

## Interdisciplinarity@WMU- Phase One planning Template

1. **Brief Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the proposed interdisciplinary initiative. What types of questions would the initiative ask? What types of complex problems would it seek to solve?

### Context

Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion of the Hispanic/Latino population in the U.S. increased from 16% to 18.4%. and is further projected to increase to 28% of the population by 2060 (U.S. Census, 2018). The Hispanic/Latino population is richly diverse and represents individuals across a multitude of racial identifies, people who have recently emigrated from a wide range of Spanish-speaking countries, and people with a multitude of complex, intersectional identities. According to the Pew Research Center, in Michigan, Latinos accounted for at least half of the population growth over the past ten years (Krogstad, 2020). This growth includes Southwest Michigan, with notable increases in several counties, including Kent and Kalamazoo. Between Fall 2016 and Fall 2020, the enrollment of Hispanic/Latino undergraduate students in CHHS grew modestly from 5% to 8%. However, during the same period the proportion of Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in graduate-level programs in CHHS remained flat, at 4% (WMU Institutional Research, 2021).

Latinos have the highest labor market participation compared with other racial ethnic groups in Michigan but are often in low-wage jobs with low educational attainment outcomes (Martinez, Kayitsinga, Horner, & Velez Ortiz, 2016). The continued growth among Latinos indicates that a more substantive response is needed within higher education to not only actively build an inclusive environment, recruit, and retain Latino students as future health professionals, but additionally offer innovative, unique opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills such as cultural competency and knowledge of the diversity of the Hispanic/Latino population for all health and human services professionals. Moreover, attracting prospective Latino students and encouraging the pursuit of health care careers for current WMU Latino students would help prepare a more diverse workforce.

2. **Impacted units:** What existing units, programs, and colleges would be involved in the proposed initiative? What other possibilities for collaboration across campus or in the broader community might exist now or in the future?

### Potential across units and colleges

3. **Impact on teaching, learning, and curricula:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on teaching, learning, and curricula. How might this initiative help to grow enrollment, including by reaching new audiences of learners through continuing education, dual enrollment, or professional certification? How will the proposed initiative positively impact the training of undergraduate and graduate students? How does it enhance our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

1) Improve the cultural responsiveness, humility and competency of CHHS students (and potentially students from other colleges) to serve Latinos and their families.

Suggested activities include:

Curriculum/Coursework

- a. Summary of accreditation standards related to cultural content in respective CHHS programs
- b. A survey of CHHS programs to determine the breadth and depth of Latino/Hispanic content/experiences existing currently
- c. Interdisciplinary course(s) related to Latino cultures, health, disparities, Latino health paradox
- d. Interdisciplinary seminars related to working with interpreters
- e. Cross-college course on Spanish for health and human service professionals, including medical terminology (\*This course(s) has the potential to draw students from other colleges such as biomedical sciences and Spanish majors. A course was offered in CHHS 6-7 years ago and was highly successful)
- f. New opportunity for students to become licensed as medical/health care interpreters (40 hours required)

Clinical/Community

- g. An advisory board with representation from local organizations, such as El Concilio or Voces, the WMU Latino Student Alliance, the WMU Camp program, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan and others would be formed to serve multiple purposes, such as providing guest speakers, clinical opportunities, guidance on classes/workshops, serving as standardized patients, mentoring
- h. Interdisciplinary, interprofessional clinical experiences in various community sites with Latino populations in diverse settings such as health clinics for Spanish speakers via Federally Qualified Health Centers such as the Family Health Center in Kalamazoo, Cherry Health in Grand Rapids, school health at Spanish/English immersion schools in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, or migrant camps in southwest Michigan
- i. Volunteer/Service-learning projects in the community with Latino groups providing greater exposure and increased awareness for non-Hispanic students
- Travel/Experiential j. Field/travel-based options either domestically in the U.S. such as touring communities of migrant farmworkers in Michigan or in a U.S./Mexico border town, or, in partnership with the WMU Haenicke Center for Global Education, study abroad with one of the existing travel courses at WMU (e.g. Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Belize, Puerto Rico, Spain etc.)

- 4. Impact on research and creative activity:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on research and creative activity. How will this initiative promote discovery and creative scholarship? How might it result in increased external funding?

2) Create a more substantial pipeline to WMU (particularly in high demand on health and human service professions) focused on Hispanic/Latino students, building upon students' cultural and linguistic strengths

3

A number of programs in Michigan focused on Hispanic/Latino student outreach and engagement have been developed including Michigan State University – Julian Samora Research Institute; Ferris State University – Center for Latino Studies; Grand Rapids Community College and Grand Valley State University – Hispanic Excellence in Higher Education Program; and Wayne State University, University of Michigan etc. Latino Studies Curricula. However, none of these programs focus on bridging the gap between educational needs and health care employment opportunities for Hispanic/Latino students.

Suggested activities include:

Community

- a. Formation of a Hispanic/Latino advisory board (as suggested above) that could provide connections with between WMU and community-based organizations. The advisory board can help the faculty with outreach strategies, and important contacts such as high schools, churches, community groups. Partners for this effort might include groups such as: Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – West Michigan; Hispanic Resource Center of West Michigan
- b. Involvement of Hispanic/Latino students at WMU in outreach and planning efforts, especially where bi-lingual skills are needed (e.g, to interact with families)
- c. Collaboration with CHHS Director of Recruitment and Outreach and the CHHS Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- d. Development of Latino community connections at both main campus and regional sites Hispanic/Latino WMU students
- e. Forge stronger ties with WMU (state subsidized) Children of Migrant Parents (CAMP) program. Many of these students have not been exposed or been provided with the support/mentoring for the health professions
- f. Coordinate and co-sponsor events with the WMU registered student organizations, Latino Student Alliance and Multi-Cultural Greek Council. Include students in planning processes
- g. Create roles and opportunities for CHHS Latino students to share their culture with non-Hispanic students
- h. Provide greater interdisciplinary support for CHHS Latino students such as a Facebook group, monthly social meetings, outings
- i. Review of the forthcoming WMU Climate Survey data, with attention to the feedback from Latino students, staff, and faculty

5. **Efficiencies and/or cost savings:** How might the proposed initiative contribute to increased efficiencies and/or cost savings, for example by reducing administrative positions (e.g. chairs/directors), sharing staff support services and/or by sharing facilities?

Potential for donors, collaboration across the community

6. **Impact on course offerings and workload:** At present, proposed initiatives will only be feasible and sustainable if they can be supported by existing resources, including instructional capacity, faculty and staff time, and facilities. Will the proposed initiative streamline existing course or program offerings? Could the initiative help create more equitable and sustainable workload for faculty, for example, by reducing the need to offer under enrolled courses, reducing the frequency of course offerings or eliminating the need to teach some courses?

The CHHS Interdisciplinarity - Culture and Health Committee suggests that there are resource implications for these initiatives. Moreover, the committee lacked representation from a Hispanic/Latino faculty member. We recommend that additional time and consideration be given to these factors.

7. **Additional Information:** What additional information would you like to provide in support of this proposal?

#### References

- Krogstad, J. (2020). Pew Research Center Report: Hispanics have accounted for more than half of total U.S. population growth since 2010. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/10/hispanics-have-accounted-for-more-than-half-of-total-u-s-population-growth-since-2010/>
- Martinez, R., Kayitsinga, J., Horner, P. & Velez Ortiz, D. (2016). Latinos 2025 – A needs

assessment of Latinos in Southeast Michigan .The Julian Samora Research Institute.

<https://jsri.msu.edu/>

U.S. Census Bureau (2018). Hispanic population to reach 111 Million by 2060.

<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/hispanic-projected-pop.html>

WMU Institutional Research (2021). Five-year history of student count by race/ethnicity.

<https://wmich.edu/institutionalresearch/interactivedashboards>

## **8. Contact**

Dr. Dee Sherwood, CHHS - School of Social Work