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NEGOTIATING A SENSE OF PLACE: A STUDY OF HISPANIC FACULTY IN  
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE UNIVERSITIES (454 pp.)

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Universities across the nation continue to experience shortage of minority faculty to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Beyond recruiting for diversity, institutions face the challenge of retaining and ensuring that minority faculty members are successful members of the academic community. The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of Hispanic faculty experiences, their perceptions of support and barriers and how they negotiate their sense of place at two predominantly White universities.

Ten Hispanic faculty who represented diverse ethnic groups, disciplines, gender, and faculty ranks were selected for the study. A mixed method approach was used to obtain and organize data to answer the overarching question: How do Hispanic faculty negotiate a sense of place in an environment where they are a minority? The Curriculum Vita Analysis focused on the records of productivity, tenure status, and their longevity. The Sociogram focused on participants' relationships with critical stakeholders, essential in establishing a sense of place within the academe. The open-ended interviews focused on participants' perceptions of factors that promote and limit their sense of place.

The findings of this study revealed that the participants have contributed over 100 publications and 231 presentations to the academic communities they represent. On the average, tenured faculty were slightly higher than the untenured faculty. Participants rated the importance of their relationships with critical stakeholders higher than the current levels of their relationships with these stakeholders. It appears that participants used productivity to gain legitimacy and utilized relationships strategically to negotiate a sense of place. While all the participants were conscious of their heritage, they provided different reasons for their consciousness. Factors promoting a sense of place include positive relationships, effective mentoring, support and acceptance of scholarship, granting of tenure, involvement and participation in institution's activities, recognition of heritage, and affirmation of unique contributions to the university. Factors that limit a sense of place include alienation, lack of recognition, and lack of institutional support. The study concludes with a set of recommendations, which includes the need to shift paradigm from minority faculty retention to focusing on developing faculty's sense of place.