

Hispanics often enroll in college but just don't finish, new report concludes

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WASHINGTON — A new report concludes that Hispanic high school graduates enroll in college at a higher rate than non-Hispanic whites, at least by some measures, but are far less likely to earn a four-year degree, which has long been regarded as the single most important key to good jobs and high earnings.

The report, released by the Pew Hispanic Center, suggests that Latinos are held back by financial and other pressures, not a lack of interest in higher education.

Many are older when they enroll and are more likely to attend community colleges rather than four-year institutions, take a partial course load and work.

The findings contradict what has been a belief among policy-makers that Latinos do not graduate from colleges and universities because they do not enroll. The problem has been seen as one of poor academic preparation of vast numbers of Latinos, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and thus one that could take a generation or more to remedy.

Along with rest of nation, CSUB struggles with Latino graduation

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Getting Hispanic students to graduate from Cal State Bakersfield once they're enrolled there is a problem stumping local administrators.

A national study released last week by the Pew Hispanic Center said children born to Hispanic immigrants are almost as likely to enroll in college as their white peers, but less than half as many graduate with four-year-degrees, according to the Associated Press. That holds true at CSUB, administrators said after hearing of the report.

"We're quite familiar with the problem. Certainly our goal is to improve those numbers, not

only for baccalaureate degrees, but for them to go beyond to masters and doctorates," said Homer Montalvo, CSUB's associate vice president of enrollment services, after hearing about the report.

CSUB officials couldn't provide exact graduation rates for Hispanic students Thursday.

Montalvo said studies to determine why students drop out from CSUB have been inconclusive, but he said financial reasons and age top the list of suspected causes.

"A good percentage of our students work. They tend to be older. Therefore that means they have families, so that is a kind of double whammy," he said.

Other possible reasons include the education level of parents.

"The vast majority of students that come to us from this region do not have a family history of college experience," said Thomas Martinez CSUB assistant to the president for diversity initiatives and special projects.

The university has programs available to assimilate those first-generation college students, such as the College Assistance Migrant Program, a program that houses the students many of whom are Hispanic, in the dormitories and gives them classes in basic English composition, math, technology and leadership development.

When the union's inspiration
Through the worker's blood shall run,
There shall be no power greater
Anywhere beneath the sun.
For what force on earth is weaker
Than the feeble strength of one.
But the Union makes us strong!

Solidarity forever,
Solidarity forever,
Solidarity forever,
For the Union makes us strong!

