OUR IMPACT

In our 20 years of service we have achieved positive changes for Latino students and their families. LEI works to improve the academic achievement and well-being of Latino students and their families by leveraging the combination of Civic Engagement, Policy, & Research, Innovative Culturally Sustaining Programs (K-16), Strengthening and Engaging Families, and College/Community Partnerships, and Mentoring.

We further our mission when we can effectively:
Convene issue experts | Civically Engage our program participants
Share best practices and Research
Accelerate Student Achievement through innovative programs
Develop college mentors and future educators

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CHRISTIAN SANTANA’S STORY

As a 7th grader, new to the community from Puerto Rico, Christian Santana didn’t want to join the Latino Education Institute’s Encouraging Latinos to Achieve Excellence (ENLACE) program. “I didn’t speak any English and it was my first year in Worcester.” Ultimately, following the recommendation of his math teacher, Christian started to regularly attend ENLACE, and he would do so for two years, building meaningful relationships with the program’s facilitators along the way. One facilitator, Eric Batista, played a role in changing Christian’s life. “Even when I would get in trouble out in the community, he would come up to me and talk to me. He’d tell me to be different from the rest.” This relationship impacted Christian significantly and influenced the choices he continued to make for years to come. Now a facilitator for ENLACE, Christian hopes to have the same impact on the youth he works with. “I strive to be a teacher and mentor to the students I’ll eventually work with.” His experiences with the LEI have also changed the way he looks at education as a profession. Now a Junior at Worcester State University, Christian is pursuing a Spanish and Education double major.

OUR MISSION:

Improving the academic achievement and well-being of Latino students (grades K-16) and their families from the city of Worcester.

The Latino Education Institute (LEI) at Worcester State University was created in response to a call to action by the Worcester Working Coalition for Latino Students. The coalition—a grassroots effort representing community and elected leaders, concerned parents, and educators—outlined strategies to improve educational outcomes for Latino students. Today, the LEI engages over 2,500 Latino families and youth in programming and initiatives aimed at college and career preparation, identity and cultural enrichment, and civic engagement. We work to ensure that youth and families celebrate their cultural assets, grow academically and in life, and advocate for themselves.

“At first I was like, ‘yeah, I want to go to college,’ because my mom said it’s good for me, but then after everything we’ve done with LEI, it has helped me see that college not only is ‘good for me,’ but it gives me more education, a career to follow, and a future to begin.”
— 2019 Latina Achievers in Search of Success (LASOS) participant