

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SHOWCASE

¿Y Luego Que? (and then what?): Developing Programming for First-generation, Chicanx/Latinx Students

Heidy Sarabia, Ana Andrade, Debra Welkley, Nitika Sharma, Amanda Shighihara, and Amy Liu
Sociology Alumni Network

Program or Project Description

Working with the Sociology Alumni Network, we developed programming in the Sociology Department, with added support of the Developing Hispanic Serving Institution (DHSI) grant, to address the needs of current students, in particular first-generation/Latinx students at our Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Creating networking, community-building, and mentoring opportunities to connect with other sociology majors and professionals in their field of interest (alumni) is the focus of this programming.



Experiential Learning Program or Project Highlight(s)

About 100 current students and more than 20 alumni attended events during the 2023/24 AY. Most of the sociology faculty and all staff participated in the ¿Y Luego Que? (and then what?) events.

We are proud to have supported students to:

- 1. Build Professional Networks through Alumni Connections and Professional Field Connections;**
- 2. Develop Career Exploration Strategies; and**
- 3. Address Structural Barriers**

Promoting Student Success in College and Career

The “¿Y Luego Que?” (and then what?) program seeks to support student success in their transition to the job market through a multi-faceted approach specifically designed for first-generation/Latinx students at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The program addressed several key transition barriers:

1. Building Professional Networks

- Alumni Connections:** The program created structured opportunities for current sociology majors to connect with alumni who successfully transitioned to careers and/or pursue graduate degrees--through formal mentoring

- Professional Field Connections:** Students were introduced to professionals working in fields of interest, which helped bridge the gap between academic knowledge and professional application — through online webinars.

2. Career Exploration Strategies

- Pathway Development:** The program helped students identify and explore viable career paths and/or graduate school programs aligned with their sociology degrees—through networking events

3. Addressing Structural Barriers

- The program specifically targeted structural, social, and emotional barriers that first-generation/Latinx students commonly face, such as limited professional networks, unfamiliarity with career development processes, and Lack of mentorship from professionals in desired fields—through a mentoring program

Community Impact

- 1. Professional Development:** providing a space for alumni to sharpen their leadership and communication skills that can augment their workplace leadership skills;
- 2. Connection to Institution:** creating an ongoing relationship with alumni and Sac State, and providing a sense of giving back to the institution that contributed to their success;
- 2. Personal Satisfaction:** offering alumni an opportunity to help the next generation succeed and see their guidance shape future professionals; and
- 3. Networking Benefits:** expanding alumni's professional network to include emerging talent and creating relationships with faculty and other alumni mentors

Campus Community Impact

The principal impact of the “¿Y Luego Que?” program was that it created a comprehensive framework to help our students, including first-generation/Latinx students navigate the complex transition from academic to professional environments by connecting students with alumni. By providing targeted support in network building, and exploration strategies, the program improved students' career readiness and prospects. Working collaboratively with alumni was key in creating these opportunities for students. Thus enhancing Sac State's goals to transform lives by preparing all students to lead, serve, and succeed!