues and struggles of poverty." Harter responded with a firm resolution to help. He says, "I said to myself, 'I'm going to get involved.'"

As Harter became further exposed to the many successful components of the CMAS programs, his admiration grew. Since that time, Harter has generously given the CMAS programs many gifts. Notably, 2 years ago he endowed a chair in honor of Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D. His goal in endowing the chair was to honor Mindiola, "a man who has dedicated his life to helping kids get an education, kids who didn't know they could get an education. It is so important these kids get the direction in life that many of us take for granted." This year Harter has agreed to underwrite this year's annual Noche Cultural Banquet, so that all monies donated will go directly to fund scholarships for the AAP students. He also serves on the CMAS Scholarship Committee and the CMAS Banquet Committee.

Another example of Harter's generosity is the non-profit organization he set up after acquiring Texas Taxi, Inc. in 2004. The organization, named Yellow Cab/Taxis Fiesta Cares, provides annual scholarships for children of employees and drivers, also underwriting local youth athletic events and starting an inner city soccer program that has expanded to 20 middle schools.

The backdrop for Harter's ideal of helping young people of all backgrounds attain an education is his Mid-Western upbringing that emphasized work and working together rather than racial or ethnic divisiveness. Says Harter, "I don't see color. I see all of us together, as people. I grew up with poor Anglos, Italians, Irish, Germans, and Poles. One of my earliest best friends was African-American. We're all in this together."

CMAS deeply appreciates Steve Harter's strong commitment and unwavering passion to bettering society through education. Tatcho Mindiola salutes him by saying, "Steve Harter is an amazing man and a good friend. Even with his high-profile accomplishments as a self-made man in a tough industry, he has consistently championed education and consistently remained down-to-earth and realistic. The Center is very fortunate to have his support." 

From the Director *continued from page 1*

sponsoring a conference for middle school students that focuses upon the importance of an education. They will also conduct the workshops. Our students assume this obligation in addition to being full-time students and working part-time. It is here where the leadership characteristics of time management, commitment, and responsibility come into practice.

Leadership is the ability to motivate people to accomplish a common goal, but not everyone can do this. Why? Theorists offer different explanations. One explanation is that leaders are born and not made. Thus, the characteristics of leadership are innate, and it is possible that a person may occupy a position of leadership but be an ineffective leader because he/she does not possess the innate characteristics of leadership such as intelligence, dominance, integrity, and self-confidence. Another theory is that leadership is situational and that different circumstances require different types of leaders. A crisis situation may require an authoritarian leader who alone makes decisions. A day-to-day situation may require a democratic leader that builds consensus among the followers who in turn feel that their opinions and desires are taken into consideration. There is also the *laissez-faire* type of leadership that leaves the followers alone and allows them to develop their own ideas and methods of accomplishing a task. The democratic and *laissez-faire* type of leaders run the risk of failure because a situation may require a quick and firm decision. There are also leaders who combine the characteristics of the three types of leadership and who act accordingly to the situation. These descriptions of leadership styles are by no means exhaustive but what they have in common is an emphasis upon the individual leader to the detriment of group or "team leadership," and it is this term that best describes our students who participated in LLI.

Team Leadership involves, among other things, unity, a common investment in purpose, the recognition of individual strengths and a division of labor based upon these strengths, and the seeking of external advice and assistance when needed. Our students are united, a bond that was fostered by their participation together in LLI. Their purpose and investment is in the education of our community. This is evidenced not only by their pursuit of a college education but also by their decision to sponsor a conference which stresses the value of an education for middle school students. The task of organizing such a conference involves a division of labor based upon the strengths they perceive each other to have. Priscilla Benitez is responsible for the Program, Alice Valdez and Pedro Cervantes are in charge of Public Relations, Cynthia Medina and Ricardo Saldana are concerned with the recruitment of the middle school students, and Eva Briones is responsible for the location of the event and for arranging transportation. They have already sought advice from CMAS. They are, in theory and reality, a Leadership Team. CMAS is very proud of the students who participated in LLI. They represented the University of Houston, CMAS, and themselves in an exemplary manner and are leaving a legacy for other students to emulate. 

Tatcho Mindiola, Ph.D.
Director

0073011059

University of Houston

Center for Mexican American Studies

323 Agnes Arnold Hall

Houston, TX 77204-3001

Visit us at www.class.uh.edu/cmas

Transforming Lives through Education... One Person At A Time

