In November of 2013 I attended the California Sociological Association’s Annual Conference. One of the sessions was titled *Current Issues in Latino/a Research*, organized and presided over by Alicia M. Gonzales of CSU San Marcos (Thursday, November 7 at 10:00 AM in the Amador Room.) In that session, Blanca Carrasco of CSU San Marcos presented the findings from her original research on “Experiences of Successful Latino Community College ESL Students.” I have summarized that presentation in this report.

Ms. Carrasco works as an ESL-based writing instructor at CSU San Marcos. In her research she recruited twelve former ESL students from Palomar Community College District, including some who currently work in the field of ESL instruction. She administered structured interviews and gathered responses centering on the following issues:

- Institutional roadblocks to ESL student success.
- Inequality of experience while in the classroom.
- Challenges experienced while working in a context of white privilege.

The prevailing theme that emerged during the interviews was a sense of isolation and alienation that speakers of languages other than English experienced in the community college classroom in general, regardless of the course subject. These experiences included both subtle and overt discrimination and continued into their post-graduation workplace environment. Drawing on her qualitative data, Blanca drafted a set of recommendations that are relevant for addressing structural barriers to ESL student success. Her recommendations are as follows:

1. Give students 10 minutes at the beginning of the term to greet each other. While doing so, welcome the ESL students directly and facilitate their communication with other ESL and native-English speaking students.
2. Provide a section in the syllabus directed toward ESL students that acknowledges them, invites them to request assistance from the instructor, and identifies other resources that may assist them.
3. Create a classroom atmosphere where native English speakers can assist ESL students.
4. Encourage ESL students to team up and work together to get through the course.

I have personally integrated Recommendation Number 2 into all of my syllabi for the spring semester. I am currently considering appropriate ways to implement the other recommendations. I look forward to any feedback and input that members of the MDC may have regarding their own experiences in facilitating success for those students whose primary language is something other than English. This report is submitted with that goal in mind. I also invite suggestions for future discussion and possible committee action stemming from these recommendations.

Respectfully,

Philip Mancus, Chair