The Students We Share:
A Cross-Border Workforce Development Priority

PRELIMINARY RESULTS
MAY 19, 2016

Mexican Migration Field Research Project 2015-2016

The Students We Share

Migration from Mexico to the U.S. and return migration back to Mexico has created a sizeable cohort of students whose education takes place on both sides of the border. These students are especially well-suited to participate in the binational economy because of their cross-border cultural fluency, and supporting their educational success should be a major regional workforce development priority. However, the flow of young people back and forth across the border can derail the educational trajectories of individual students who are not able to adapt to the pressures caused by migration. Research findings from a survey of a representative sample of 8,000 9th and 10th graders at 65 schools in San Diego and Tijuana offer insight into the educational trajectories and professional aspirations of youth in the region, informing policy solutions for policymakers in California and Baja California to respond to the specific needs of the shared student population.

The Mexican Migration Field Research Project

This research was carried out by the Mexican Migration Field Research Program (MMFRP), a unique, three-course offering for students seeking hands-on field research experience focused on international migration. Students participating in the course have the opportunity to work as part of an interdisciplinary, multinational research team of undergraduate and graduate students from the United States and Mexico. Through coursework and time in the field, students develop skills to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data using established methods from the social and behavioral sciences. This course has been offered at UC San Diego since 2004 and is based at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies (USMEX) at the School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) in collaboration with the Division of Global Public Health and the Latin American Studies Program.

Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies

USMEX was founded in 1979 to study Mexico and the full range of issues affecting economic, social and political relations between Mexico and the United States. Spearheading UC San Diego’s engagement with Mexico, it is a go-to source for rigorous academic research that can be applied to the creation, implementation and evaluation of public policy. The Center is privileged with the unique opportunity to engage in research on Mexico and the U.S-Mexico relationship from its location on the border. A binational perspective is part of the DNA of the Center and is a differentiating factor in its work.
Our young people have big dreams

Think it is important to go to college: 93%
Talk to their friends about the future: 85%
Believe they will earn a university degree: 73%

They live binational lives

Have experience living on the other side of the border: 24%
Identify as being both American and Mexican: 28%
Think their future is international: 42%
Have crossed the border: 57%
Can speak both Spanish and English at least a little: 71%
Have family or friends on the other side of the border: 77%

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings are preliminary and represent only the responses from a representative sample of 3,362 students in 9th and 10th grade in Sweetwater Union High School District and students in 10th grade in public high schools in the municipality of Tijuana. Additional findings from the full dataset will be available in September 2016.
They face barriers to success

- 45% Might quit school for financial reasons
- 54% Don't know what university they want to attend

They rely on schools to prepare them for the future

- 73% Rely on teachers and counselors as the best source of career information
- 77% Believe the classes they take prepare them for the future
MMFRP would like to thank the large group of students and researchers who worked hard to carry out our fieldwork this year

Cheryl Alvarez, COLEF
Marcela Alvarez, UC San Diego
Veronica Benitez, UC San Diego
David Bernstein, UC San Diego
Jose Luis Burgos, UC San Diego
Tania Camargo Chávez, UABC
Nallely Cruz, COLEF
Christina Cui, UC San Diego
Erika D’Andrea, UC San Diego
Denise Moreno Ducheny, UC San Diego
Astrid Erickson, UC San Diego
Velina Felix, UABC
Melissa Floca, UC San Diego
Patricia Gandara, UCLA
Itzel García, UC San Diego
Valeria García Rubio, UABC
Micah Gell-Redman, University of Georgia
Bernardo Gomez, UABC
Laura Gutierrez, UC San Diego
Lizzbetha Hernández, UABC
Ileana, Herrera, COLEF
Christopher Hong, UC San Diego
Ramiro Jurado Perojo, UABC
Anthony King, UC San Diego
Marina Lopez, UC San Diego
Saul Lopez, UC San Diego
Slade Mahoney, UC San Diego
Jose Luis Marín Romero, UABC
Dulce Mariscal, COLEF
Eligio Martinez, UC San Diego
Max Matus, COLEF
Dania Elizabeth Medina, UABC
José Manuel Montoya, UABC
Ana Barbara Mungaray, UABC
Leah Muse Orlinoff, UC San Diego
Cinthia Maricela Navarro, UABC
Kelly Nielsen, UC San Diego
Vicky Ojeda, UC San Diego
Gary Orfield, UCLA
Aubrey Oxley, UC San Diego
Karina Parra, UABC
Monique Pizano Peralta, UABC
John Porten, UC San Diego
Claudia Fabiola Pulido, UABC
Ana Luisa Ramírez Soto, UABC
Zaira Razú, Stanford
Rocio Rivera, UC San Diego
Alexis Rivera, UC San Diego
Adilene Rodríguez, UABC
Brenda Yamilet Rodríguez Vera, UABC
Cindy Romero, UC San Diego
Jesus Salgado Politron, UABC
Christian Salinas, COLEF
Mayra Sánchez Jiménez, UABC
Iliana Sandoval Palomares, UABC
Melissa Soto Osuna, UABC
Juan Trenado, UC San Diego
Jethro Vázquez Rojas, UABC
Isidro Vera Muñoz, UABC
Olga Roselen Verdugo Valdez, UABC
Karla Yee, UC San Diego

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