



PAST PERCEPTIONS, PRESENT USAGE: Latinx Students and Academic Libraries

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the population of Latinx students enrolled in higher education has increased by 142%, but they are still underrepresented overall. According to 2015 United States census data, only 16% of Hispanic adults have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 54% of Asian Americans, 36% of (non-Hispanic) white people, and 23% of Black people.¹ The needs of Latinx students in higher education are obviously not being met. Academic libraries have long seen themselves as integral to student success, but there is little research about how they are (or are not) serving Latinx students specifically. The IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto states that “as libraries serve diverse interests and communities, they function as learning, cultural, and information centers,” and called for all library types to “reflect, support and promote cultural and linguistic diversity.”²

This research study came out of a desire to see if Latinx students felt reflected and supported in their academic library at a large, public, Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Almost one-third of students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) are Latinx. The researchers surveyed over 600 of these students and interviewed fifteen. A majority of those interviewed felt that their Latinx identities influenced their experiences at UNLV. They described feeling connected to other Latinx students, safe when they saw people who looked like them, and affirmed by each other on campus and in the library. Unfortunately, these positive experiences were primarily due to the makeup of the student body and not because of any purposeful action by the library.

This paper provides a review of the small body of literature about Latinx students and academic libraries, an overview of the results of student surveys and interviews, and recommendations. The survey data showed that Latinx students have a variety of national origins, immigration experiences, and linguistic backgrounds. The interviews gave researchers a chance to explore the nuances of these different Latinx identities. Latinx students were regular public and school library users before attending UNLV, and 81% of students came to the UNLV libraries at least once a week. However, 40% of students did not have any experience with impromptu help services and 64% had never had a scheduled interaction with a librarian through instruction or research consultations. Although all interviewees knew about co-curricular outreach events like therapy dogs and virtual reality painting, only 60% had participated. The survey results and interviews showed

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that Latinx students at UNLV frequently utilized the libraries' spaces for utilitarian purposes rather than as places to connect with library staff or find cultural engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whitmire's 2003 foundational study "Cultural Diversity and Undergraduates' Academic Library Use" was the first to examine academic library engagement across different races and ethnicities.³ She utilized a 1996 data set of almost 10,000 "Asian American, African American, Latino, and Native American, and White undergraduates" from forty-three institutions and found that overall GPAs were not associated with library usage.⁴ In fact, students of color as a whole used the library more, but white students with less library use had higher GPAs. Much of the research from the past two decades around the value of academic libraries has correlated library usage with higher GPAs, retention, and graduation rates, but those studies have rarely broken down student demographics. Almost all research about academic libraries and students of color cites Whitmire, but many of the articles correlating library usage to student success do not. Although it was beyond the scope of this research study to analyze factors that contribute to academic achievement, the authors encourage librarians to critically examine research that does not consider student demographics and other personal or systemic factors that may cause students to earn lower grades and have higher attrition rates.

The research around Latinx students and academic libraries is not robust. The first article was published in 2006 and described the activities of an institution's grant-funded project to increase Latinx engagement.⁵ Adkins and Hussey's foundational article about the role of libraries in the lives of Latinx college students found that "academic library use is primarily motivated by informational need" while "public library use was more frequently motivated by a desire for cultural reinforcement or a desire for entertainment materials (which may also help reinforce culture)."⁶ Because they only interviewed seven students, they noted the smallness of their sample size and called for additional research. Two articles answered that call by discussing the academic library experiences of undergraduate students who were a part of generation 1.5, a term that describes U.S.-educated people who "are still in the process of learning English when they enter college."⁷ In 2011, a study compared the library use and information literacy skills of Latinx students to white students, and found that even though Latinx students spent more time in the physical library and were more likely to receive library instruction, they scored lower than white students on an information literacy test.⁸ Walsh's 2013 dissertation attempted to discover a pedagogical method that could increase library usage and information literacy skills in Latinx students.⁹ Bladeck's excellent literature review noted that "only if librarians learn about and understand what Latino students need and benefit from the most, can academic libraries modify their modus operandi to better serve this growing group of student population."¹⁰ Outside of the seven articles referenced here, the researchers only located six additional publications about Latinx students and academic libraries.¹¹ The researchers look forward to the 2022 book from Library Juice Press *Supporting Your Hispanic Students in Academic Libraries* (working title) edited by Isabel Soto-Luna and Sommer Browning.¹²

BACKGROUND

Institutional Context

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is a public, doctoral-granting, R1 university with just over 31,000 students. It was designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Spring 2015 when over 25% of students identified as Hispanic.¹³ In Fall 2020, 30% of students identified as Hispanic and 10% identified as two or more races.¹⁴ UNLV, like the United States Census Bureau, uses the word Hispanic in their demographic data. This government designation came from the 1975 Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions. One committee member noted that "there are many who say they do not like the term 'Hispanic' because it reminds them of the Spanish empire that annihilated the [indigenous] civilization[s]" and that the committee "could have met endlessly and still not have satisfied every person in the United States whose descendants are Spanish and/or indigenous."¹⁵ A 2015 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 51% of people had no preference between the words Hispanic or Latino while 32% preferred Hispanic and 15% preferred Latino.¹⁶ Latinx is a newer term cre-

ated by and for non-binary folks as a collective noun for people of all genders. The usage of the term had a sharp increase in 2016 after the Pulse Nightclub shootings, but a 2019 survey showed that 76% of people who identified as Latino or Hispanic have never heard of the term.¹⁷ Of the 11 student organizations at UNLV for Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx students, two use the term Hispanic, six use the term Latino, and three use the term Latinx.¹⁸ The researchers used the term Latinx in recruitment materials and subsequent presentations and writings.

UNLV does not collect additional data about countries of origin, immigration information, or linguistic backgrounds, but this research did. Although the umbrella terms Latinx and Hispanic are useful for solidarity and to provide an overall picture of the UNLV student body, each individual Latinx student's experience on campus and in life was influenced by this additional data and other personal information that the researchers did not collect (see Appendix A). Surveyed students were asked to identify what region(s) they and their families were from. Over two-thirds (69%) were from North America (Mexico or the United States) while 9% were from Central America, 5% were from South America, and 7% were from the Caribbean. 10% of students identified two or more regions of family origin. There were also other aspects of their lives that impacted their university experiences. 92% of Latinx students lived off campus, which matched the UNLV student body population as a whole.¹⁹ 66% of Latinx students worked (with 49% of working students averaging 21 or more hours per week). One interviewee described being fortunate enough to be able to quit her job but was concerned for all the students who had to continue to work and attend university. She said, "I just think [the university] could have maybe a better retention rate if they had some sort of emphasis on those students who do want to be students but cannot necessarily take four to six classes every semester...you just need to have the support from the school, and it's just not there."

METHODOLOGY

The researchers conducted a qualitative mixed-methods study which utilized surveys and semi-structured interviews to address these questions:

- Who are the Latinx students of UNLV?
- How do Latinx students at UNLV utilize the libraries?
- How do Latinx students attending an HSI perceive the libraries and library staff?
- Do the UNLV libraries serve a cultural role for Latinx students?

With data provided from the Office of Initiatives and Analytics, the researchers sent a Qualtrics survey to non-international undergraduate Latinx-identifying students who had taken at least twelve credits at the institution. The survey consisted of multiple choice, Likert scales, and open comment boxes (see Appendix B). The authors collected the responses from the six open comment boxes and copied the data across six tabs in a Google Sheet. The authors adopted an open coding or a primary-cycle coding method to analyze the data so that the student responses drove the coding, rather than a predetermined concept.²⁰ At the end of each survey, students had the ability to opt-in for an in-person interview. These were semi-structured with nineteen questions (see Appendix C). Students who participated in the survey were entered into a drawing to win a \$50 gift card, and those who participated in the interview were entered into an additional drawing to win a \$50 gift card. To ensure that various Latinx voices were being recognized, demographic information was collected from the interviewed students using Google Forms and compared to the demographic information collected from the surveys. Adkins and Hussey noted the importance of "the establishment of rapport between interviewer and participants" but felt that their interviews lacked cultural bonding because one author was not Latinx and the other was "not visibly Latina."²¹ In order to build rapport and cultural bonding in this study, the authors began each interview by introducing themselves as women of color, their educational experiences at both UNLV and predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and how the research project started. Although the researchers originally intended to alternate between interviewing and note taking, they ultimately decided that it was important for the Latina researcher to be the one asking questions and responding to participants. A draft of the interview questions was tested on two Latinx student employees, and their feedback influenced the final version of the questions. All the interviewed students consented to being voice recorded which allowed for the researchers to utilize a transcription service.

LIMITATIONS

Thirty minutes into the eighth student interview, the participant asked the researchers, “I’d actually like to ask you, what is Latinx? Is that...I haven’t heard of that term before.” The title of the research project shared with students was “Latinx Students in a Hispanic-Serving Institution’s Academic Library” and the survey eligibility included affirmation that “I am Hispanic, Latinx, Latina, Latino, AfroLatinx, etc.” This student obviously knew that they were a part of the group that was being researched since they participated in both the survey and the interview, but clearly they were part of the 76% of people who had not heard that term.²² The researchers realized that they should have been asking students what term they preferred, but the researchers did not feel that they could change the interview questions.

The promotional email subject “Quick Libraries Survey” might have created a limitation by influencing student participation. It was possible that students who did not use the UNLV libraries (or did not use them often) self-selected out of completing the survey. Additionally, there was an error in the survey at question 12 (see Appendix A). Students who said that they had unscheduled interactions with library staff were supposed to see five follow-up questions with a Likert scale to rate different aspects of those interactions. Instead, those questions were skipped, and students went straight to a question with an open comment box where they could share additional information about these unscheduled interactions. Students who did not report having any scheduled or unscheduled interactions were not offered an opportunity to explain why they have not used library services.

The interviews were conducted in person from February 28, 2020 through March 10, 2020. On March 11, the UNLV campus was notified to prepare to transition to virtual instruction in April. On March 12, the campus was notified to prepare to transition to virtual instruction immediately. It was possible that people who normally would have been interested in being interviewed chose not to participate because of the lack of information about COVID-19 at that time. Additionally, although the researchers felt they hit the data saturation point when they had at least one interview participant from each of the tracked demographics (see Appendix D), they believe the research would have benefited from having multiple people from each demographic. Finally, they were not able to pay each participant. The grant funding received from Simmons University was used for professional transcription of interviews. The two \$50 gift cards were purchased by the researchers.

FINDINGS

The survey was sent out to a total of 6,190 students, and 705 students completed it for a response rate of 11%. From the survey respondents, fifteen students were interviewed (see Appendix D) with varying Latinx demographics. Results regarding library usage, cultural representation, and perceptions of librarians were collected during the survey. A large amount of the information regarding Latinx identities was gathered during the interview stage due to the introspective and probing nature of the semi-structured interviews. The findings are organized into four categories: (1) Latinx identities; (2) past and current library usage; (3) cultural representations in the library; and (4) perceptions of librarians. These were drawn from the survey responses, interview transcriptions, or a combination of both.

Latinx Identities

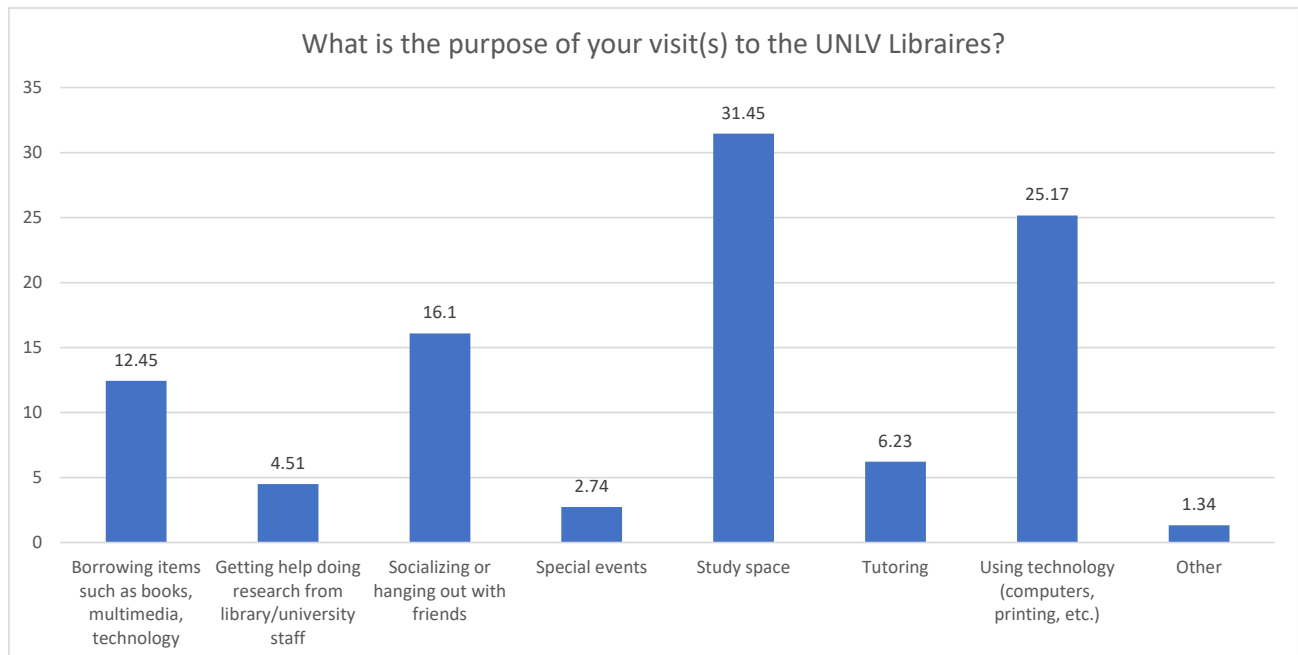
Of the fifteen students interviewed, twelve felt that their Latinx identities influenced their experiences at UNLV, and eight out of fifteen students felt that they were positive. A quote provided by one of the interview participants captured the spirit that many of the students expressed, “You just kind of have a connection. Latinos are very jovial, wonderful, warm people. And when you know someone’s Latino or Latina, you just get this instant connection, and it just feels good.” Four out of fifteen students felt that their Latinx identities negatively influenced their experiences at UNLV. One student, a female biology major, spoke about being the only or one of the few Latinx students, and being the only or one of the few women. She said, “I feel like I lost the lottery. I was born a female. I was born Latina and multiracial. I was born into a single-parent household. I feel like I almost lost the lottery, but because of it I have such a strong character that a lot of other people don’t have.” Another student originally said she did not feel different because of her identity, but later in the interview described being targeted by one of her professors.

Two students felt that UNLV was not Latinx enough. One grew up in the San Francisco area and noticed that Latinx people in Las Vegas were drastically different from those back home, especially in regard to being monolingual. Another was an English major and he said, “UNLV is one of the most diverse schools, it’s one of the tag lines they like to put up, but the thing with academia is that it’s still very white,” and he felt unprepared to fit into “Anglo American culture.” Three out of fifteen students had unexpected relationships with their Latinx identities at UNLV that were neither positive nor negative. One felt like his identity as a Latino and as an immigrant did not affect his experiences at UNLV.

Another student in this category provided a different perspective than the previous fourteen interview participants. When asked about her Latinx identity at UNLV, she referenced the tossed salad versus melting pot metaphor. The melting pot, which is a metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming homogenous, has been used less due to its assimilationist sentiment. The tossed salad metaphor allows for people to retain their different identities while also integrating into one society. The interviewee said, “I think we are more a melting pot than the tossed salad. I think the tossed salad thing is exclusionary and I don’t like it. I do like the melting pot.” Even though this student was a beneficiary of a program for underrepresented students, she felt these programs were actually a problem, “I get the impression that there’s quite a bit of animosity regarding the groups that are there...it really actually hurts a pretty big population of students that can’t identify as one of those things. And then, they’re not feeling really the majority.” The interviewees’ perceptions and experiences as a Latinx student at UNLV were shaped by their past, and there was no singular monolithic experience shared by the interviewees.

Past and Current Library Usage

The survey asked four questions regarding students’ usage of libraries. Before attending UNLV, Latinx students reported using public libraries at a higher rate than they used school libraries. Out of 636 respondents, 555 (87%) visited public libraries while only 478 (66%) visited their school libraries. The survey data showed fairly consistent school library usage through elementary, middle, and high school. However, interviewees remembered using these libraries differently. Memories about elementary school libraries tended to be focused on books and people while memories about secondary libraries were about utilizing the space for non-reading needs. One interviewee said her elementary school library “was just a beautiful space to be in. Everyone was so friendly, and I think you could win things for reading, so it was really encouraging for people to read.” When questioned about her high school library, she said, “I did have to take my first AP exam there. Yes, it wasn’t a place where I was like, oh I can go there and be in there. It was more of I have to go here to finish this thing for class because the teacher said you have to go there.”

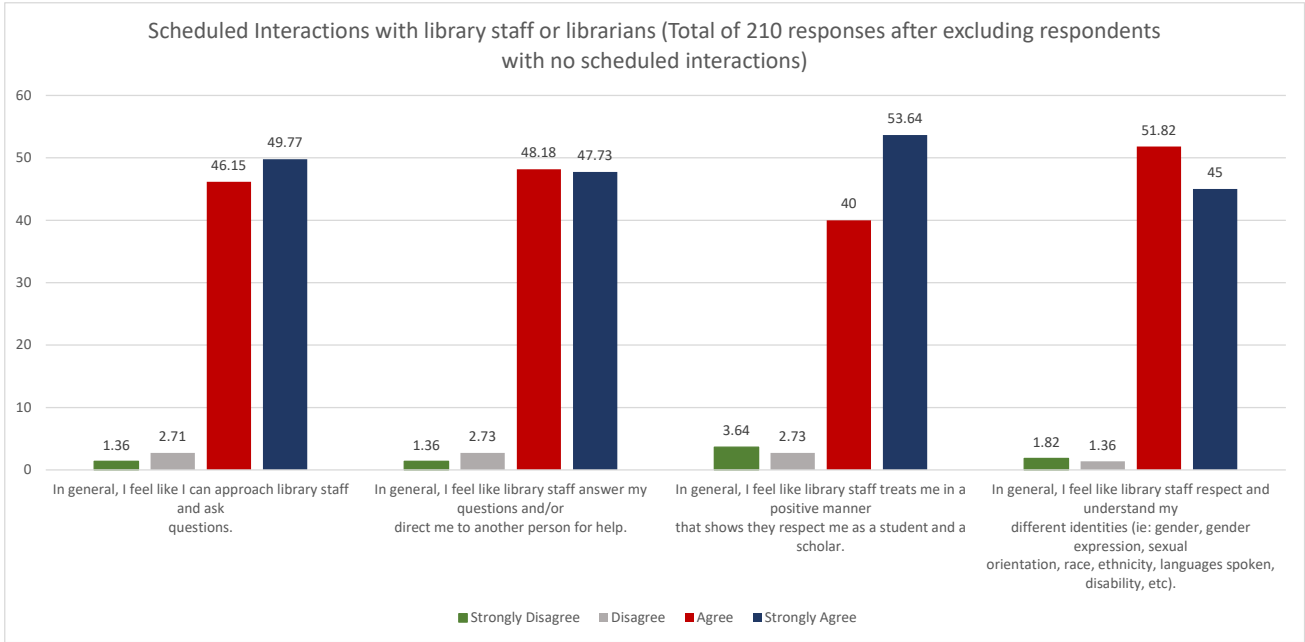


One interesting finding was that 22% of surveyed students reported visiting a public library recently. When asked about their UNLV library usage, 630 out of 652 (97%) respondents said they visited one of the campus libraries in the last six months and 533 out of 652 (81%) said they visited the university libraries at least once a week. The survey asked for the purpose of those visits and had open comment boxes where students could share positive or negative aspects of the libraries. 94% of students used the libraries as a study space, and 56% of positive comments were about how much students liked the space. Although 75% of students used the libraries for their technology such as computers or printers, almost no students had positive things to say about the tech. 15% of the negative comments were technology complaints, specifically about the lack of outlets, the slow speed of Wi-Fi, printers, and computers, and the terrible cell phone coverage. The third most popular use (16%) for the libraries was socializing. The popularity of campus libraries has created tension between students who needed a quiet study space or group study room and those who wanted a place to hang out with friends. 46% of negative comments were crowd complaints. These included comments about overall noise levels as well as lack of seating, furniture, and group study areas. This data showed the importance of maintaining (or even increasing) quiet study areas, group study areas, and access to quality technology. There was no doubt that Latinx students were using library spaces.

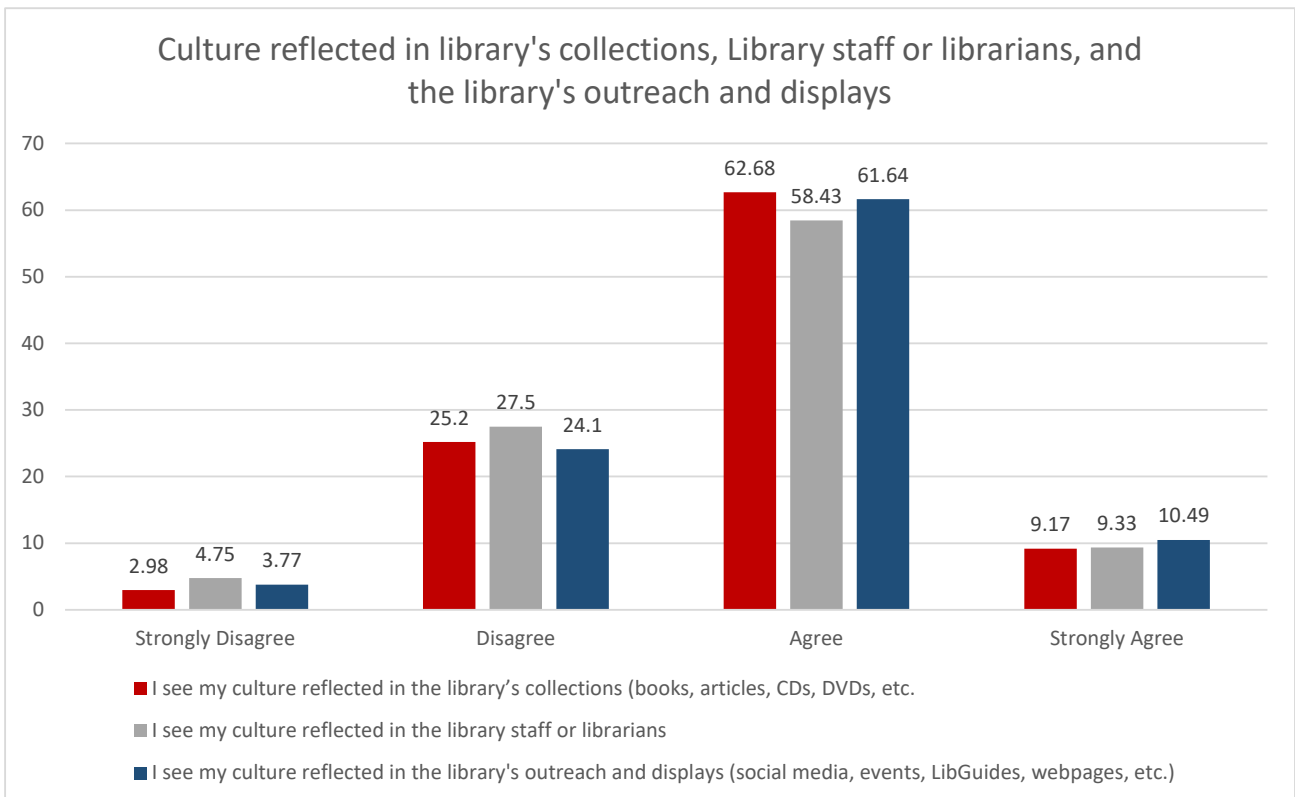
In the fifteen interviews, students offered more details about how they were introduced to the libraries' resources and how they did or did not utilize them. Twelve interviewees said their first introduction was through a campus tour or program orientation, but these were described as very brief uninformative experiences. One student remarked that all they could remember was quickly walking through the main library to get out of the heat. Thirteen interviewees had library instruction as part of a course (usually English 102 composition classes, but also in first-year experience courses or upper division classes) and this was where many felt that they truly understood resources the libraries contained. However, for some students, these seventy-five minute one shots were not beneficial and left them feeling confused. A first-year student described a library instruction session where she struggled but did not ask for help. She said, "I don't want to bother anybody...I'll be fine. I can do it on my own. And I was able to do it on my own and I was okay, but I do wish I would have been more assertive and been able to speak to someone." Students were aware that help exists, but they were reluctant to take advantage. A student who attended UNLV for over four years said, "I know that you can talk to a librarian and then they can help you with research, but I myself haven't done it yet. I don't know if maybe it's because I'm too prideful, like, I can do this myself, or if I just don't know exactly how it works." Finally, a student who was in their second-to-last semester remembered, "in [English] 102, we're always referred to the library. I don't know if it's an intimidation thing, like, I don't think I've ever properly used the resources here. I know they exist, but it's finding the time to come and ask about them and dedicating however many hours to sitting here and learning how to use a library...I feel like, as an academic, using a library is a skill that I do not have, and I cannot say that I have ever adequately learned how to use the library like that." These interviews emphasized the importance of providing several library instruction opportunities throughout students' academic careers. Additionally, there was clearly a disconnect between knowledge of services and utilization of services. Neither the surveys nor the interviews revealed a simple answer for how librarians could make this connect for Latinx students.

Perceptions of the Library

In the survey, Latinx students were questioned about their feelings in the libraries, their interactions with library staff, and how they viewed cultural representation in different parts of the libraries. The vast majority of Latinx students (91%) agreed that they had a general sense of belonging in the libraries. Slightly fewer students (84%) agreed that they felt connected to the libraries' resources, spaces, faculty, and staff. However, only 60% of students reported having unscheduled interactions with staff at different service desks or through email, online chat, or phone calls. When it came to scheduled interactions with staff through things like library instruction sessions, research consultations, or outreach events, the number of participants dropped down to 36%. Once again, the researchers found that students were not actually utilizing services.



Students who had scheduled interactions (which were more likely to be with librarians rather than student workers) were asked follow-up questions. Students had almost exclusively positive experiences when it came to asking questions, having questions answered, and being treated well. The last question specifically asked about staff respecting and understanding students’ different identities (i.e.: gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, disability, etc.). The researchers wanted students to know that the survey was not just asking about their Latinx identities but about all of their various intersecting identities. The results showed that in these scheduled interactions, students overwhelmingly felt welcomed as students and under-



stood in terms of their different identities. 97% of students agreed or strongly agreed that library staff respected their different identities. While many students were required to attend a library instruction session or schedule a research consultation, it was possible that students were more likely to participate in these library services if they already felt supported by libraries and library staff.

When students were asked questions regarding seeing their culture reflected in the libraries' collections, staff, outreach and displays, the results were positive but not as overwhelmingly positive as the previous results. 72% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they saw their culture reflected in the library's collections (books, articles, CDs, DVDs, etc.) while 28% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed. 68% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they saw their culture reflected in the library staff or librarians while 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The last question in the section asked students if they saw their culture reflected in the libraries' outreach and displays (social media, events, LibGuides, webpages, etc.). 72% agreed or strongly agreed compared to 27% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. While only 16% of students did not feel connected to the library, almost twice as many students reported not seeing their culture reflected in various parts of the library. These preliminary results led the researchers to believe that cultural reflection might not be connected to a sense of belonging.

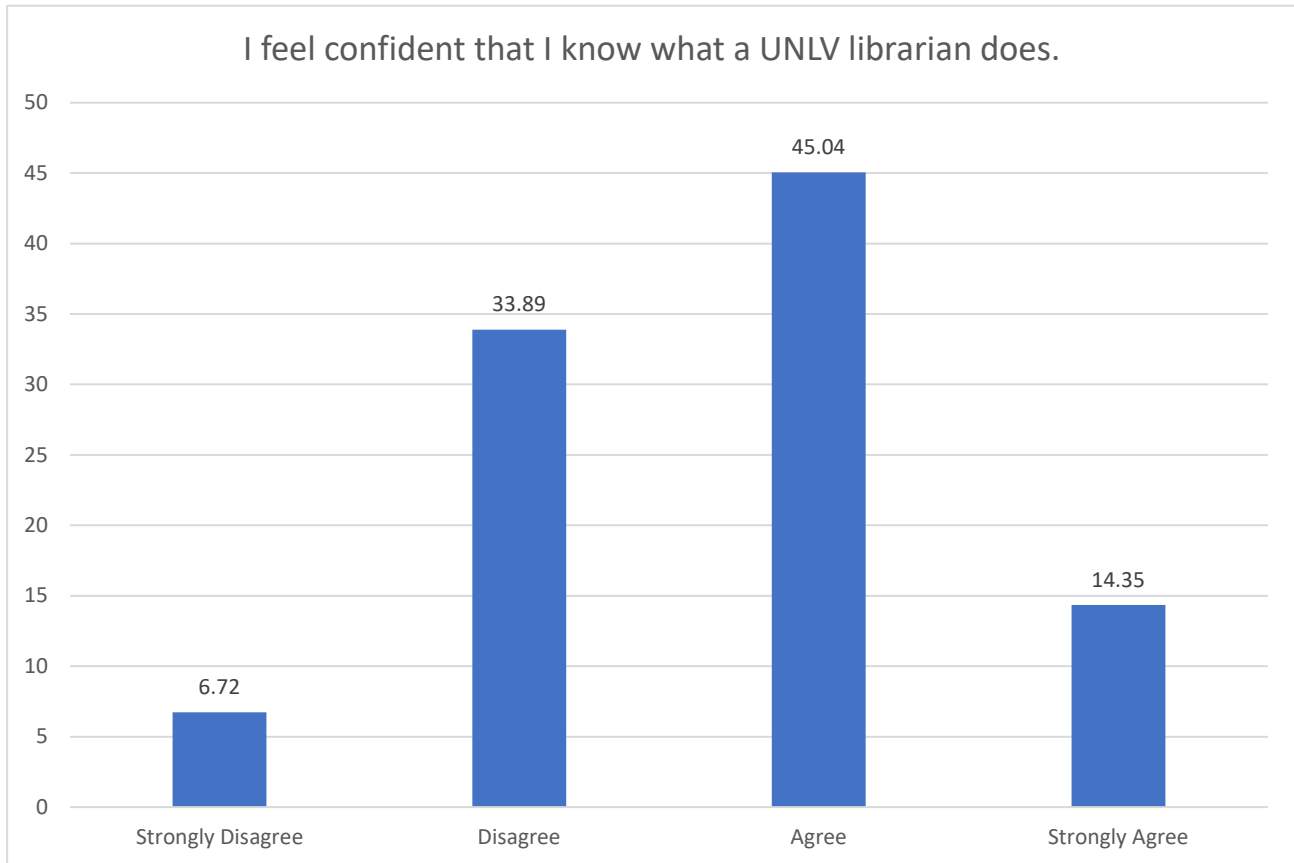
There were several opportunities for students to provide feedback via open comments in the survey. 322 students offered suggestions for the libraries, 385 shared complaints, and 488 had positive things to say. However, when asked to think about their culture reflected in the libraries and share any additional information they could think of, the students had very little feedback. There were only eighty-nine comments (not counting responses that said N/A or unsure).

Of the eighty-nine students who commented about cultural representation in the libraries, thirty students were generally positive about what they saw. They said things like "UNLV is a very diverse school, it would be hard not to see my culture being reflected." Three students wanted more bilingual staff, six students wanted more staff of color, and thirty-one students wanted to see more culturally relevant collections, displays, and events. These requests often overlapped in a single student's comment. For example, one student said, "My culture is not reflected in the library staff... I would like to have sections of books specifically in Spanish, instead of them just being scattered throughout." Some specific examples of representation students wanted to see included different nationalities such as: Cuban, Colombian, Peruvian, and Indigenous Peoples. In Las Vegas, the largest Latinx community is Mexican Americans, so it was unsurprising that people whose families come from other countries feel particularly underrepresented here where people often assume that all Latinx people are Mexican. Other students wanted to see other parts of their identities reflected, including requests for materials about the LGBT community, queer identities, queer Latinidad, trans Latinx identities, and Afro Latinos. Only seven students identified a specific example of cultural representation in the libraries.

On the other end of the spectrum, nineteen students did not want to see their culture in the libraries. It was not surprising that a percentage of students felt this way due to some open responses that expressed anger at this type of research. Some of these comments said, "There is a constant force pulling to shame white people. I found that terrible" and "No need for more inclusion, we are represented. PLEASE STOP PRESSING THE AGENDA."

In addition to the very different feelings between individual survey respondents, there were also some differences between survey respondents in general and interview respondents in general. In the survey, only nine students mentioned wanting to see more bilingualism in the libraries and a more diverse staff. However, twelve interviewees thought it would be beneficial to work with Latinx and/or Spanish-speaking librarians. The researchers felt that this discrepancy might have been because the students who volunteered to be interviewed were those who were more concerned with Latinx representation. It could also have been that the interviews allowed the researchers to discuss their own identities as women of color which created a safe space for students to express their feelings more honestly. This self-disclosure was nonexistent within the survey. Another reason this could have occurred was because interviewees had previously reflected on their Spanish-speaking parents taking them to public libraries as well as their own experiences learning to read and speak English. In the surveys no examples were provided, but in the interviews, the researchers were able to answer questions and describe what cultural representation might look like.

Perceptions of Librarians



Although both researchers attended UNLV and eventually completed MLIS degrees, neither felt that as an undergraduate student they understood the role of librarians in their education. The survey asked whether students felt confident that they knew what a UNLV librarian does. The students (41% or 389) who generally reported feeling confident about what librarians do were given an open comment box to respond to the question, “Can you describe what a UNLV librarian does?” The responses were coded into a range of understanding. One quarter (27% or 104) of students had no response. They either entered nothing into the comment box or entered something like “NA.” 5% (21) of students who felt confident they knew what a librarian does actually had very little idea when pressed. They said things such as “I have no idea what the librarians do here,” “what every librarian does,” and “monitors the library.” 16% (61) of students had a very weak idea. They used verbs like “assist,” “help,” “guide,” “support,” and “organize.” The statements were technically true but very vague. The researchers felt that a student who answered “helps the students with any questions they may have or things they may need” might not actually know what questions to ask. In responses that were coded as no idea or very weak idea, students often identified library tasks that were usually performed by student workers or non-librarian staff, such as checking out books or providing directions. 32% (124) of students had some idea with specific examples. These students said things like, “they help students navigate through the resources available to them at the UNLV library,” “they help you find resources for specific research projects you’re trying to complete,” and “I think maybe he or she do [sic] something with cataloguing or classifying library resources or help students looking for books or answering questions and maybe with computer applications.” Finally, 21% (79) of students had a very strong understanding of what librarians do with detailed, specific responses. These students may have experience working with a librarian or may even work in the library as employees. Their answers were quite long, but they said things like, “There are many roles a UNLV Librarian can play into. Whether it’s assisting students with research,

finding a book that they need for a class, or organizing thoughts. Each college has a unique librarian, but anyone can go and talk to any librarian at UNLV” and “UNLV librarians help students navigate the library including on-line databases. They host workshops to help students develop their writing skills, technical skills, and anything else they see fit regarding research papers, resumes, etc. Librarians are basically the wisest people in the library.” The 41% (7% strongly disagreed and 34% disagreed) of students who said that they did not feel confident about what a librarian does simply went on to the next survey question.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results, the researchers have developed four recommendations. The first is to hire Latinx people at all levels within academic libraries. Students did not differentiate between student workers, non-librarian staff, and librarians. It is imperative to hire people who have a common connection and culture in each of these positions. It is also important for librarians to describe their roles and responsibilities to students so they can develop a better understanding of potential services that may benefit their academic careers.

Second, libraries should increase inclusive collections, displays, and events. The surveys and interviews revealed that many students do want to see their culture reflected in their university libraries, which can be promoted in these ways. Even though only a small number of surveyed students specifically requested this, most interviewed students did. Students may not realize that this is even an option in academic libraries. Each library should speak with students and other patron groups to understand what they would like to see in the spaces. People who did not want to see their culture reflected in the library were in the minority. Additionally, as Dr. Nicole Cooke pointed out in essential textbook *Information Services to Diverse Populations* “learning how to compassionately and competently serve diverse user groups will enable library professionals to serve all users.”²³

When interviewed and surveyed, many of the students did not differentiate between university and library actions. For example, if the libraries posted a flier for a university event, students sometimes attributed it to the libraries. If the library offered an outreach event, the students sometimes thought it was hosted by the school. Additionally, tutors who worked *for* the academic success center but worked *in* the main library were viewed as library staff. A student who had a negative experience with a tutor included it as a negative interaction with library staff. It is essential to make changes within the library to connect with and affirm Latinx students, but if the entire institution is not active in these changes, then this inaction will reflect on all of the campus units including the library.

Finally, Latinx students are not a monolith, and each person’s backgrounds and experiences shape their views and their needs. To understand how the spectrum of Latinx students perceive their institutions and libraries, colleges and universities need to conduct their own research. The results demonstrated that Latinx students do not have a singular experience, and depending on their past and their current environments, their lives can be drastically different. A student who attends an HSI can have a profoundly different experience than a Latinx student who attends a PWI. The researchers interviewed students who attended both, and their positive perceptions of diversity at UNLV were strongly influenced by the negative experiences at their previous institutions. It would be beneficial to both PWIs and HSIs to understand their Latinx students by listening to their views of the school. It is also imperative to seek out Latinx collaborators to conduct similar studies. If an institution does not have a Latinx librarian or professor interested in this work, researchers should pay a Latinx student to assist. The authors felt that having a Latina librarian lead the interview and share her experiences created an open environment, especially when discussing personal information. Having a Latinx person lead the conversation and intertwine their knowledge is valuable and irreplaceable.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE 1		
Survey Participant Attributes (n=697)		
	Attribute	Number of Participants
Do you live on campus?	NO	621
	YES	56
Are you currently employed?	NO	234
	YES	442
Are you a first-generation college student?	NO	143
	YES	251
What region(s) are you and/or your family from?	North America	504
	Central America	94
	South America	49
	Caribbean	60
	Other	26
At what point did you and/or your family come to live in the United States?	My grandparents, great grandparents, etc.	251
	My parents came to the United States	467
	I came to the United States	51
Is English your first language?	Yes, English is my first and only language	182
	Sort of—I also learned another language at the same time	252
	No, English is not my first language	210
	My English language background is complicated	18

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

These five questions are an opportunity for us to get to know you as a person.

1. Do you live on campus?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Are you currently employed?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes
 - i. (if yes) During the semester, I work on average 1-10 hours per week
 - ii. (if yes) During the semester, I work on average 11-20 hours per week
 - iii. (if yes) During the semester, I work on average 21-30 hours per week
 - iv. (if yes) During the semester, I work on average 31-40 hours per week
 - v. (if yes) During the semester, I work on average more than 40 hours per week
3. Are you a first generation student? (You are a first-generation college student if neither of your parents have a college degree)
 - a. No I'm not a first-generation student
 - b. Yes I am a first-generation student
4. We would like to have a representative sample that includes Latinx people from various parts of Latin America. Which region(s) are you and/or your family from? Select all that apply.
 - a. North America (Mexico)
 - b. Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama)
 - c. South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela)
 - d. Caribbean (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, etc.)
 - e. Other (please specify below) [open comment box]
5. We would like to have a representative sample that includes Latinx people with various backgrounds. At what point did you and/or your family come to live in the United States? If the answers are different for the different sides of your family, please select all that apply.
 - a. My grandparents, great grandparents, great great grandparents, etc. came to the United States
 - b. My parents came to the United States
 - c. I came to the United States
 - i. (if respondent came to the United States) At what age did you come to permanently live in the United States? [open comment box]
6. We recognize that students might have different educational experiences in the United States depending on their language background. We would like to understand the relationship between English language background and library experiences. Is English your first language?
 - a. Yes, English is my first and only language
 - b. Sort of—I also learned another language at the same time
 - c. No, English is not my first language
 - i. (if respondent did not learn English as their first language) At what age did you start learning English? [open comment box]
 - d. My English language background is complicated (detail below) [open comment box]
 - i. (if respondent identifies their English language background is complicated) At what age did you start learning English? [open comment box]

These four questions are to understand your library experiences.

7. Before you started attending a college or university (whether UNLV or elsewhere), what kinds of libraries did you visit? Select all that apply.
 - a. Elementary school library (age 5-10)
 - b. Middle school library (age 11-13)

- c. High school library (age 14-18)
 - d. Public library (at any age)
 - e. Academic library in a college or university (where you were not enrolled as a student)
 - f. None of the above
8. What libraries have you visited in the past six months? Select all that apply.
- a. Any college or university library NOT at UNLV
 - b. Branch Library at UNLV (Architecture, Health Sciences, Law, Music, Teacher Development Resource)
 - c. Lied Library at UNLV
 - d. Public Library
 - e. None of the above
9. How frequently do you use UNLV Libraries? This includes Lied Library and/or any branch libraries (Architecture, Health Sciences, Law, Music, Teacher Development Resource Library)?
- a. Daily
 - b. Multiple times per week
 - c. Once a week
 - d. Once a month
 - e. Once a semester
 - f. Once a year
 - g. Never
10. What is the purpose of your visit(s) to the UNLV Libraries? This includes Lied Library and/or any branch libraries (Architecture, Health Sciences, Law, Music, Teacher Development Resource Library)? Select all that apply.
- a. Borrowing items such as books, multimedia, technology
 - b. Getting help doing research from library/university staff
 - c. Socializing or hanging out with friends
 - d. Special events
 - e. Study space
 - f. Tutoring
 - g. Using technology (computers, printing, etc.)
 - h. Other [open comment box]

These seven questions (and their follow ups) are an opportunity for us to understand your interactions with library staff.

11. I feel confident that I know what a UNLV librarian does.
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Agree
 - i. (If respondent agrees) Can you describe what a UNLV librarian does? [open comment box]
 - d. Strongly Agree
 - i. (if respondent strongly agrees) Can you describe what a UNLV librarian does? [open comment box]
12. Have you had any **unscheduled** interactions with library staff or librarians? This might be at the circulation desk, reference and information desk, online chat, or any interaction without a set starting and ending time.
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - (if respondent has had an **unscheduled** interaction) they are provided with a Likert scale for each of the following statements: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree
 - i. In general, I feel like I can *find* library staff when I have questions or need help.
 - ii. In general, I feel like I can *approach* library staff and ask questions.

- iii. In general, I feel like library staff answer my questions and/or direct me to another person for help.
 - iv. In general, I feel like library staff treats me in a positive manner that shows they respect me as a student and a scholar.
 - v. In general, I feel like library staff respect and understand my different identities (i.e.: gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, disability, etc.).
 - vi. Thinking specifically about these **unscheduled** interactions with library staff or librarians, is there any other information you would like to share about your experiences with library staff? [open comment box]
13. Have you had any **scheduled** interactions with library staff or librarians? This might be library instruction sessions with your whole class, a scheduled research consultation where you work 1-on-1 with a librarian, or any interaction that had a set starting and ending time.
- a. No
 - b. Yes
- (if respondent has had a **scheduled** interaction) they are provided with a Likert scale for each of the following statements: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree
- i. In general, I feel like I can **approach** library staff and ask questions.
 - ii. In general, I feel like library staff answer my questions and/or direct me to another person for help.
 - iii. In general, I feel like library staff treats me in a positive manner that shows they respect me as a student and a scholar.
 - iv. In general, I feel like library staff respect and understand my different identities (i.e.: gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, disability, etc.).
 - v. Thinking specifically about these **scheduled** interactions with library staff or librarians, is there any other information you would like to share about your experiences with library staff? [open comment box]

For the following questions, your culture can refer to any of your different identities (i.e.: gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, disability, religion, etc.). Likert scale options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

- 14. I see my culture reflected in the library's collections (books, articles, CDs, DVDs, etc.)
- 15. I see my culture reflected in the library staff or librarians
- 16. I see my culture reflected in the library's outreach and displays (social media, events, LibGuides, webpages, etc.)
- 17. Thinking specifically about your culture being reflected in the library, is there any other information you would like to share? [open comment box]

The following questions are about how you feel when you are in the UNLV Lied Library and/or branch libraries. Likert scale options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

- 18. I feel a general sense of belonging when I'm in the UNLV Lied Library and/or branch libraries.
- 19. I feel welcomed as a student, scholar, and person when I'm in the UNLV Lied Library and/or branch libraries.
- 20. I feel connected to the library's resources, spaces, and/or faculty and staff when I'm in the UNLV Lied Library and/or branch libraries.
- 21. What are some positive things about UNLV Libraries? [open comment box]
- 22. What are some negative things about UNLV Libraries? [open comment box]
- 23. What changes or additions would you like to see in the UNLV Libraries spaces, services, collections, items, resources, etc.? [open comment box]

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your major, what year are you in, and what are you planning on doing after college?
2. How many days are you on campus taking classes? Walk us through a typical day when you're on campus at UNLV.
3. Walk us through a typical day when you're not on campus at UNLV.
 - a. Potential follow up questions: Do you have any responsibilities outside of going to school like caring for family members or working or household responsibilities?
4. How do you think that your cultural background as a Latinx student here influences your experiences here at UNLV?
5. When you have to do research for a class, where do you go to get help?
 - a. Potential follow up question: If you got stuck, what person or resource would you go to for help?

In the survey, we asked about your history using school libraries, public libraries, and potentially other college or university libraries.

6. Thinking about the time from when you were born until you were 10 years old, which is usually 5th grade in the United States, what kinds of libraries did you use during that time?
 - i. Potential follow up questions: Who took you? What did you do in those libraries? How did those libraries make you feel?
 - ii. Potential follow up question: During this time, would you consider yourself a reader?
7. Thinking about the time from when you were 11 years old to 18 years old, the middle school and high school years, what kinds of libraries did you visit during that time?
 - i. Potential follow up questions: Who took you? What did you do in those libraries? How did those libraries make you feel?
 - ii. Potential follow up question: During this time, would you consider yourself a reader?
8. Are there any other libraries you visited before you came to UNLV? Can you talk to us about those?
 - i. Potential follow up questions: What did you do in those libraries? How did those libraries make you feel?
 - ii. Potential follow up question: During this time, would you consider yourself a reader?
9. Besides the Libraries at UNLV, what other libraries are you still using?
 - a. Potential follow up question: What do you like about those libraries?
 - b. Potential follow up questions: Do you consider yourself a reader now? What does being a reader mean to you?
10. How did you become familiar with UNLV libraries? (potential suggestions: orientation, tours, classes, etc.)
11. Do you know that the library has outreach events like therapy dogs, voter education workshops, or tabling with library staff?
 - a. If yes: Have you participated in any of these outreach activities? Why or why not?
 - b. If no: What kinds of outreach activities would interest you? What would influence whether or not you attended?
12. What interactions have you had with UNLV library staff or librarians? Consider employees at the desks, in the classrooms, in the online chat, through email, etc.? What were those interactions like?
 - a. Follow up question: What words would you use to describe the UNLV library staff or librarians?
13. Have you had any experiences in the UNLV libraries that stand out because they were positive or negative?
14. Do you feel safe when you're in the libraries? What contributes to that feeling?
15. Have you ever interacted with any librarians (anywhere) who were Latinx and/or spoke Spanish? Do

you think there are or would be any benefits to working with a Latinx librarian and/or a librarian who spoke Spanish?

16. Do you feel like you see your culture (which you can identify however you want to) reflected in the materials that we have, the events that we have, the stuff that's on the wall, the displays that we have here in our library?
17. Have you ever considered becoming a librarian? Why or why not?
18. What changes or additions would you like to see in the UNLV Libraries spaces, services, resources, etc.?
19. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experiences as a Latinx student at UNLV in general or in the library specifically?

APPENDIX D

TABLE 1

Interview Participant Attributes (n=15)

	Attribute	Number of Participants
Are you currently employed?	NO	4
	YES	11
Are you a first-generation college student?	NO	4
	YES	11
What region(s) are you and/or your family from? (Select all that apply)	North America	10
	Central America	2
	South America	2
	Caribbean	2
	Other	1
At what point did you and/or your family come to live in the United States?	My grandparents, great grandparents, etc.	5
	My parents came to the United States	10
	I came to the United States	0
Is English your first language?	Yes, English is my first and only language	1
	Sort of—I also learned another language at the same time	8
	No, English is not my first language	6
	My English language background is complicated	0

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