

December 31, 2013

Dear Friend of Latino Students,

I am soliciting your support for an initiative I have succeeded in bringing to Bergen Community College this winter after four years' investment in working through the logistics of making it happen. The United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI) College Leadership Development Program (CLDP) is a nationally proven tool for increasing college completion and student success, and this support is greatly needed at Bergen, where:

- Latinos comprise 33% of the overall student population of 34,000 students **AND**
- Latinos are about 25% of each graduating class in the past 5 years **BUT**
- Only 14% of BCC Latino students complete Associate Degrees within a 3 year timeframe; **slightly less than**
- New Jersey state's average for Latino student community college completion – at only 17.1% within 3 years.

We held the first of our five CLDP workshops on Dec 7 and 15, 2013 and will meet three more times, ending with an all day workshop on Sunday, January 19, 2014. The CLDP calls for student groups to hold a total of 15-21 individual, interactive sessions with administrators and key faculty. This affords participants the opportunity to learn about the range of academic and career support our college offers; to learn from leaders in the community college space like the Dean of Library Services and BCC's theater Director, about career paths not typically found on job search websites; and about how the college functions managerially.

Regionwer us academically and as emerging leaders. We hope to become strong self and peer advocates capable of influencing policies and situations that impact our future and present success. We are about equally balanced between men and women of Latino heritage; and we live in Bergen, Passaic, Hudson and Essex Counties.

As the first crop of Bergen CLDP participants, we will receive scholarships to USHLI's national conference in February, but our group must fundraise for travel to Chicago and lodging. We also need refreshments for our two remaining evening workshops at the college; and both venue and meals for our all day Sunday workshop, which will be held off campus as BCC closes on Sundays. We need to raise \$12,000 to cover expenses for 27 people.

We hope that as a friend of Latino youth, you will help us accomplish our goals. We need monetary donations, a venue space for Sunday, January 19 and, airline miles for travel can be part of our collection. We will deeply appreciate the support you share with us, as well as your interest in our lives and futures. Please reach out to me if you are able to give us a hand.

Wishing you a Próspero Año Nuevo and Peace,

**Jorge Ivan Gomez Wei** (aka Ivan Wei)

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**CLDP Coordinator at BCC and**

A.S. Business Administration & A.A.S. Horticulture

*BCC NAACP Chapter President*

*NJ State NAACP Youth & College Division President and NAACP Region II Youth & College Chair*

*BCC Student Government Association Senator*

*Phi Theta Kappa at BCC, Vice President of Fellowship; Chi Epsilon Alpha (EOF) President*

*Andrew Goodman Foundation Vote Everywhere Ambassador*

*Food & Water Watch Take Back the Tap Coordinator at BCC*