

WEB EXTRA **Students discuss black-Hispanic relations**

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A group of about 15 students brainstormed ways to improve the relationship between blacks and Hispanics in the United States during a roundtable discussion in the Marvin Center Tuesday.

The students at the event, who came from all ethnicities and backgrounds, looked at both the differences and similarities between blacks and Hispanics and cited examples of ways the two groups have cooperated in the past.

The discussion, called "Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict Between Blacks and Latinos and What it Means for America," was sponsored by the Senioritas Latinas Unidas and Delta Sigma Theta.

To facilitate the discussion, Stacy Terrell, president of Senioritas Latinas Unidas, handed out note cards with quotes from "Presumed Alliance" by Nicolas Vaca, a book that analyzes the relationship between the two groups.

Blacks and Hispanics have a lot in common, participants discovered. Students said the fact that both of the groups are minorities in a dominant white society should help them identify with each other.

"We're minorities together, suffering as one at the hand of the white man," Terrell said.

Students identified part of the problem between the two groups as the economic impact that Hispanics coming to America had on blacks. They pointed out that many blacks tend not to take the jobs that Hispanic immigrants are willing to take.

"(That) black people's ancestors worked on your farm is the mentality that creates a desire not to work at certain jobs," Robinson said.

Participants added, however, that because Hispanics are succeeding in these low-level jobs in the American economy so rapidly, blacks may feel marginalized by their success.

"A lot of African Americans feel threatened by this influx," sophomore Eric Woodard said. "The media shows (Latinos) as downtrodden, but they are successful, even though they haven't been here for 300 years."



Media Credit: David Ediger/Hatchet photographer
Students participate in the round table discussion, "Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict Between Blacks and Latinos and What it Means for America," Tuesday night in the Marvin Center.

Other students added that both ethnicities tend to have similar goals, such as economic advancement, equal representation and treatment and other civil rights issues.

"You might be fighting for the same thing, but the reasons behind the fight are totally different," first-year graduate student Tanisha Stewart said, explaining why these similarities have not brought the groups closer.

Students at the roundtable also pointed to the Los Angeles mayoral elections this past year, where Antonio Villaraigosa, an Hispanic, was voted into office with both the support of blacks and Hispanics within the city, proving the two groups can work together for a common goal.

Terrell said by the end of the discussion, the students had achieved their goal.

"I feel this was a way to have an open dialogue about black and Latino relations so we can get change in our generation," she said.