

# ENLACE Leadership Institute

## Masters of Arts in Higher Education



COHORT 9



COHORT 13



COHORT 14

**25 YEARS (2000-25)**  
**Developing Latinx Leaders  
in Higher Education**



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# MISSION & GOALS

## ENLACE's Mission

The mission of the ENLACE Higher Education Master's Program is to prepare leaders in higher education that will create change responsive to the educational needs of Latinx students and an increasingly diverse post-secondary student population. The program aims to support promising students to work as culturally competent and critical staff and administrators at institutions of higher education immediately after they graduate, aiding first-generation college students, economically challenged students, immigrant students, and students from underrepresented groups. The program emphasizes on the Latinx experience and provides knowledge and skills related to the history and development of post-secondary institutions and effective administrative practices at that level. It also stresses an understanding of administrative and supervisory skills for the development and support of instructional systems at the collegiate level. Lastly, the program also prepares highly qualified students for further graduate study and research in doctoral programs so they may pursue a path to tenured faculty and senior administrator positions at colleges and universities across the nation.

## ENLACE's Goals

Develop higher education leaders who are critical change agents and culturally responsive administrators prepared to assist first-generation college students, economically challenged students, immigrant background students, and students from historically excluded groups.

Emphasize the Latinx experience in today's higher education and provides knowledge on the history of post-secondary institutions and practical skills related to today's best administrative practices centered on students' lives.

Stress administrative and supervisory practices for the support of student-centered instructional systems and holistic student services.

Prepares highly qualified students for further graduate study and research in doctoral programs so they may pursue a path to tenured faculty and senior administrator positions at colleges and universities across the nation.

## About ENLACE

ENLACE, in Spanish, stands for ENgaging Latinx Communities for Education. ENLACE began in 2000 with an initial \$1.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as part of the national ENLACE Initiative. The grants were awarded to increase opportunities for Latinx to enter and complete college. The Northeastern Illinois University grant for ENLACE was one of 13 sites selected across the United States and was the only one funded in the Midwest. Additional financial and in-kind support has supported the program's continued success along with the ongoing commitment of Northeastern Illinois University. The program was recognized in 2016 as a finalist for the national Examples of Excelencia award, which recognizes evidence-based practices that increase Latinx student success in higher education.



# IMPACT & TRANSITION

## **Institutional Needs Proposal**

Hire Full-Time Tenure-Track Professor in Higher Education/Director for the ENLACE Leadership Institute

Part-Time Tenure-Track 50% 35K salary  
Intentional strategy for Seal of Excelencia, grants, and state funds

Graduate Assistant

Additional funds for Professional Development workshops, Latin America visit summer course, and events

## **Recommendations**

Cap incoming cohorts to II ENLACE Fellows  
Alternate new cohorts with UCLC starting FALL 2025



University Center for Lake County  
Receive Cohort 17 in FALL of 2025



El Centro, Northeastern Illinois University  
Receive Cohort 18 in FALL 2026

## **Our Impact**

The ENLACE Leadership Institute MA in Higher Education at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) has had significant institutional cultural impact on many colleges and universities in the Chicagoland region since its inception in 2000. Our contribution to local higher education has established a well-recognized network of Latinx professional leaders who are critical change agents and culturally responsive administrators. The expertise of our alumni has influenced student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates among the growing Latinx student population.

The ENLACE Leadership Institute has graduated over 200 masters in higher education and we sustain relationships with our alumni by hosting events on campus with the intention to create opportunities for our students with professional mentoring and development. Our return on investment by the state of Illinois and the Kellogg foundation has established a regional career-track program that consistently develops leaders in higher education.

The ENLACE Leadership Institute has carried out NEIU's values and mission in serving culturally diverse students beyond the university's campuses. The grant proposal was written in the late 1990s by grassroots Latinx community leaders who sought to influence state policy with the goal of enrolling more Latinx students in higher education. Today, the ENLACE Leadership Institute has alumni in the district leadership for the City Colleges of Chicago district as well as in the Illinois Latinx Council for Higher Education (ILACHE). Several alumni have participated in local HSIs' efforts to earn the Seal of Excelencia for using best practices in serving the growing Latinx student population in higher education. Recently, two alumni became fellows for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo. They were chosen from a national search of highly effective leaders. Our alumni are active leaders in the state of Illinois and in the national platform for policy.

Lorena Mora, from the Pew Research Center (2022), captures the rapid growth of Latinx students between 2000 and 2020, at four-year institutions that jumped from 620,000 to 2.4 million, a 287% increase. By comparison, overall student enrollment at four-year institutions in the U.S. grew by 50% during this time. In the fall of 2022, the National Center for Education Statistics there were 3.8 million Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Twenty-one percent of U.S. resident students enrolled in degree-granting institutions were Hispanic/Latino.

# Earned Masters Degrees in Last 10 Years



COHORT 1



COHORT 12



COHORT 6



COHORT 11

**2024 Cohort 14**

**Masters Degrees: 13**

**2023 Cohort 13**

**Masters Degrees: 16**

**2022 Cohort 12**

**Masters Degrees: 16**

**2021 Cohort 11**

**Masters Degrees: 20**

**2020 Cohort 10**

**Masters Degrees: 16**

**2019 Cohorts 8 & 9**

**Masters Degrees: 23**

**2017 Cohort 7**

**Masters Degrees: 16**

**2015 Cohort 6**

**Masters Degrees 10**

**TOTAL 131 Masters Degrees**

**2015-2024**

# Notable ALUMNI

NAME	COHORT	INSTITUTION	POSITION
Dr. Myra Gaytan-Morales	1	University Center for Lake County	Dean/Director
Dr. Maria Luna-Duarte	3	University of Illinois at Chicago	Associate Dean for Student Success
Tanya Cabrera	5	University of Illinois at Chicago	Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Inclusion
Dr. Jesus Iniguez	4	College of Lake County	Dean, Lakeshore Campus
Dr. Sandra Pizano	6	College of Lake County	Lead Academic Success Advisor
Luis Duarte	6	University of Illinois at Chicago	Executive Director, Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (LARES)



COHORT 4



COHORT 5

# Notable ALUMNI

NAME	COHORT	INSTITUTION	POSITION
Stephanie Herrera	7	Oakton Community College <i>Doctoral student at National-Louis University</i>	Learning Support Coordinator
Isabel Castro	7	National-Louis University <i>Doctoral student at National Louis University</i>	Student Success Coach
Mason Salazar	7	City Colleges of Chicago <i>Doctoral student at Loyola University</i>	District Director of Admissions
Franklin Ortega Palaguachi	8	Waubonsee Community College <i>Doctoral student at Colorado State University</i>	Latinx Resource Center Manager
Emmanuel Lopez	10	Governors State University	Director of Latinx Resource Center
Ahmed Fayek	10	Everspring, Inc. <i>Doctoral student at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</i>	Lead Academic Success Advisor



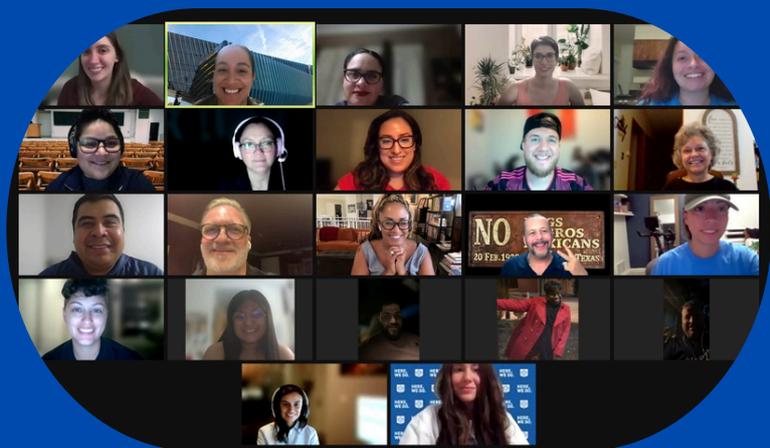
COHORT 10



COHORT 8

# Notable ALUMNI

NAME	COHORT	INSTITUTION	POSITION
Leslie Castillo	10	North Park University	First-Year Experience, Director
Sean Heraty	10	Truman College	Dean of Enrollment Management
Marisa Lugo	11	Malcom X College <i>2022-2023 fellow in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo</i>	College Advisor
Lizette Galan	11	El Centro, NEIU	Coordinator of Student Success & Social Media
Gabriela Mata	11	Morton College	Director of College Community Experience
Araceli Mena	12	College of Lake County	College and Career Navigator



# Notable ALUMNI

NAME	COHORT	INSTITUTION	POSITION
Quintiliano Rios	12	NEIU	Interim Assistant Dean of Students for Undocumented Student Resources & Student Care
Victor Muñoz	13	Wright College	Director of First- Year Experience
Danny Cortez	13	El Centro, NEIU	Coordinator of Financial Aid
Yeisha Betancourt-Ruiz	14	Wright College	Interim Dean for Humboldt Park campus





MASTERS OF ARTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Northern Illinois University April 26, 2024



2025

Gabriel A. Cortez, PhD  
DIRECTOR

