



SCOLA overview

Introduction

On April 3-4, 2009 the Memorial Student Center Committee Complex's for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture will host its 21st annual Student Conference on Latino Affairs (SCOLA). The conference serves as a forum where approximately 300 students from across the nation gather to discuss, analyze, and understand a topic that is pertinent to the Latino community in our nation. The conference theme for this upcoming year is: ***"Narrowing the Latino Education Gap: An American Crisis."*** Participants have the opportunity to attend concurrent sessions where they will hear prominent leaders involved in Latino empowerment in education. Representatives from the government, academia, the media, and leaders of the business sector will address their professional expertise and concern about the educational gap in the Latino population in the United States. The ultimate goal of the Conference is to enable the delegates attending SCOLA to gain the knowledge and capability to empower high school students, college students and encourage the leaders of their communities to seek solutions towards this growing concern.

Topic

The yearly conference topic is chosen after extensive background research, in-depth discussion amongst committee members, and helpful advice from faculty and student leaders at Texas A&M University. ***"Narrowing the Latino Education Gap: An American Crisis"*** is a topic that centers on a growing concern within the Latino population and our entire nation. As we entered into the new millennium, we analyzed the level of the level of education of Latino youth and the rising and alarming number of Hispanic high school dropouts in the United States. While there has been some improvement in the status of Latino education over the past decade, statistics still indicate that Latinos continue to drastically lag behind compared to the numbers of White and Black Americans. In 2005, the high school dropout rate in Hispanics was 22.4% compared to 6% of Whites and 10.4% of Blacks and the gap has been steady over the past decade.

We believe that now is the time to discuss and seek solutions toward improving our economic and social standing in the United States. A generation of uneducated, low skilled, low productive and low wage earners will only compound issues relating to social security, further impacting our current economic and educational crises. We believe that we are obligated to teach the next generation of high school and college students about our education crisis, and SCOLA is a perfect venue to discuss these overarching issues. In the past, SCOLA has invited prominent national and international presenters to speak on a wide variety of topics affecting the Latino community. This year we are focusing on the rising Latino high school dropout rate, the Dream Act and immigration, and Latino graduate student success.

Mission

SCOLA's dual-faceted mission is to provide a forum for students to discuss significant issues that impact the growing Latino population in our nation, and to foster exemplary leadership development among its members. This is achieved by bringing the focal point of Latino issues to Texas A&M University where Latinos are challenged, new opinions are formed, and a greater understanding of issues are addressed.

Through the intricate planning of each conference, SCOLA team members benefit by developing "real world" skills in marketing, development, and operations. This task yields tremendous experience and a sense of accomplishment as the conference ensues. SCOLA provides the opportunity and the vehicle for individuals to succeed in the planning and implementation of each detail of the conference. With every passing conference, SCOLA realizes its mission and goals and grows in strength.

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Student Conference on Latino Affairs website: <http://scola.tamu.edu>