

**From Hispanic-Enrolling to Hispanic-*Serving*: How La Plaza Can Make Dominican University an HSI in the Footsteps of Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP**



A Report by the Latinx Visioning Working Group  
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## From Hispanic-Enrolling to Hispanic-*Serving*: How La Plaza Can Make Dominican University an HSI in the Footsteps of Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP

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### **University Identity Statement**

Dominican University is a diverse, relationship-centered community rooted in a vibrant liberal arts and sciences education, offering rigorous, integrative, and innovative undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. At the heart of the University is its Catholic, Dominican tradition, grounded in the compatibility of faith and reason, which affirms the dignity of the human person and concern for the common good. The University's curricula, research and campus life demonstrate a commitment to ethics, community service, social justice and global citizenship. Dominican University educates one student at a time in the company of others, engaging a multiplicity of cultural, religious and secular worldviews, transforming students, faculty and staff into agents of positive change.

## **I. Introduction: Dominican University: A Hispanic-Serving Institution in the Footsteps of Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP**

### **“More Than Ordinary Virtue...”**

In 1850 as Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP prepared to leave his adopted nation to return to his native country for the General Chapter of the Order, he confronted a question of mission and charism. Asked how he would frame the identity of the Order in the Wisconsin and Iowa territories, Mazzuchelli spoke from the experience of intercultural relationship. He had logged decades of work with the Winnebago, Chippewa and Menominee as well as with the daughters of German and Irish lead miners, French fur traders and trappers, Protestant city planners and Catholic “rabble.” In this context, Mazzuchelli understood that the vocation of his calling was incompatible with practices from Europe: “The holy Founders of the Orders within the last three centuries...accommodated themselves to the times. We need more than ordinary virtue to keep the monastic spirit in the midst of the pastoral duties in many parts of the Union.” Mazzuchelli’s life was a study in mendicancy and itinerancy. Both practices required him to rely on others while responding to the call of a journey that would take him to new places and new cultures to which he was prepared to adapt and serve on their own terms.

Carried forward in the Sinsinawa Dominican tradition today, the University has a commitment to honor the traditions, cultures, and virtues of the members of our community and encounter them as people in a specific time and place embedded within multiple cultures. To do so, we need to move beyond “ordinary” virtue, redeploying our resources, pedagogies, and practices in ways that affirm the value and centrality of historically silenced narratives. We need to recognize and build upon the assets of our diverse student body and, following in the footsteps of Fr. Mazzuchelli, “engage a multiplicity of cultural, religious and secular worldviews” to contribute to the creation of a more just and humane world.

It is in that spirit that Dominican University commits to new encuentros: a vision emerging from the Latinx cultures already rooted in our reality. We need more than ordinary virtue to be able to adapt the lived commitments of our mission to the holistic education of students as persons embedded in multiple, overlapping cultures. We acknowledge that this work invokes the interdependence of community and the innovation of the itinerant spirit of Mazzuchelli. Most importantly, the story of the founder of the Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation communicates that integration and interculturality can only happen if there is a presumption and acknowledgement of the strength and value in the people we are called to serve and preserve. That community of faith in one another and love for one another should continue to be the focal point of our vision.

For the last ten years, Latinx students have increasingly become the assets upon which the future of Dominican University is built. The imperative to educate one student at a time in the company of others calls for a flexible, culturally grounded, and practical approach to truth and love through rigorous integration of the liberal arts and sciences with a spectrum of high impact practices. This encourages depth of experience in particular fields and across disciplines. None

of this can be done without Dominican University’s mission being understood and lived out as self-conscious practices that both value and preserve our students cultures of origin.

With the spirit of Mazzuchelli and embracing this new journey, we envision Dominican as a place of encounter—a Plaza<sup>1</sup>—in which dialogue, alliances, knowledge, tradition, and new practices are formed and solidified by and for the diverse Latinx community in the Chicago-land area. The vision of the Dominican plaza fully aligns itself with our mission, which opens the space for a “free and open inquiry and dialogue with a diverse array of persons, places, texts, objects, ideas, and events, past and present.”<sup>2</sup> To arrive to our Plaza means to encounter students, faculty, staff, and the Latinx community at large, to learn from one another, and to serve one another to unleash the power of interdependency, community, and dialogue within the circular yet ever-changing space of tradition.

## II. History and Background of the Latinx Visioning Working Group

Called together in the Spring 2016 at the request of President Donna M. Carroll, the Latinx Visioning working group began with a comprehensive assessment of the way the University serves Latinx students. The University’s identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) has not been formally assessed since its designation by the U.S. Department of Education<sup>3</sup>. The federal definition is merely based on enrollment demographics. This term does not account for the cultural realities that inform the specific communities that become part of campus life. We advocate for a more robust and culturally expansive notion of HSI: an institution that not only enrolls but *serves* Latinx students with purpose and meaning.

La Plaza has thus become the group’s conceptual and organizational principle. The plaza

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<sup>1</sup> The etymology of the Spanish word plaza comes from the Latin root platea meaning broad way or street. In Latin America the plaza, also known in Mexico City as Zócalo, serves as a kind of spatial palimpsest. Prior to the Spanish conquest, in Mexico the plaza was a main ceremonial center in the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán. In colonial times, the plaza was established following a Spanish architectural model to serve as the center of three closely related institutions of power: the cathedral, the administrative center, often associated with the governor’s palace and the legal court. Quilombos and palenques were also fortified plazas around which communities of fugitive slaves organized themselves, welcoming anyone into the first free and civil societies of the Western Hemisphere. In postcolonial times, the plaza has been appropriated in times of political strife, economic crisis or national celebrations to serve as a place where large crowds gather and people of various socioeconomic levels encounter one another. It has also come to function in many Latin American countries as a space of cultural encounters expressed through art and commerce, a central hub for social gathering, or touristic ventures. ([www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com))

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dom.edu/academics/undergraduate/overview/vision-mission>

<sup>3</sup> Hispanic-Serving Institution is a designation by the United States Department of Education conferred upon a higher education institution in the following circumstances: “A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is **defined as** an institution of higher education that – a.) is an eligible institution; and b) has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application.” The criteria to be an eligible institution incorporate the socio-economic status of the overall undergraduate and graduate student body as well as permanence factors such as sustaining a Hispanic population (over 25%) for a three-year period. See United States Department of Education, “Title V: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Definition of a Hispanic-Serving Institution,” accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www2.ed.gov/print/programs/idueshsi/definition.html>.

anchors Dominican's commitment to foster cultural awareness within our community. In doing so, it was appropriate to choose a term linguistically situated across cultures and yet originally connected to the traditional place of encounter among people in Latinx communities around the world. Guided by this conceptual model, a diverse cross section of faculty, staff, and students who have been engaged in self-conscious practices to value and preserve Latinx cultures at Dominican University provided insight into seven different opportunities for strategic growth and development. We call these opportunities "Initial Encuentros at La Plaza" (For the original documentation of the group's work to articulate needs see Appendix A). They are as follows:

### **Initial Encuentros en la Plaza**

- 1. Dominican University will enrich what it means to be mission-centered by creating new pathways to live the mission and vision as cultural realities.** We will respond to the needs of the student body that has chosen DU by reflecting their cultures and experiences inside and outside of the classroom. In order to do this, the University community must center cultural work as a driver of institutional identity in the upcoming strategic planning process.
- 2. Dominican University will institutionalize well-structured opportunities for our students to leverage their multilingual and transcultural competencies for their growth as professionals, community leaders, and members of the global family.** Our students' experience and skill moving across and through cultural boundaries are distinctive assets that they can build upon as future professionals, community members, and agents of social change. We will advocate for our existing engaged learning practices – like community-based learning, internships, study abroad, and independent research – to build more opportunities for our students to exercise their often advanced capacities to move between cultures and languages. We will forge new curricular options like certificates in translation and interpretation that explicitly build upon these competencies. Finally, we will more intentionally encourage pathways to graduate education. This will translate into affordable professional outcomes for Dominican Latinx undergraduate students and their families.
- 3. Dominican University will cultivate and organize strategic community partnerships that will provide transformative experiences for our students within the Latinx community around Chicago.** We will identify partner elementary, middle and high schools whose students would benefit from our programming, professional models, and alumni achievement. We will deepen relationships with Latinx businesses and community-based organizations. Both will provide unique opportunities for Dominican students and benefit from the expertise and skills of our students and faculty. We will renew partnerships with national organizations, beginning with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, who engage with us in vital local and national advocacy for Latinx student concerns. These partners also provide students with a range of scholarships and opportunities

for deep experiential learning. Dominican University will become a recognized leader and the school of choice for the next generation of Chicagoans.

4. **Dominican University will build inclusive classrooms utilizing evidence-based pedagogical practices that prevent micro-agressions, cultural biases and ethnocentrism.** We will work toward equity and inclusion. In doing so, we must implement the strategic diversity initiatives such as increasing the recruitment and hiring of diverse faculty and staff that reflect the student body, incorporating anti-racism training for all constituencies, and embracing the complexities of our cultural identity.
5. **Dominican University will create structures of advising and mentoring that respond to students' specific cultural contexts, provide them with innovative tools to promote their successes and engage them in the intentional formation and pursuit of long-term goals.** Designing and providing institutional support for advising and mentoring from multiple sources – advisors, peers, and alumni – will be essential to the successes of these structures.
6. **Dominican University will adapt the notion of the Dominican Family by culturally situating family support and accompaniment structures.** The current Dominican student remains embedded in a highly engaged network of family relationships that are a source of support and a responsibility. The development of workshops and small groups with and for parents and the integration of language access practices will empower parents to engage more fully in the life of the University.
7. **Dominican University will grow financial support structures that help families to be able to invest in a four-year liberal arts education that particularly emphasizes a mission grounded in our identity as a Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institution.** The University will intentionally cultivate advancement opportunities that support Latinx scholarships, internships that are stipended and paid over unpaid, and aggressively pursue institutional grants.

### **III. La Plaza: Organization, Support, and Structure**

La Plaza is a metaphor that evokes a central place where people and voices meet. We learn, discuss, form alliances, and participate as members of a community. La Plaza became an active force at Dominican when faculty and students came together to recognize the value in learning about and with the global Latinx community. Thus, a foundation for La Plaza has already been laid out by the work of existing programs and departments. The Latino and Latin American Studies Minor, Spanish, Social Justice and Civic Engagement Minor, the Center of Teaching and Learning Excellence, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, University Ministry, Student Involvement, Career Development, Study Abroad, Community-Based Learning and the Academic Enrichment Center are examples of units on campus that have created programming

and curriculum around the cultures of origin and experiences of our Latinx students. These programs recognize the intersection of those experiences and cultures with a multiplicity of others within a larger U.S. context.

However, La Plaza needs to scale up and become a more visible and coordinated entity, reaching out and providing guidance, support, and capacity to every program, unit, and activity on campus. As such, the ethos of La Plaza, aligned as it is to the vision and mission of Dominican University and the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters will offer a framework for our vision. La Plaza is, nonetheless, meant to be a concrete, organized, and centralized set of initiatives synchronized by a Board. This structure will assess needs and vet the quality, cultural appropriateness and viability of the programs and proposals that emerge from the multiple Latinx cultures. The constitution of the Board will be guided by the spirit of La Plaza and thus be representative of the different constituencies on campus, given their cultural competence and their willingness to participate guided by the values of La Plaza.

The geographic location of Dominican is also representative of La Plaza as an important contact point of the various communities within the Chicago-land area. Leaders of historically Latinx neighborhoods such as Pilsen, Little Village, and Humboldt Park as well as newly growing Latinx concentrations in Cicero, Berwyn, and Melrose Park among others will find in *La Plaza* a meeting place to exchange ideas and practices with one another and with Dominican University. This assures students and community alike that Dominican is equipped with the intercultural competencies, interdisciplinary academic foundation, and engaged disposition to educate the upcoming generations of Chicagoans in the values of an integrated community with multiple historical origins, beliefs, and experiences. In sum, on campus and beyond, La Plaza will be designed to reinforce Dominican University's mission and identity as a place of encounter, study, and service for all who cherish and celebrate the historical and cultural value of the Latinx community and its undeniable interconnection with the history of the U.S and its multilayered society.

#### **IV. From Concept to Practice: Initial proposals for realizing La Plaza at Dominican**

The seven areas of encounter that we enumerate above provide us with an orientation and vision for the University to embrace and integrate into the strategic planning, vision, and practices of Dominican University. We offer these concrete proposals as a starting point for moving from being a robust Hispanic-enrolling institution to a Hispanic-*servicing* institution.

##### **1. Dominican University will enrich what it means to be mission-centered by creating new pathways to live the mission and vision as cultural realities.**

###### **Proposal: Center cultural work as a driver of institutional identity in the 2017-2022 Strategic Framework**

**Description:** The 2017-2022 Strategic Framework will be the result of a community-based process that began in Fall 2016 with a series of open fora that unpacked a SWOT analysis from the most recent branding consultation by Lipmann & Hearne. The invitation in this institutional process is to identify priorities that can strategically advance the mission and

strengthen the community. It is a fact that these open fora have been taking place at a time when students of color have seized their voice and continued calls for a campus community that is more culturally competent especially in regard to specific cultures (African-American and Latinx), more racially and ethnically diverse (among faculty and staff), and free of all forms of bias and discrimination much of which has taken strident forms in the current political climate.

The work done by the Latinx Visioning Working Group is an asset in providing shape to and direction for policies and practices that systematize institutional change. Engaging in a similar SWOT analysis to the strategic framework visioning, the diverse cross section of faculty, staff, and students envisioned seven initial encuentros that can be guiding language for the University's strategic framework. These encounters happen at the intersection of different communities and cultures. In sum, they apply the lens that the working group used to identify a means for better serving particular communities (Latinx) to the question of culturally grounded policies and practices for serving all of our students. Centering the seven identified encuentros documented above will allow Dominican University to reflect the cultures and experiences of its students inside and outside of the classroom, to respect and preserve those cultures and experiences, and to develop pathways for new student-centered leadership and engaged learning practices that embrace particularity instead of mandating unnatural universality.

**2. Dominican University will institutionalize well-structured opportunities for our students to leverage their multilingual and transcultural competencies for their growth as professionals, community leaders, and members of the global family.**

**Proposal: Professional opportunities via Translation/Interpretation Minor (English/Spanish) with possible certification by the American Translators Association (ATA)**

**Description:** *The Translation and Interpretation minor/certificate promotes and develops the interlingual and intercultural skills of our student body, training them to pursue careers that require professional use of more than one language and culture.*

*Given the diversity of the student body at DU, its global focus and urban location, and the multiplicity of languages represented on campus, the minor would be in a unique position to attract prospective undergraduate and graduate students among traditional, first generation, and underrepresented populations. It will also be attractive and beneficial to working professionals looking to continue their education.*

A minor/certificate in Translation and Interpretation Studies is fully aligned with the Vision and Mission of Dominican University. Emphasis on a “free and open inquiry and dialogue with a diverse array of persons, places, texts, objects, ideas, and events, past and present” is indeed the nature and objective of the field of Translation and Interpretation studies.

Translators are mediators who provide access to other cultural and linguistic realms, opening an array of possibilities of action and interaction across cultures to individuals who otherwise



would be excluded from having the privilege of dialogue and inquiry outside of their linguistic and cultural communities. Moreover, interlingualism is a “talent” that many of our bicultural students already have and cherish. As faculty, our vision should recognize and develop that potential in our students. We will equip them with one of the most important tools to make the world a more just and humane place: the ability to understand and interpret one another in equal and responsible terms.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. Dominican University will cultivate and organize strategic community partnerships that will provide transformative experiences for our students within the Latinx community around Chicago.**

**Proposal: Expanding opportunities – inside and outside of the classroom – for student reflection on the political and social issues that are emerging concerns in their communities.**

**Description:** We recommend that the university provide faculty and staff focused on students’ development and support with the means to develop new course and experiential learning opportunities. This will allow students to delve more deeply into Latinx and African-American cultural, social, and political concerns. *We propose the development of new courses, community fora, and opportunities for reflective dialogues that allow students to more fully explore the political concerns, social movements, and strategies for effective political action that are emerging in their communities.*

There are “homegrown” models for political and theological reflection pedagogies that have already taken root in our Alternative Break Immersion, Ministry en lo Cotidiano, and Diversity Dialogue programs. There has also been a good deal of effort on the part of faculty in Criminology, Sociology, Theology, the Graduate School of Social Work, and faculty associated with Community-Based Learning and the Social Justice and Civic Engagement minor to foster these spaces of extended social analysis and reflection. *However, to meet our students need to deepen their political literacy and expand their capacity for effective engagement with their concerns, we propose giving greater consideration to the hire of faculty whose expertise extends to the contemporary politics of Latinx and other underrepresented communities. We advocate more professional development opportunities for faculty who wish to expand their expertise in these areas so that they can offer new courses that speak to those concerns. Finally, we suggest directing additional funding for student development offices so that they can provide opportunities for deep reflection and engagement upon these concerns outside the classroom.*

**Proposal: Promoting students’ stories of engagement with transformative experiences at Dominican.**

**Description:** We have inspiring stories to tell about our students experiencing personal and professional growth through their experiential learning opportunities. Many of these stories

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dom.edu/academics/undergraduate/overview/vision-mission>

involve Latinx students who are participating in internships, transformative service, study abroad, research, and social action *within* Latinx businesses, community organizations, and Spanish-speaking countries. *We propose a multi-media communications and promotion campaign that tells the stories of a wide-range of Dominican students but gives strong prominence of place to Latinx students' engaging in experiences that deepen their ties to their communities, linguistic heritage, and social networks.*

*Such a campaign will heighten students' sense of their possibilities, enable them to find peers who have already done great things, and learn the nuts and bolts of how to pursue similar experiences. It will also suggest to students that the lives they build at Dominican can be consonant with the lives they are building with their families and communities and have a powerful modeling impact for current and prospective students and a galvanizing impact on our alumni and donors.*

Such promotional work can begin on a smaller scale this year with a solicitation of students participating in these experiences to share their stories. The Office of Marketing and Communication can partner with university offices that can hire student workers to help frame and adapt the stories to web, video, and print formats. In a follow-up stage, we recommend a more intensive commitment of human resource time to this effort from the Office of Marketing and Communications, offices that engage students in these experiential learning opportunities, and the Office of Information Technology. This effort could be budget neutral, but it would require making such a campaign a marketing and communications priority. University staff could be aided in this effort by creative collaborations with the Communications and English Departments and new internship / campus employment opportunities for students in those majors and minors.

**Proposal: Returning the focus to staffing resources that will be needed if we are to provide more structured internship pathways to our students.**

**Description:** Outward facing personnel who can foster working relationships between our students and the organizations and businesses with whom there are strong opportunities has long been understood as a need at Dominican, but has been delayed because of dire economic challenges in the last year. We advocate that these staffing needs be placed back into the conversation for the next budget year.

#### **4. Dominican University will build inclusive classrooms utilizing evidence-based pedagogical practices that prevent micro-agressions, cultural biases and ethnocentrism.**

##### **Ongoing: Inclusive Teaching Academy**

**Description:** The **Inclusive Teaching Academy** is part of university-wide efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion at Dominican, and it is the cornerstone of a comprehensive initiative on inclusive teaching that will also include faculty learning communities, workshops and other kinds of programming, and online resources. The Academy will help faculty members design or redesign courses in accordance with the principles of inclusive teaching. It also aims to build community around inclusive teaching,

develop best practices, and build effective structures to help insure that the principles and goals of inclusive teaching and learning become widespread and enduring aspects of Dominican's culture and values.

### **Ongoing: Inclusion and Excellence: A Workshop for Faculty Search Committees**

**Description:** This workshop provides a framework for department chairs, department search committees (chairs and committee members alike), and other members of the university community the opportunity to engage the best practices for facilitating the process for fair, inclusive, and effective faculty searches.

### **Ongoing: Multicultural Courses across the Curriculum**

**Description:** Develop multicultural courses that deal specifically with forms of oppression and injustice, biases, and social position, agency, and equity, and cultural expression of non-dominant groups. Through an application and review process, courses are designated as Multicultural if the aforementioned criteria are clearly articulated and met in the course description and development.

### **Proposed: Inclusive Pedagogy and Tenure**

**Description:** Making inclusive pedagogy a requirement of faculty for renewal, tenure, and promotion. This will include, but is not limited to, demonstrating effective skills in teaching Dominican's diverse student population.

### **Proposed: Develop and Deploy Faculty and Student Research**

**Description:** Promote multicultural and cross cultural research that deepens the understanding of diversity, community, the common good, and social justice.

### **Proposed: Resourcing Faculty Latinamente**

**Description:** The project seeks to prepare faculty to better serve Latinx students, the new demographic plurality, by resourcing faculty across the curriculum. The design is grounded in an organic approach that recognizes that the development of intercultural competencies in students calls for teaching/learning strategies built on the interconnectedness of cultural and practical knowledges as well as particular ways of being community. By inviting an interdisciplinary team of Latinx educators, the project establishes within the school faculty community a teaching/learning network of Latinx colleagues who form a critical mass—for the duration of the project—of those who are usually underrepresented on faculties.

- 5. Dominican University will create structures of advising and mentoring that respond to students' specific cultural contexts, provide them with innovative tools to promote their successes and engage them in the intentional formation and pursuit of long-term goals.**

**Proposal: Building greater capacity for holistic student advising at Dominican.**

**Description:** In several fora across the University, faculty and staff have advocated for providing Dominican students with advising experiences that encourage them to look beyond majors or course requirements toward a more integrative vision for the people they wish to become in this world. During the life of the Bridge to Career Task Force, in Contemplating Life’s Callings Retreats, in meetings with the leadership of our Transitions program, and in discussions among our LAS Seminar faculty, our colleagues have spoken passionately about the value of creating an advising experience that allows students to more fully consider the mentors, co-curricular engagement, transformative experiences, and academic support they need to build a life after Dominican.

Freshman seminar instructors / faculty advisers who have participated in the AAC&U Equity and Excellence Academy Promising Pathways pilot have developed new tools – including holistic advising booklets and group advising sessions – to begin building an advising experience for freshmen that both works to realize equity goals and helps them in the intentional formation of long-term goals. Those faculty, along with advisers and other faculty colleagues are now participating in a NetVUE grant funded learning community to discuss holistic advising practices and consider how they might be implemented at Dominican University.

While these conversations about and pilot efforts with holistic advising have taken place in different forums across the university, we believe we have reached a moment when those efforts may have room to be made more concrete in our institutional design. As the University pursues realignment, the Provost has charged staff leaders to study best practices and share insights and recommendations for how some of those academic advising and support practices may be realized at Dominican. *The Latinx Visioning Working Group will share insights and proposals for culturally-contextualized advising and mentoring to inform this study of best practices and the recommendations that follow.*

## **6. Dominican University will adapt the notion of the Dominican Family by culturally situating family support and accompaniment structures.**

### **Proposal: Building a Network of Parent Groups that honor and celebrate our students’ cultures**

**Description:** At the heart of our Latinx students’ experience and cultural imaginary is the family. Families are sources of strength and determination for our students. Leveraging family support provides our students a means to integrate and affirm their cultures of origin, to receive shared wisdom passed down through generations, and to learn from role models that may never have been a part of a college or university experience. Among our predominantly first-generation students this grounding in family is an essential ventaja<sup>5</sup>, or cultural asset.

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<sup>5</sup> An excellent chapter on ventajas: Rendon, Laura I., Nora, Amaury, and Kangala, Vijay, “Ventajas/Assets and Conocimientos/Knowledge: Leveraging Latin@ Assets to Foster Student Success,” in *Hispanic-Serving institutions in American Higher Education*, 92-118.

At Dominican University, we pride ourselves in the expression of Dominican family as the lived experience of our mission. *In order to integrate and extend that mission-centered approach culturally, we propose the formation of parent groups from our communities. In these groups, parents will network, share and compare questions and uncertainties, and build new practices of support for their student attending Dominican.*

We will identify skilled parent leaders merging from these parent groups to serve as organizers and facilitators for other parents at SOAR and Discover Dominican days at the university. In these parent workshops, parents would share their experience as parents of university students. Their role could grow organically to provide further advisory input on a variety of University practices and initiatives.

**7. Dominican University will grow financial support structures that help families to be able to invest in a four-year liberal arts education that particularly emphasizes a mission grounded in our identity as a Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institution.**

**Proposal Title: Latinx Alumni Mentors for Student and Professional Success**

**Description:** Our Latinx community respects and admires models for success as a source of strength and perseverance. In Spring 2016, the President's Office, Brennan School of Business and University Advancement formed the Latinx Alumni Professional Roundtable, a group of 25 Dominican University Latinx Alumni who have convened a bi-monthly working group to engage in areas of support for Latinx students.

During the Fall Semester 2016, the Latinx Professional Roundtable is partnering with the Career Development Office to host a Speed Networking event pairing 50 DU students and 25 Alumni professionals.

*We recommend that this initiative on behalf of alumn@ continue and to be resourced as a mentoring project for Latinx students.*

**Proposal: Dominican University Develops Intentional Partnerships with Local Latinx Businesses**

**Description:** The Latinx community takes pride in its community development in the Chicago area. We recommend that Dominican University leverage Latinx business leaders and intentionally partner on projects, studies and programs of the University that serve common needs.

The Office of the President and Brennan School of Business are beginning preliminary discussions with local Chambers of Commerce under the guidance of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. An ongoing study on the international economic and social impact of immigrant businesses in a partnership between Brennan School of Business and the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce due to conclude in Spring 2017 is an example of the

possibilities of leveraging these relationships.<sup>6</sup> Preliminary efforts are underway to begin discussions with Little Village Chamber of Commerce, Berwyn Development Corporation and the Village of Melrose Park as to engage in joint studies and projects valuing the strength of Dominican University and these local Latinx communities.

**Proposal: “You are Called to be Padrin@” - Leveraging our Cultural Community Support for Scholarship Opportunities at Dominican University**

**Description:** In Latinx cultures, families are formed through wide relational networks that move beyond the family. These networks, or a system known as *compadrazgo*, develop close ties that mirror the traditional commitments of family and serve as formal and informal ways of investing in relationships. For example, the *padrino* or *madrina* (Godfather or Godmother) of a child’s Baptism is often a close family friend whose bonds to the parents are cemented by the honor of committing time, treasure and talent in raising the child. These webs of relationship are in many cases strong lifelong alliances that are sacred.

We recommend a committee be established to design a scholarship program with University Advancement and the Office of the President in our Latinx community to mirror *compadrazgo*. It would celebrate the importance of being called by the community to prepare the next generation of leaders. This type of program can move beyond providing financial resources for scholarships, and be woven into the community development proposals above. *Padrinos* and *madrinas* could serve as career mentors and sources of inspiration and motivation for our students. Our communities expect that Latinx students become new leaders in the history of the Latinx community of the Chicago area. Dominican University is well-positioned to launch such an initiative.

A special population who could benefit from this approach are undocumented applicants to Dominican University. The institution accepted over 300 freshmen applicants for Fall 2016 whose immigration status remains a barrier to access to higher education. This Fall 2016, we admitted 34 undocumented students to the University in the Freshman class. Roughly ten percent of those accepted applicants matriculated to the university. Moreover, we also know that students who are undocumented are some of the most academically successful persons to matriculate here. The average GPA of these students is 3.39 (in the duration of time in which records have been reliably maintained). How can we more intentionally commit to students from our communities? *Dominican can launch a strategic fundraising plan to invite alumni and community leaders to become padrinos or madrinas, long-term, culturally grounded, mentors who both understand the challenges of achievement and can respond resoundingly to make that achievement possible for those that follow.*

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<sup>6</sup> Chicago’s other Magnificent Mile is not State Street or the Clybourn Corridor. The second-highest-grossing shopping district in the city is a 2-mile stretch of 26th Street on the Southwest Side, in predominantly Mexican-American Little Village. Just one example of the impact of an immigrant neighborhood economy on the city of Chicago in Crain’s Chicago Business, September 2015 <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/section/little-village>.

## Appendix A

### Visioning Progreso Latino

April 28, 2016

#### Minutes

#### Present:

**Faculty and staff:** Brendan Curran, Portia Anderson, Norah Collins, Angela Frazier, Trudi Goggin, Leticia Villareal-Sosa, Ricardo Aguilera, John DeCostanza, Paul Simpson, Sheila Radford-Hill, MaDonna Thelen

**Students:** Viviana Garcia, Atzimba Rodriguez, Michelle Roman, Bianca Mena, Raunel Urquiza

#### I. Commitments in areas of need: (faculty/staff/students are listed in capital letters, convener is indicated in bold)

1. Staff and faculty in the classroom [convener-ANGELA FRAZIER, TRUDI GOGGIN, LETICIA VILLAREAL-SOSA]
  - Concerns raised about faculty bias, and those who offend do not participate in workshops on bias/racism/xenophobia
  - Courses, content, reflect American experience of continent, not just US
  - Training of professors and staff on cultural identity, anti-racism
  - Hiring and recruiting of faculty and staff that reflect the diversity of student body
2. Cultural grounding of the mission of Dominican/Finding our identity as an HSI institution – [convener-JOHN DECOSTANZA, PAUL SIMPSON, SHEILA RADFORD-HILL, LETICIA VILLAREAL-SOSA]
  - Leverage our diversity as opportunity to lead in Chicago
  - Owning HSI not because of HSI data but because it is who we are
  - Support in majors to reflect culture and experience of students and the market
3. Professional opportunities via dual language and multi-cultural background (ex.- translator certification) – [convener-LISA PETROV, DEBRA VINCI-MINOGUE, ROBERTO CURCI, MATT HLINAK]
4. Outreach to Latin@ leaders and larger community [convener- MADONNA THELEN, ATZIMBA RODRIGUEZ, BERTO AGUAYO, RAUNEL URQUIZA, ALYSHA BIEHL, JACOB LESNIEWSKI, KATHLEEN MULANEY]
  - Alumni and professional models of achievement in relationship with students
  - Pipeline programming – grammar and high schools
  - Exposure for students to professionals and activists

- Community based opportunities
5. Financial support and resourcing during college career - Resourcing –[convener-NORAH COLLINS, MICHELLE ROMAN, ATZIMBA RODRIGUEZ, BIANCA MENA, KATHLEEN MULANEY
    - Latino scholarships, internships that are stipended and paid over unpaid, grants ex: HSF grant, Title V, HSI, etc.
    - In MAP crisis – plan with options and alternatives
    - Access
    - Explore whats out there
  6. Student access to transformative experience [convener-PAUL SIMPSON, JOHN DECOSTANZA, RAUNEL URQUIZA, JACOB LESNIEWSKI, DAVID PERRY, KELI WOJCIECHOWSKI, MADONNA THELEN, TINA TAYLOR-RITZLER]
    - Experiential opportunities
    - High-impact practices
    - Getting DU out there on internships in structured ways
    - Public policy minor or major
    - Civic engagement and social justice
  7. Student support and accompaniment [convener-TRUDI GOGGIN, NORAH COLLINS, MICHELLE ROMAN, RICARDO AGUILAR]
    - Invite students to take more leadership opportunities (ex- SOAR)
    - Resourcing for undocumented students – refresh manual, orientation
    - Meet students where they are not just where we want them to be
    - Advising – seeking new model for advising not just next semester courses but also process of individual and student goals from study to career, wholistic model, major to career link, internships, job offers
    - Need in explaining things – ex: financial awareness, procedures
  8. Family support and accompaniment [convener-RICARDO AGUILAR, BIANCA MENA, ATZIMBA RODRIGUEZ, , MICHELLE ROMAN, LETICIA VILLAREAL-SOSA, TRUDI GOGGIN]
    - Workshops and small groups with parents
    - Develop a parent committee – get parents involved
    - Embrace faculty involvement and relations with Wellness Center
    - Language access – SOAR experience, from mock classroom to parent presentations, materials, web language access,
    - Family disconnect from college experience – opportunities and events, relationship with families.
    - Need in explaining things – ex: financial awareness, procedures
    - Admissions – first contact at campus in language, culture, brochure materials, website, etc.
    - First generation realities



## II. Next steps

### 1. Each group convene at least once between May and July with the following goals:

- Convener is indicated for each group and is responsible for: insuring each group gathers, takes notes for the group and submits them to Brendan Curran by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Draft next steps to achieving a goal with 3 month and 6 month and 1 year goals
- Be realistic of staff, faculty and student involvement and finances\

### 2. Next meeting – JULY 6<sup>TH</sup> AT 3:00 PM

- Report on Working groups
- Update from groups
- Priorities for School Year 2016-2017