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**Program Evaluation of Existing TELACU CSP Alumni Network and Outreach Strategies:
Final Proposal**

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Abstract

Previous program evaluation studies that assess alumni engagement are often conducted in university settings, which produce key communication strategies that optimize and enhance alumni engagement in that respective field. However, there is a discrepancy in the literature that examines alumni engagement in nonprofit organizations – which may contribute to the lack of alumni engagement. To address this discrepancy, a community-engaged research approach and program evaluation will be conducted in collaboration with the TELACU College Success Program to identify key communication developments and strategies to optimize alumni engagement and foster community among alumni. The next steps include developing and distributing a self-reported alumni survey that gauges their needs and interests within the organization. The data collected from the self-reported survey will aid in the overall assessment of current communication strategies and outreach methods within the TELACU College Success Program. The results of this study will ultimately, contribute to shifting standard program evaluation methods into integrating community-engagement frameworks and practices for optimal reflection.

Keywords: Program Evaluation, Community-engaged Research, Alumni Engagement

**Program Evaluation of Existing TELACU CSP Alumni Network and Outreach Strategies:
Final Proposal**

Given the limited amount of resources that nonprofit organizations have access to, research and discourse on this particular topic are important ways to generate more resources and build community in nonprofit organizations. It is also important to acknowledge that the concept of fostering and sustaining alumni engagement has been a key strategy that universities and nonprofit organizations employ within their respective management systems. However, it should be duly noted that alumni engagement has only been predominantly researched in university settings – exacerbating the lack of literature that evaluates alumni engagement in nonprofit organizations. Additionally, Latinx alumni engagement has been vastly understudied which not only creates a larger knowledge gap on alumni engagement but also on the Latinx demographic overall. This assertion can be supported by Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al. (1999), who argue that “Only in recent years with the emergence of Latino university scholars and think tanks has basic research been undertaken that promises to better inform mainstream institutions and decision makers about Latino constituencies.” (Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al., (1999), p.7). The discrepancy in the literature on this topic may also be attributed to a crucial point that Creswell (2018) brings forth – which is that the concept of selecting a research topic should be applicable in multiple settings. Creswell contends that “the issue of whether the topic should be studied also relates to whether anyone outside the researcher's own immediate institution or area would be interested in the topic” (Creswell (2018), p.29). Fortunately, in this case, assessing Latinx alumni engagement in nonprofit settings should be conceptualized as a mutually beneficial strategic opportunity for key stakeholders and nonprofit organizations. This point can be particularly validated by Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al. (1999), who explain that “The absence of more pertinent knowledge

about Latinos in the independent sector is damaging not only to Latino interests but also to the interests of the sector itself. Latino donor practices and giving potentials, for example, are often misunderstood by mainstream foundation and nonprofit executives owing to the failure of existing research and practice to account for the particularities of Hispanic culture, experience, and motivation” (Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al., (1999), p.7-8). In essence, the contents of this research topic can undoubtedly be applied to several nonprofit organizations and other workspaces that are similarly structured suggesting that the outcome(s) of this research will constructively contribute to the literature.

In collaboration with The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU) College Success Program (CSP), the relevance of developing and/or implementing new outreach and communication strategies will not only provide a seamless transition of graduating TELACU CSP Scholars into the TELACU CSP alumni program but will also contribute to a consistent timeline of engagement opportunities and outreach practices that best serve the alumni community. Given that the effects of COVID-19 have shifted workplace dynamics and ethical practices across many different sectors, nonprofit organizations such as TELACU CSP have been directly impacted by the pandemic in this aspect. As a result, current outreach and communication efforts to alumni members are strictly limited to remote forms of communication, participation, and engagement. TELACU CSP’s current outreach and communication efforts include using the online platforms Constant Contact and Survey Monkey to notify alumni of upcoming workshops and events they can participate in. In addition, volunteer opportunities that support current TELACU CSP Scholars are offered to alumni as well as for opting in to receive alumni resources. Although these online communication platforms have continued to provide essential updates and resources to alumni members, the

TELACU CSP is currently undergoing a program development phase that can accurately capture the inclusive needs of all of its alumni members. Because the TELACU CSP alumni network extends beyond the Southern California region, the input from alumni that are based in different regions of the state and country must be assessed. Another integral point that should be considered is that most current alumni engagement strategies are centered on how alumni members can “give back” or provide a form of service for their community and former affiliates. Though this strategy and core concept is key for establishing alumni engagement, it is imperative that future alumni engagement efforts also factor in the needs of the alumni community based on any stage of their professional career. This particular point can be supported by Wallerstein et al. (2018) in which Wallerstein makes a clear assertion that encapsulates the importance of mutual learning during the research writing process: “A key strategy for mutual learning is the practice of cultural humility, in which all partners are reflexive about their positions of power, whether by race-ethnicity, education, or community status, and are willing to negotiate these dynamics” (Wallerstein et al., (2018), p.24). Given that this research proposal intends to put Wallerstein’s theoretical ideas into practice, this can be achieved by actively strategizing with the primary contact at my community partner to ensure that alumni experiences and/or preferences are actively included in any program developments and during the reflexing writing process.

In this research project, a community-engaged research approach was paired with the fundamental elements and practices of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and a mixed-methods approach to conduct a program evaluation of the existing TELACU CSP alumni network and the outreach strategies. The rationale behind implementing a mixed-methods approach allows for more variety in the responses of alumni (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data) – enabling alumni to capture their overall needs and interest in a short period of time. On

the other hand, a community-engaged research and PAR framework was used in this research to dispel the unequal power dynamics that some academic and research spaces inadvertently create when community experiences and voices are not reflected in the research writing process.

Minkler (2000) shares a similar standpoint, but solely emphasizes the significance of adopting PAR given that “what is distinctive about PAR is not the methods employed, which may be either quantitative or qualitative, but the active involvement of the people whose lives are affected by the issue under study in every phase of the process” (Minkler (2000), p.192).

Ultimately, a community-engaged approach paired with PAR frameworks and a mixed-methods approach directly identified relevant program recommendations from the alumni perspective to generate strategic tools that will maximize their engagement.

Literature Review

Although previous program evaluation studies have analyzed and described alumni engagement by examining alumni experiences and preferences, there is a lack of emphasis on examining how alumni demographics (i.e., race, gender, SES, etc.) may contribute to their overall engagement. Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al. (1999), expands on this notion by describing that “Latinos are especially misunderstood where their particular service needs and philanthropic potentials are concerned. Unfortunately, identifying appropriate response strategies in these important areas is complicated by the absence of more accessible national data on Latino groups” (Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al., (1999), p.7). Assessing alumni demographics can aid the process of developing survey questions that can give insight into overall alumni engagement. This concept becomes particularly relevant in TELACU CSP’s program evaluation because the racial makeup of the nonprofit organization is predominately from the Latinx community. Based on the findings from the Gonzales (2010) research article, trends in Latino philanthropy reveal that

“...Latinos become more comfortable with the U.S. philanthropic culture through training and practice. Once Latinos are trained, they will make the traditional ask and engage in more formal activity.” (Gonzales, (2010), p.61). In addition to this point, Gonzales draws on the notion that Latinx philanthropic engagement may require specific or personalized language in any form of communication to enhance their engagement, “If the organization has a good cause and makes ‘the ask’, Latinos will support it.” (Gonzales, (2010), p.60). Although the findings in the Gonzales (2010) research article center on examining Latinx philanthropy, these findings can be interpreted and applied as crucial suggestions and recommendations that can be implemented in TELACU CSP’s program evaluation. Namely, how the program evaluation collected and assessed alumni recommendations on how TELACU CSP could provide a continuum of professional development resources and opportunities for alumni.

To build off of this discourse, Rattanamethawong et al., (2015) propose that “Customer clustering and segmentation are two of the most important data mining methodologies used in marketing and customer relationship management. They use customer-purchase transaction data to track buying behavior and create strategic business initiatives.” (Rattanamethawong et al., (2015), p.647). Rattanamethawong et al. suggest that adopting marketing data analysis tools could be useful in tracking the specific program interest of their alumni. A possible outcome of adopting Rattanamethawong et al.’s suggestions would be for TELACU CSP to transition their current alumni database onto a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) online platform/database – in the effort of optimizing the effectiveness of their alumni engagement data analysis. CRM platforms such as [Salesforce](#) are very useful for tracking individual relationships, engagement, email blasts, and other forms of communication. Ideally, a transition to Salesforce would require lots of time and effort from the TELACU CSP staff, however, the results would

directly address the following program evaluation items as presented in **Table 1**. In collaboration with TELACU CSP, the contents of **Table 1** were developed to establish the overall project goals and outcomes, but also to help guide the survey questions that would ultimately assess the needs and interests of alumni members. Each description was identified as a key concept that should be implemented throughout the research process by TELACU CSP.

Table 1

TELACU CSP Alumni Program Evaluation Items

Development of Tools	Description
Communication Strategy Tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify optimal availability of alumni to volunteer, keep a record of program interests, and note their preferred contact method. ● Interest to increase alumni engagement and develop how we can do this in a virtual setting. ● Offer diversified opportunities for alumni who read emails, but don't engage.
TELACU CSP Alumni Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify effective outreach strategies based on alumni preference(s). ● Assess alumni needs now that they have entered/will enter the workforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potentially include current TELACU CSP seniors in anonymous surveys. ● Evaluate current engagement trends and keep track of how many alumni are actively engaged. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore methods to enhance alumni engagement and active members. ● Offer diversified opportunities for alumni who read emails but don't engage.

Note. The Development of Tools and Description were based on the current needs of the TELACU CSP team in regard to their outreach strategies for the alumni network.

Given that the outcomes of this research proposal are outlined in **Table 1**, similar viewpoints can be drawn in the Chi, Hongmei, et al. (2012) research article that assessed the role of alumni engagement in post-graduate settings. Although the findings in the Chi, Hongmei, et al. (2012) study do not fully translate to nonprofit organizations, one particular point highlights the essence of this research proposal: "From the alumni point of view, benefits of participating in

alumni groups allow them to stay in contact and meet their fellow classmates, professors and university personnel, even after several years beyond graduation. It also allows alumni to share professional or personal advice, explore mutual interests and exciting new opportunities in a collaborative way.” (Chi, Hongmei, et al. (2012), p.1391). There is a clear emphasis on building and maintaining an interactive relationship between alumni, current students, and the organization which is entirely what the purpose of community-engaged research and PAR is about. The role of each stakeholder in this relationship should be held to an equal standard just as their counterparts, which is why this research proposal will seek out effective platforms and strategies that could be useful in establishing this relationship.

Overall, the program evaluation of TELACU CSP’s current alumni network and outreach strategies allowed the TELACU CSP staff and alumni to become agents of change within the organization by playing an active part in the development of future alumni engagement efforts. Adopting a community-engaged approach and a PAR framework became foundational practices throughout the research writing process in the effort of creating a new system for program evaluations.

Methods

By adopting a community-engaged research framework, the data collection process evaluated TELACU College Success Program (CSP)’s existing alumni program and outreach strategies – in the effort of capturing the current needs and recommendations from alumni members. The program evaluation methodology was supported by a logic model which focused on describing the program’s resources, activities, and outputs (Program Evaluation Toolkit, pg.9). A mixed-methods approach was also used to develop a series of surveys that conducted an assessment of the self-reported needs and recommendations of the current TELACU CSP

alumni. To further dissect and analyze the data collected from the survey responses, a thematic coding analysis process was adopted to sort and categorize the open-ended responses. Burnard (1991) claims that open coding shares a similar objective because the aim of this analysis is to “produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link the themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system” (Burnard, (1991), p.462) Because of this, the fundamentals of open coding were also incorporated into the methodology of this research project but specifically in the data analysis portion. Overall, the data produced reflected possible outreach strategies and programs that can be implemented in the current alumni program to maximize alumni participation/engagement and foster a stronger sense of community.

Background

The TELACU College Success Program (CSP) is a nonprofit organization that integrates four key components in its programming: **(1)** providing financial resources, **(2)** academic, leadership, and personal, and professional development, **(3)** college advisement and career guidance, and **(4)** encouraging Scholars to give back to the community. Aside from these key programming components, the TELACU CSP program provides one-on-one guidance, mentoring, and internship opportunities. The demographic composition of the program is largely first-generation Latinx undergraduate students who need the aforementioned key programming components. TELACU CSP’s commitment to ensuring the successful longevity of its Scholars and alumni has led the nonprofit organization to become a leading model for promoting Latinx economic, professional, and academic success.

Positionality

Considering the nature of community-engaged research, the positionality of the researcher must be firmly established upon the initial meeting with the community partner. This research framework hones in on the active involvement of the alumni, staff, community, and other key stakeholders during the writing and research process. Because of this, key concepts and definitions must be explained before engaging further in the research process. As a first-generation Latina undergraduate student who is currently a TELACU CSP Scholar, my positionality can certainly have an impact on how the research writing process is conducted. However, my involvement with the TELACU CSP staff has not extended beyond program participation until now. The importance of acknowledging my positionality during the entire community-engaged research project will ultimately allow me and my collaborators to actively engage in reflexive thought processes — ensuring that the final tools, strategies, and data produced will reflect an accurate assessment of the areas of improvement for current outreach and program strategies in the TELACU CSP alumni program.

Access, Role, and Building Trust

Understanding the accessibility to the community partner, role as a researcher, and the trust-building process during community-engaged research can help set the tone for a long-lasting and trustful relationship between both parties. Considering the processes involved in community-engagement research, a fundamental practice that should be upheld and constantly maintained is open communication. Naturally, open communication was an effortless process for myself and my community partner because the accessibility was already established from a direct connection to the organization. As a current TELACU CSP Scholar, my role as a researcher created a new relationship dynamic with the current TELACU CSP staff where I respected and upheld current confidentiality guidelines and practices. More specifically, my role

and responsibility as a researcher ensure that any self-reported survey that is administered adhered to the consent guidelines and multi-media release forms developed by TELACU CSP to protect privacy and confidentiality. Hence, the data collection process built-in measures to manage data securely in an effort not to compromise sensitive data that is self-reported by alumni members. Establishing and building trust among TELACU CSP staff requires a constant self-reflection of positionalities and roles so that trust can be reinforced at every stage of the research process. This idea is supported by Wallerstein et al., (2017) who describe six different types of trust: **(1)** critical-reflective trust, **(2)** proxy trust, **(3)** functional trust, **(4)** neutral trust, **(5)** role-based trust, and **(6)** trust deficit – which outline the dynamic relationships that could occur during trust-building stages. Currently, my trust-building process with TELACU CSP is at the proxy trust stage where partners are trusted because someone who is trusted invited them. However, it's important to note that the functional trust stage where partners are working together for a specific purpose and time frame, but mistrust may still be present can still occur (Wallerstein, N., Duran, B., Outzel, J. & Minkler, M. (Eds). (2017). Additionally, Gonzalez (2019) proposes another key communication concept that should be prioritized. The concept that Gonzalez (2019) proposes is focused on the spectrum of community engagement to ownership — which can be used in the context of assessing projects, programs, and campaigns. More specifically, the spectrum can be used “to assess current community engagement efforts and set goals for how efforts can advance along the spectrum towards greater community ownership” (Gonzalez, R. (2019), p.13).

Procedures

A mixed-methods approach was conducted to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the self-reported survey program recommendations from TELACU CSP alumni. To provide my

community partner with a brief overview of the goals and outcomes of the community-engaged research, a study information sheet was developed and given to the primary TELACU CSP contact. The contents of the study information sheet include outlining key research goals, a community partner description, and a methods overview. The surveys were administered via Survey Monkey by a current TELACU CSP staff member. It should be noted that the survey responses remained anonymous via Survey Monkey, however, one survey question allowed alumni to opt-in and provide their personal contact information for further follow-up. A brief overview statement and disclaimer were integrated into the survey to convey that TELACU CSP is collaborating with an undergraduate student to compile data to continuously enhance the TELACU CSP Scholar alumni experience. Moreover, consulting the TELACU CSP staff on the timeliness of the overall survey distribution also dictated when the survey responses were collected and analyzed. The survey drafting and distribution process began in mid-March and a survey reminder was sent in mid-April, which allowed for the data collection and analysis process to be completed by May.

Development of Tools

A logic model template was continuously updated to reflect TELACU CSP's needs and can be used to pinpoint the most effective communication strategies that work for their workplace dynamic. Additionally, an evaluation checklist was used to mark a progression of key ideas that have already been implemented throughout the course of the research process. These tools not only made the entire research process easy to navigate but also served as resources for my community partner in future programming endeavors. These two tools also contributed to the overall development of the TELACU CSP Alumni Interview Guide, which will be used by the TELACU CSP team in the near future.

Lastly, a survey template was also developed for the alumni to self-report ways in which they deem the current program to meet their current needs. The questions on the survey reflected how the alumni currently perceive their own involvement/engagement in the organization and then assess key categories or components that draw them into a sense of community. Shen et. al., (2020) designed a program evaluation study that found that “alumni envisioned their engagement as (a) behaving in ways that contribute to the academic unit, (b) communicating actively with the unit and fellow alumni, and (c) feeling emotionally attached to the academic unit.” (Shen, Hongmei, and Bey-Ling Sha. (2020), pg.5). Although the program evaluation in this study surveyed a different population, the results give insight as to which components alumni value in terms of their engagement, which can be included in this survey evaluation. To add to this idea, Priest, K. L., & Donley, S.’s (2014) program evaluation study found that “alumni mentors also identified several areas where they saw personal or professional development in themselves. They identified that through this experience they were also able to develop their mentorship skills through testing out leadership techniques they had learned in their careers. Mentors also reported that it reinforced the importance of having mentorship in all areas of life – beyond just career – as a source of guidance and feedback. Through the mentoring relationship, they felt as if they were giving back to both the student and the Leadership Studies program.” (Priest, K. L., & Donley, S. (2014), pg.122). A key component of this program evaluation is how professional development extends beyond the young adult age group and can be useful for adults. Our program evaluation and surveys will hone in on this idea and explore whether or not this is something that the TELACU CSP alumni would like to see more of.

One of the key considerations that were made is that current survey efforts by the TELACU CSP staff have already identified various program interests for alumni and have sent

targeted follow-up emails to these alumni directly via Outlook. Ultimately, our program evaluation and surveys would reflect internal consistency, a statistical concept that was valued in Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J.(2004) study. A key finding from the study revealed that “since the survey instrument had a high internal consistency, this was a promising tool for the college to conduct self-evaluation research, collect large scale data across the different teacher education programs in unit, and develop a transparent and efficient method to collect feedback on program effectiveness. Such data would be beneficial for all stakeholders including: faculty, administrators, future candidates, policy makers, accrediting agencies, and the community at large.” (Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J.(2004)., p.683). With this in mind, the program evaluation and survey response findings became a template for further examination/evaluation practices by TELACU CSP staff.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The software platform that was used to analyze the data collected from surveys was the data analysis tool already included in Survey Monkey. This platform provided useful information about when the responses were collected, how many clicks were received, and the overall number of respondents. The self-reported survey responses were then used to assess whether or not there was a significant finding/response that could be implemented into the current program. In addition to SurveyMonkey, Microsoft Excel was utilized to categorize and sort through the data, but also to generate graphs for each of the responses for a better understanding of the response distribution. These graphs showcase how each individual question varied and contributed to the larger discussion around alumni needs and interests. After the data was collected, several key themes/trends were identified via open coding analysis for further program recommendations.

Adaptive Work Plan

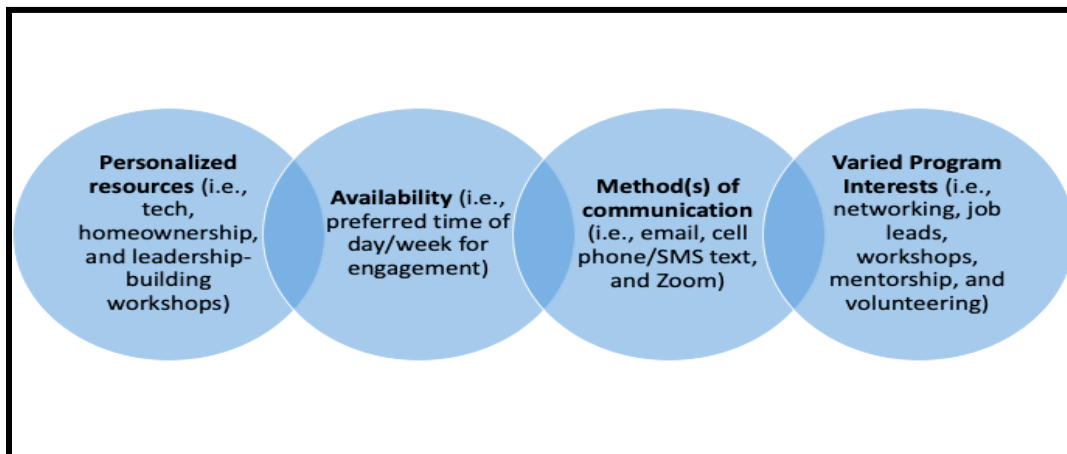
In efforts of upholding an initial communication agreement, the online organization platform, monday.com was approved by both parties to remain a constant form of communication. The platform allows both parties to collaboratively upload important documents, set item/task updates, and due dates, and link other online platforms to ensure efficiency. In sum, monday.com can be used as a productive communication tool to manage and oversee any major updates/statuses of the community-engaged research project. In addition to monday.com, a [Google Drive folder](#) was created and implemented as a means to upload documents for review.

Results

The results of the self-administered survey conveyed a series of key findings that reflect the current effectiveness of TELACU CSP's alumni network and outreach strategies. In addition, the results indicated a few areas of enhancement that should be considered for future alumni programming. By adopting a community-engaged approach paired with a mixed-methods approach – TELACU CSP was actively included throughout the development of the survey. A few key data trends/themes emerged in the results of the survey which are reflected in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1

TELACU CSP Alumni Survey Data Trends/Themes

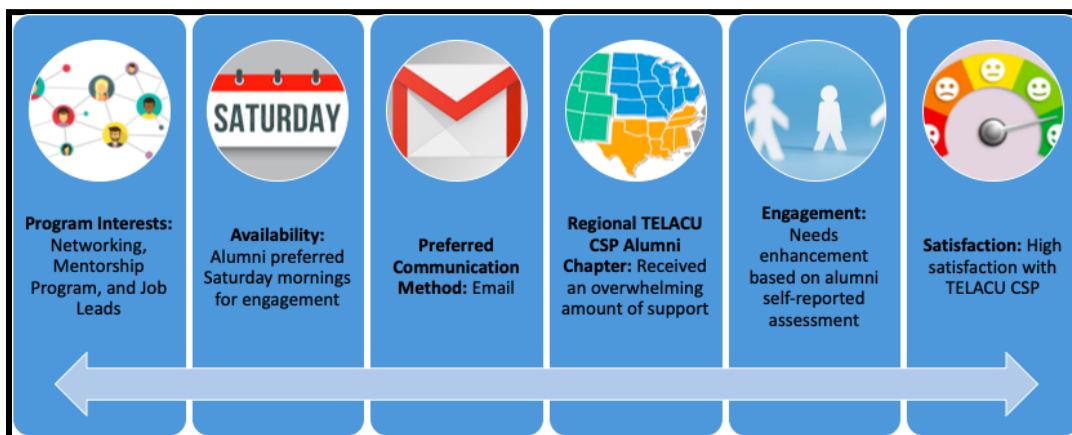


Note. These key data trends/themes were generated by a thematic coding analysis of the open-ended survey responses.

These key data trends/themes were self-reported by only a small percentage or fraction of the entire TELACU CSP alumni network, which is currently 1667 alumni members. Only 102 self-reported survey respondents shared their future alumni program recommendations, which amounts to 6% of respondents. Additionally, each of these key trends/themes was formed by all 11 survey questions and can be further explained in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2

TELACU CSP Alumni Survey Main Findings



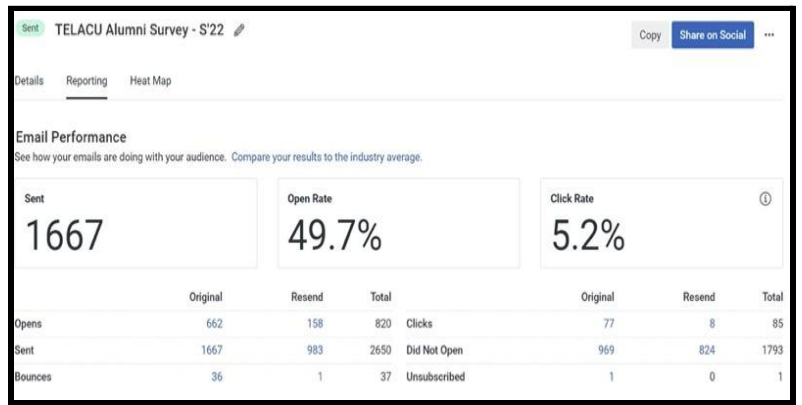
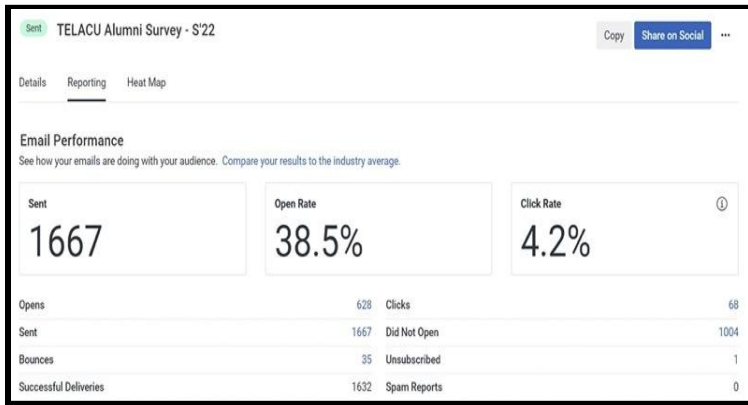
Note. These key data trends/themes were generated by a thematic coding analysis on the open-ended survey responses.

In each of the 6 key data findings, it can be noted that alumni have reflected their personal interests and needs for future alumni programming. The first program recommendation reveals the top 3 preferred program interests that are currently offered at the TELACU CSP program for their college scholars. However, in this context, these results are particularly relevant because the overall demographics of the alumni indicate that networking is such a vital resource that can be used in the workplace – not only for professional development but also for

future job opportunities. The availability of alumni members was also another key factor that plays an active role in determining their overall engagement. As noted above, alumni members preferred to be contacted for engagement opportunities on Saturday mornings. Although this is a strategy already in place at TELACU CSP, it is also important to note that the alumni schedules are mostly based on their full-time job and other commitments. The preferred method of communication was also clearly noted as email versus cell phone/SMS texting, and Zoom options. Given the nature of professionals using email on a daily basis, this concept is consistent with the data. This finding was also inadvertently supported during the data collection process, which can be seen in **Figure 4** – where there was a higher response rate after the initial outreach. Namely, when more respondents completed the survey after a survey reminder was sent on Outlook versus Constant Contact. A TELACU CSP Alumni Regional Chapter was important to consider because it can provide alumni members a means to foster community and build connections with other alumni members. The findings revealed that there was an overwhelming amount of support for future programming of this particular component, but alumni also felt that they needed a comprehensive and detailed plan that outlined how a regional chapter would be implemented. Additionally, alumni members self-reported and described their current engagement levels as “somewhat infrequent” or “infrequent”, which indicates that future alumni programming would have to take into account their needs, interest, and availability to optimize and enhance their engagement levels. In spite of their infrequent engagement, the majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the TELACU CSP program and that being a part of the program and alumni network contributed to their overall professionalism and their current professional roles.

Figure 3

TELACU CSP Alumni SurveyMonkey Results



Note. These images are screenshots taken directly from the SurveyMonkey data analysis software. **Figure 3**, outlines that most of the respondents did not open their email and view the survey.

Figure 4

TELACU CSP Alumni SurveyMonkey Results



Note. This image is a screenshot taken directly from the SurveyMonkey data analysis software. **Figure 4** highlights the specific days on which most respondents submitted their survey.

Ultimately, the data reveals that future alumni programming must carefully reflect the program interests, needs, availability, and preferred method of communication of alumni members.

Discussion

The main findings reveal that future TELACU CSP alumni programming should take into account the key data trends/themes that reflected the program needs and interests of the alumni. The overall data collection process was intended to assess those individual needs and interests but also give the alumni agency in the research process. Given the importance of interweaving a community-engaged approach throughout the writing and data collection process, this approach ensures that the alumni members have some input in the programming. Although this concept is not necessarily unfamiliar to the frameworks that some organizations adopt, it is something that should arguably always be at the forefront of any programming process. Ultimately, the findings of this particular research project have supported this concept and have revealed the value of alumni input – particularly how it can impact their engagement.

The larger discussions surrounding the implications of the finding suggest that even though the TELACU CSP alumni network and outreach strategies are already producing some engagement – there is room for continuous enhancement. In particular, the data collection process revealed that alumni are very open to providing additional follow-up information about their program recommendations. Because of this, it might be worthwhile to conduct either a quarterly or yearly survey to assess the needs of alumni. Needless to say, the availability for alumni may be limited and therefore should be seriously taken into consideration for optimal engagement strategies to be developed and adopted into future programming. Based on the level of current alumni engagement, it seems as though adopting recurring surveys might also contribute to fostering a greater understanding of their personal and professional life. This would be an important feature of the newly established alumni program because it would ensure that alumni members feel continuously valued and heard. From a research perspective, it is

imperative that each alumni member's input is collected and coded in such a way that it not only benefits the research and organization but that it makes an actual impact on the life and experience of that alumni. For instance, the purpose of creating and implementing an open-ended question in the survey was to allow alumni members to freely state their needs and interests. A vast majority of respondents expressed either a need or interest to be in receiving personalized resources, more networking opportunities, and their preferred communication outreach methods. This finding is significant because it aligns with the point that Shen, Hongmei, and Bey-Ling Sha. (2020), made on identifying key program interests to optimize overall engagement. By identifying the key program interests, future program evaluations will have an effective framework to follow. Although these were the main data trends/themes that were found, it should be noted that some of the responses were niche and would require the TELACU CSP program to install specific measures to contribute to the overall satisfaction of the alumni members.

One of the biggest takeaways from this data collection process was that the alumni indicated an overwhelming amount of support for a TELACU CSP Alumni Regional Chapter. The relevance of this program would not only help the current TELACU CSP staff optimize their time and efforts to provide personalized resources, but it would also help promote overall engagement. The main purpose behind introducing the Regional Alumni Chapter idea to alumni via survey was to get a sense of how that would not only fulfill their need for personalized resources but also increase their networking opportunities. This purpose also stresses the importance of networking in a transitional period after graduating college and navigating a workplace setting. Networking for professionals is not only about quantity but also about quality. Namely, the networks of personal and professional relationships that could be established in a regional chapter could contribute to the overall sense of building community. This notion was

also directly expressed by Chi, Hongmei, et al. (2012), which argue that one of the most important factors that contribute to overall engagement is alumni relationships and networks. This aspect of a regional chapter would build off of what TELACU CSP already does – promotes the economic and professional development of Latinx folks. It would ultimately carry on the legacy into a transitional period after the TELACU CSP experience where college graduates can hone their skills and knowledge from their undergraduate studies and also their holistic experience at TELACU CSP.

Although this research project found several relevant information on how TELACU CSP could optimize its outreach strategies to promote more alumni engagement, previous studies on alumni engagement also have reached a general conclusion that supports the findings in this study. What is worth noting is that for TELACU CSP in particular, the current alumni engagement was mostly centered around different program interests such as mentoring, volunteering, and workshops. This framework was already captivating alumni but the recurring need and interest for networking seemed to surpass the importance of these varied program interests. The rationale behind this may have something to do with the nature of being a professional and understanding the role that networking plays in securing future employment opportunities. Aside from this, alumni members expressed that networking opportunities would fulfill their professional goals and their personal goals. Some alumni members thought it would be worth mentioning that their goal was to simply reconnect with other alumni members from their cohort and catch up. Others mentioned that it would help them build a sense of community with other Latinx folks within a certain profession/industry.

Given that Latinx alumni engagement has previously been studied in either university or in philanthropic settings, this research project has contributed to the literature around Latinx

alumni engagement in nonprofit organizations that promote professional and economic development. Understanding Latinx alumni engagement is not only important in adult settings but can also be used to apply to younger Latinx demographics. Although the same research strategies will not be used in those demographics, the same concept can be applied to uncover the best methods and practices that can be used to create the best engagement setting. Because the Latinx population in the U.S. is growing exponentially, this research project can produce key findings that can even extend beyond the nonprofit sector and into advertising, media, and politics. The same observations were made by Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al., (1999), on how the current and newer Latinx generation is crucial to study and analyze for alumni engagement trends. Campoamor, D., Diaz et. al., (1999), would also agree that the relevance of this research project can actually impact the lives of Latinx folks immensely by giving certain individuals the knowledge on how to best reach or captivate the Latinx population.

Of course, the limitations of this research project included not having enough time, not collecting enough data, and other types of data (i.e., interviews) to obtain a comprehensive assessment of the current TELACU CSP alumni network and outreach strategies. Because the overall alumni network is so grand, further research efforts would require more time to develop or would require a research team to carry out multiple interviews. It would also be beneficial to have access to alumni member demographics such as age, gender, and other factors that may contribute to their overall engagement. However, having access to these specific demographics would have to be approved by the TELACU CSP staff – but given the current confidentiality agreement statements, this information cannot be accessed by and released to a researcher.

In conclusion, the next steps of this research project would include additional program recommendations that will be addressed and proposed in the TELACU CSP alumni interview

guide and program proposal. These documents will ultimately equip the TELACU CSP staff with the necessary information to implement a comprehensive and inclusive alumni program for their recent graduating TELACU CSP Scholars. If these next steps and program recommendations are implemented in such a way that the alumni can feel more connected and foster greater community among themselves, it will contribute to the enhancement of their overall engagement.

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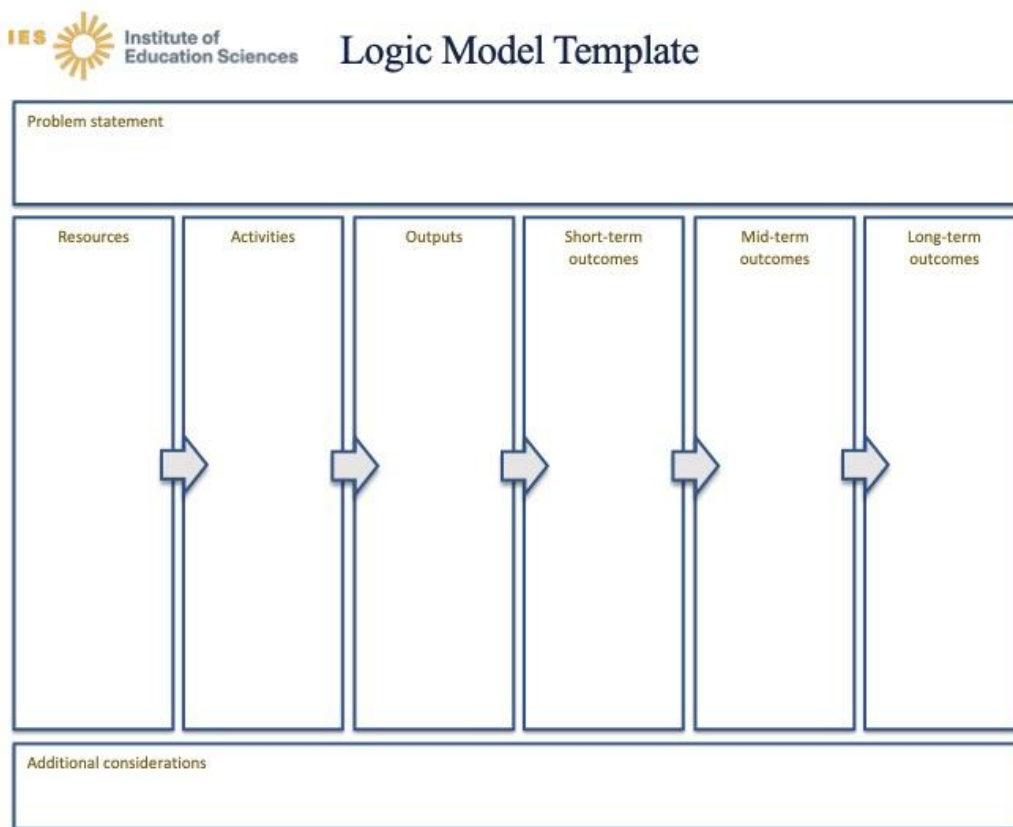
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Appendix

Appendix A. Logic Model Template



Appendix B. Data Quality Checklist

Data Quality Checklist

Validity

- External validity:** The extent to which an instrument or evaluation can be generalized to different contexts, such as other populations or samples.
- Internal validity:** The extent to which the study or instrument measures a construct accurately and is free of alternative explanations.

Reliability

- Internal consistency:** The items in a data source (for example, an assessment) consistently measure the same topic (for example, ratios and proportional reasoning).
- Inter-rater reliability:** Processes, such as training on coding interviews or scoring observations, are in place to ensure that data are collected consistently by multiple raters.
- Test-retest reliability:** Individuals receive the same score if tested twice on the same assessment.

Timeliness

- The data are current and collected within an appropriate time frame.
- The results of data analysis and interpretation are available when needed.

Comprehensiveness

- The data include sufficient details or contextual information.
- The data can be meaningfully interpreted.

Trustworthiness

- The data are free from manipulation or entry error.
- The data are as free as possible from bias, and known biases are identified.
- Processes, including training of data collectors, are in place to address potential sources of bias and error.

Completeness

- The data are collected from all participants in the sample.
- The data are sufficient to address all evaluation questions.
- There is a sufficiently small degree of missing data.
- The results are generalizable to other contexts (for example, other schools, districts, or state education agencies).

Appendix C. Study Information Sheet

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED PROJECT GOALS

Communication Tracker

- Identify optimal availability of alumni to volunteer, keep a record of program interest, and note their preferred contact method.
- Increase alumni engagement and develop a virtual setting for engagement.
- Offer diversified opportunities for alumni who read emails, but don't engage.

TELACU CSP Alumni Survey

- Identify effective outreach strategies based on alumni preference(s).
- Assess alumni needs now that they have entered/will enter the workforce.
- Evaluate current engagement trends and keep track of how many alumni are actively engaged.

UCLA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL CHANGE CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT

ASSESSING TELACU CSP'S EXISTING ALUMNI NETWORK AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES



TELACU COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM (CSP)

TELACU College Success Program (CSP) is a nonprofit organization that is committed to ensuring the successful longevity of the program's Scholars and Alumni. The program integrates four key components in their programming:

- Providing financial resources
- Academic leadership, and professional development
- College advisement and career guidance
- Encouraging Scholars to give back to the community

METHOD & ETHICAL RESEARCH PRACTICES

A community-engaged research approach will be used throughout the writing process and data collection process to ensure that the needs and interests of the Alumni are assessed at every stage. In addition to this, a mixed-methods research approach will be conducted to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the self-reported survey program recommendations from TELACU CSP Alumni.



Appendix D. TELACU CSP Interview Guide

TELACU Alumni Network Conversational Interview Guide
A Conversation Facilitated by TELACU College Success Program (CSP)

Introduction & Interview Overview Script:

Hello [interviewee name], thank you for talking with me today.

The TELACU College Success Program (CSP) will begin facilitating conversations with TELACU CSP alumni members to promote active engagement and foster a sense of community across the entire alumni network. Our goal is to gain your perspective on how the TELACU CSP team can best tailor future alumni programming to address your current needs and interests. The conversations collected will be invaluable in informing best practices for future alumni program recommendations and outreach strategies.

Our guided conversations will be audio-recorded with your permission and the conversation is expected to be about an hour. Any personal stories, opinions, recommendations, etc. that you share will not be associated with your name or person. All audio recordings will be securely maintained and notes/transcriptions will be made after the meeting. Please feel free to request that we stop audio-recording at any time.

Thank you again for your time and for sharing your stories and perspectives.

Guiding Conversational Questions: Listed below are the questions that will be the basis of our conversation today.

Personal Background Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your current professional role and your overall professional experience?
 - a. Were there any challenges or barriers to obtaining this position?
 - b. How could the TELACU CSP team have helped you navigate this professional role (i.e., management/leadership workshop)?
2. What are your overall professional/career goals?
 - a. How could the TELACU CSP team help you achieve these professional/career goals?