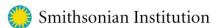
A Study of The Graduate Training Seminar of the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives

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Office of Policy and Analysis Washington, DC 20560-0405

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A report prepared by the Office of Policy and Analysis Smithsonian Institution

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Background

Between 1993 and 2001, the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives (SCLI) conducted the Latino Graduate Training Seminar in Qualitative Methodology (GTS) for graduate students in Latino studies. In cooperation with the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, SCLI conducted the two-week GTS program each summer for approximately 15 students. Due to funding problems, SCLI did not conduct the GTS program during the summer of 2002.

In November 2001, SCLI asked the Office of Policy & Analysis (OP&A) to study the GTS program's effectiveness in accomplishing its goals, which include:

- Increasing the number of Latino graduates working in museums;
- Enhancing the development of a Latino research community by creating links between active researchers in the field; and
- Increasing the capacity of Latino scholars to conduct museum related research, especially through learning qualitative research techniques.

There are two components of this study. The first component is based on the experiences of 38 former GTS graduate student participants, which is 32 percent of the total number of participants (120). The former students were contacted by e-mail by the GTS program director (The student questionnaire is presented in Appendix B). The deadline for accepting questionnaires was delayed twice as the number of respondents was too low. The response rate of 32 percent, following three requests, was lower than desired; however, it is similar to cooperation rates for typical mail and email surveys. The second component is based on telephone interviews conducted with eight faculty members.

The relatively low response rate between the census of former GTS students and the sample of college faculty associated with Latino Centers and the GTS requires a note of

¹ The Office of Policy and Analysis appreciates the assistance of former GTS participants who responded to the survey. SCLI e-mailed an MS Word formatted questionnaire to 120 former GTS participants. Thirty-eight GTS graduates responded before the survey analysis started. A small number of questionnaires were returned after the final date for accepting questionnaires. One supposition regarding the low responses is the accuracy of email addresses since such addresses often change, especially for students finishing a degree program. A parallel survey was sent to GTS program faculty presenters. Out of 50 questionnaires, only two faculty members responded.

caution in interpreting this report. The OP&A research team was not able to determine if the survey respondents hold different opinions from non-respondents. For example, it is possible that only participants with a very favorable opinion of the GTS may have responded. Alternatively, students who were most interested in a job with the Smithsonian Institution may have been motivated to respond because they felt that a favorable response might improve their employment chances. The research team has no reason to believe that the survey respondents were more likely to be favorably disposed towards GTS than non respondents; however, such a possibility exists in any survey.

Survey Respondents

Responses from student participants in GTS were distributed over each of the years between 1993 and 2001. Appendix A: Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents and the years they attended the GTS program.

Most respondents were enrolled in a doctoral program (65%) when they participated in the GTS program (Appendix A: Table 2). Currently, more than four out of five survey respondents have completed a Ph. D. (43%) or are in a doctoral program (38%) (Appendix A: Table 3).

While GTS students learned about the program in several ways, college based information sources and friends were the most commonly cited (college information, 26%; faculty, 16%; and friends, 21%). Smithsonian information was cited less frequently (13%) (Appendix A: Table 4).

Findings from Participant Surveys

Few graduate students consider attending programs similar to GTS. Most expect to deepen their contact with Latino research and research skills.

More than three-fourths of former GTS students who responded did not consider going to any programs similar to GTS (81%) (Appendix A: Table 5). None of the early participants (1993-1995) mentioned considering similar opportunities, while a quarter of more recent students considered alternatives. It is likely that for early participants, alternatives were not available. Students in master's programs were more likely to consider similar programs than doctoral or post-doctoral students. At the time that they attended, two out of three GTS respondents were enrolled in doctoral programs.

When the students arrived, most students had expectations that the GTS program would increase their research skills and knowledge (89%), develop greater insights into Latino issues (82%), build contacts with students and faculty (79%), and develop insights into their careers (61%). Only a minority of students attended the GTS program with the expectation that they would develop job leads (24%) (Appendix A: Table 6).

Sample of student comments:

- I was primarily interested in the interdisciplinary nature of the program at SI.
- I participated in other programs in the past, such as the Getty Minority Internship Program, but I only applied at the SI Program [for] the year of 2001.

Note: All student quotations are presented as submitted

GTS meets student expectations. The students consider the program to be excellent or outstanding.

Nearly nine-tenths (84%) of the students who responded to the email survey said that their GTS experience met their expectations (Appendix A: Table 7). Likewise, nearly eight-tenths rated GTS as outstanding (41%) or excellent (38%) (Appendix A: Table 8). And almost all participants say that they would recommend GTS to their friends (97%) (Appendix A: Table 9). There were no significant differences between the opinions of earlier and later GTS participants.

Three out of four respondents (78%) said that they totally agreed that GTS topics and classes were relevant for Latino students, with the percentage totally agreeing being significantly higher in recent GTS seminars than earlier seminars. Slightly fewer (70%) totally agreed that GTS allows students to make contacts with Latino scholars. Smaller numbers totally agreed that GTS gives experience with specific types of museum research activities (59%), lets students explore career options (43%), provides contacts with GTS staff/lecturers that are useful as references (43%), makes students more qualified to do research on Latino issues (41%), and teaches specific research skills (24%) (Appendix A: Table 10).

Major contributions of GTS to the growth of students as Latino scholars include networking, exposure to museum operations, and a chance to reflect on Latino issues. A few students who entered the program expecting to develop specific research skills expressed disappointment that classes were not taught at a more advanced level.

Sample of student comments:

• [The GTS program met my expectations] afforded me an opportunity to grow intellectually and while making meaningful connections with other scholars. It was also really nice to be in a large Latino context after having been in the mid-west for several years. It was like I could breath and didn't have to explain myself all the time.

- [The GTS program met my expectations] is a fabulous opportunity for dialogue, community, exploration and growth.
- My experience at the Latino seminar was invaluable. For me, it was outstanding in organization, selection, programming, scholarly content, participation and in knowledge which will last a lifetime.
- Although the experience was invaluable, I felt that the trips that we made to different sites were not as informative as they could have been. I felt that we got presentations that were very low grade in terms of what was being provided, we were presented information at very base level [too generalized] and it was not always appropriately [not geared to graduate students].
- The program provided me with a critical opportunity to invite self-reflection, making me confront my own stereotypes and fears about issues of class, race, and diversity.
- I felt that the training really went over very basic or familiar ground...and failed to teach tangible skills that could be applied to our own research.
- [The GTS program met my expectations] not so much in skills, but absolutely career insights, many contacts and a sound knowledge base that I continue to expand on.

GTS participants are actively engaged in researching Latino issues in museum related fields or university teaching.

Nearly all of the respondents are actively doing research on Latino issues (92%) (Appendix A: Table 11). Participants have continued to maintain their, networks of Latino contacts resulting from GTS after leaving the Smithsonian, perhaps in conjunction with active research activities. Almost all have remained in contact with other GTS students (87%) (Appendix A: Table 12). More than two-thirds (69%) say that their present occupation takes advantage of the GTS experience (Appendix A: Table 13), even though fewer than half (45%) say that they work in a museum or museum related organization (Appendix A: Table 14). Nearly three-fourths of the previous respondents who responded to the survey said that their GTS participation made them more interested in museum work (Appendix A: Table 15). One factor in the relatively small percentage of GTS participants working in museums is that many GTS students end up in educational careers. Among the survey respondents, 12 indicated that they are currently professors. Five respondents identified themselves as working for a museum.

GTS students would like to work at the Smithsonian, but the Smithsonian has employed only a few.

Almost every respondent was interested in a Smithsonian or another museum job (95%) (Appendix A: Table 16). Four out of ten have applied for SI graduate fellowships (42%) with most applicants receiving a fellowship (39%) (Appendix A: Table 17). Although there is great interest in getting an SI or another museum job, less than one-quarter have applied for an SI job (22%) (Appendix A: Table 18). Fewer than half of GTS students (among those who responded to this email survey) say that they have kept in contact with someone at the Smithsonian. (Appendix A: Table 19).

Students feel that programmatic changes will need to be made to enhance GTS as a career development instrument that strengthens a Latino scholar network.

Specific changes to the structure and operation of GTS emphasized factors that could strengthen it as a career development tool for Latino scholars:

- Extend the seminar beyond two weeks.
- Involve students in actual research for Latino issue exhibitions.
- Develop a formal mentoring relationship between students and established Latino scholars.
- Organize follow-up and creation of an active alumni group.
- Incorporate more information about actual museum operations.

Sample of student comments suggesting changes to GTS:

- More time could be given to participants (a third week maybe?) so that they could actually experience museum research and still benefit from the guidance of the lecturers, GTS personnel, and other participants.
- I have two suggestions: help students develop a design proposal that could be used for further research and provide students with mentors (faculty or staff) that they can get work with.
- Perhaps the program should be extended to a month as long as a research component is implemented. I also think that prepared, conference type presentation should be a part of the program.
- If more time was given to truly develop the intimate and professional communion between participants and possible mentors... Perhaps, if the program emphasized the mentoring process as well?
- I think more intellectual rigor could be applied.
- More hands-on museum work and more emphasis on career development.

- I think it would be helpful to integrate an organized follow-up system in order to continue the important conversations and collaborations started in the program.
- Hold yearly symposiums/reunions to bring back alum. Sustain the academic dynamic among Latinos that you created so well.

GTS can attract graduate students more effectively than in the past.

The student responses indicated that GTS can more effectively market the seminar and attract applications from a greater number of Latino students by:

- Encouraging alumni and scholars to promote the program.
- Doing even more advertising and marketing.
- Disseminating information to more Latino centers and departments.
- Increasing the amount of the stipend.
- Clarifying the information that SCLI disseminates.

Sample of student comments regarding marketing GTS to Latino students:

- Marketing/marketing/marketing. A word frowned upon in academia, but a powerful and unavoidable force in our daily lives. Ask marketing professionals.
- Work closely with a core or faculty from across the country; also enlist the help of all the alumni. Maybe establish a seminar alumni committee/advisory board and charge them with getting 100 applications.
- I think more inroads need to be made with Latino and Hispanic cultural centers, community organizations and museums that have Hispanic-related collections. Also, with Latino and Hispanic faculty at Universities and Community colleges.
- More outreach. Attend NACCS; sponsor a table and a breakfast or luncheon. Come out to places like UCB, Austin, Stanford, USC and other schools with Latino students. Hookup with programs like the Ford. Have the Ford participants come over to the Smithsonian for a day!
- Utilize web-based announcements maybe? I only knew about it through word-of-mouth and it took me forever to find it on the web.
- *Not all Latino graduate students are only involved in Latino organizations.*

Make information available through College Art Association and Association of American Museums, too. Both have websites and newsletters. Also, don't stop sending info to graduate art history departments, because this is where I learned about the program.

- Advertise and use your graduates as resources to bring in future participants.
- In my experience, the program announcement was posted only at the sociology and Mexican American Studies department postings should go to art, studio, literature, philosophy, anthropology, and any other humanities departments with people who are already considering work in museums and who may not have a strong relationship with Latino-specific departments.

Findings from Faculty Interviews

As noted earlier, the OP&A study team were able to interview only two individuals who have served as faculty in the GTS program. Although the sample was limited, these interviews generated findings that generally parallel the findings from the student survey.

The creation of networks and fellowships is the program's most significant contribution.

Interviewees described networking and fellowship as very important in helping Latino students connect to the larger Latino community, thereby strengthening the students' ability to deal with the isolating experience of being minority graduate students. By networking with other students, faculty, and Smithsonian employees, students also create potential career opportunities and enrich their pool of informal resources.

GTS faculty members are unclear about the mission and goals of the GTS program.

Faculty received little information about the program and did not go through any formal orientation prior to teaching the seminars. One interviewee believed the program's mission was to foster a sense of national community between Latinos, while another interviewee thought keeping students in school seemed to be the program's main mission. One interviewee stated that if the program's goal is to get more Latinos in museums, recruitment should focus on master's level students or those who received bachelor degrees in public humanities rather than Ph.D. students. He believed that the market for Latino Ph.D.s is very competitive because so few are available.

Requiring a final report of a project would increase the value of program content.

While everyone agreed that the program was beneficial, two critiques were offered: (1) lack of a final project and (2) lack of integrated readings. The short length of the program was identified as a barrier in incorporating a final project into the curriculum.

GTS faculty members agree with students that the GTS can be improved by:

- Extending the length of the program. A two-week program may not be long enough to teach participants valuable skill sets. A minimum of four weeks was recommended.
- Developing a more rigorous program. Having students engage in more sustained readings and preparing a final project may help students develop better skill sets.
- *Keeping students involved with museums after the program.* Engage the student in a project that extends beyond the program. One opportunity may be to connect the student to a Smithsonian affiliate museum with the possibility of displaying his project at the museum.
- Facilitating the networking and fellowship components created during the program. A newsletter or a conference may help to keep former participants and faculty members interested and involved in the program and accomplishment of its goals.
- Providing a faculty orientation about the program's mission and goals.
 Understanding of the mission will help the faculty develop the most appropriate seminars.
- Providing faculty with student feedback on their seminars and the overall program. Once their seminars are completed, faculty has no interaction with the program administrators. With feedback, the faculty could work to improve the seminars, especially since many faculty are asked to return on multiple occasions.

The Bottom Line

The GTS program plays a role in the development of Latino scholars who have an interest in and a relationship with museums. The low cooperation rate for faculty, combined with a lower than desired cooperation rate for students, suggests that the GTS has low saliency on university campuses even though it is praised by responding students. The GTS program should not be defined primarily as a vehicle for increasing the number of Latino scholars working in Smithsonian museums. A majority of former GTS students are not currently employed by museums, but rather teach in colleges and universities. The small number of former GTS students at the Smithsonian may reflect the shortage of SI jobs, the quality of graduate training, Smithsonian recruitment practices, or students' lack of interest in jobs at the Smithsonian Institution. The major effect of GTS is diffused across the general Latino research community, especially educational institutions. From a broader perspective of increasing the number of Latino scholars working with museums other than the Smithsonian, GTS could be a useful training vehicle. However, its content would need to be expanded and its duration extended.

APPENDIX A: The Survey Responses

Table 1 Student respondents by year of GTS attendance (Number)

Year of attendance	Number
1993	3
1994	4
1995	3
1996	8
1997	3
1998	3
1999	7
2000	3
2001	<u>4</u>
	Total 38

Table 2
What type of degree program were you in when you attended GTS?
(Percent)

Degree program during GTS		Percent	
Master's		35%	
Ph. D.		<u>65%</u>	
	Total	100%	

Table 3
What is your highest level of education now?
(Percent)

Edducational attainment		(Percent)
Ph. D.		43%
In Ph. D. program		38%
Master's		16%
Bachelor's		<u>3%</u>
	Total	100%

Table 4
How did you hear about the GTS seminar?*
(Percent)

Information source	Percent
College Information	29%
Friend	26%
College Faculty	21%
Smithsonian Info	16%
Other	16%

^{*} Percents total more than 100% because more than one response could be chosen.

Table 5
Did you consider going to any other museum based or similar programs instead of GTS?

(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	81%
Yes	<u>19%</u>
	Total 100%

Table 6
What did you expect to get from attending the GTS?*
(Percent)

Expectation	Percent
Skills/knowledge	89%
Latino insights	82%
Contacts	79%
Career insights	61%
Job leads	24%
Class credit	3%
Other	24%

^{*} Percents total more than 100% because more than one response could be chosen.

Table 7
Were your expectations met by GTS?
(Number)

Response	P	ercent
Yes		84%
Mixed (Yes/No)		3%
No		13%
	Total	100%

Table 8
Overall, how would you rate the value of GTS to you?
(Percent)

Response	Percent
Outstanding	41%
Excellent	38%
Good	19%
Fair	3%
Poor	<u>0%</u>
	Total 100%

Table 9
If a friend asked, would you recommend going to GTS?
(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	3%
Yes	97%
Total	100%

Table 10 Benefits experienced from GTS participation (Percent)

			Neither			
	Totally		Agree nor		Totally	
Benefit realized	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Total
More qualified to do						
research on Latino issues	41%	38%	16%	5%	0%	100%
Taught specific research						
skills	24%	43%	16%	8%	8%	100%
Make contacts with Latino						
scholars	70%	24%	3%	3%	0%	100%
Explore career options and						
opportunities	43%	38%	16%	0%	3%	100%
Experience with specific						
types of museum research						
activities	59%	35%	5%	0%	0%	100%
Relevant topics and classes						
in GTS for Latino Studies	78%	19%	3%	0%	0%	100%
Contacts with GTS						
staff/lecturers that are						
useful for recommendations						
or references	43%	22%	30%	3%	3%	100%
	.5 70	/0	2376	2 70	2 70	10070

Table 11
Are you actively doing research on Latino issues?
(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	8%
Yes	92%
	Total 100%

Table 12
Have you remained in contact with other GTS participants?
(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	13%
Yes	<u>87%</u>
	Total 100%

Table 13

Does your present occupation take advantage of the GTS experience?

(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	28%
Yes/No	3%
Yes	<u>69%</u>
	Total 100%

Table 14
Do you work in a museum or museum related organization?
(Percent)

Response		Percent
No		55%
Yes		<u>45%</u>
	Total	100%

Table 15
Did GTS make you more or less interested in a museum career?
(Percent)

Response	Percent	
More	74%	
No effect	18%	
Less	<u>8%</u>	
	Total 100%	

Table 16
Would you be interested in working at the Smithsonian or another museum?

(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	5%
Yes	<u>95%</u>
	Total 100%

Table 17
Have you ever applied for a Smithsonian graduate fellowship?
(Percent)

Response		Percent
Applied and got		39%
Applied, but did not get		3%
Not applied		<u>58%</u>
	Total	100%

Table 18
Have you ever applied for a job at the Smithsonian since GTS?
(Percent)

Response		Percent
Applied and got		11%
Applied, but did not get		11%
Not applied		<u>78%</u>
	Total	100%

Table 19
Have you remained in contact with anyone at the Smithsonian?
(Percent)

Response	Percent
No	53%
Yes	<u>47%</u>
	Total 100%

APPENDIX B: GTS Student Questionnaire

The Latino Graduate Training Seminar (GTS) at Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives (SCLI):

A SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS

Administered by
The Office of Policy and Analysis
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560-0405
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PLEASE <u>UNDERLINE</u> YOUR ANSWER. THE SPACE IN THE ANSWER BOXES WILL EXPAND TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR TEXT RESPONSES, COMMENTS, OR CLARIFICATIONS. PLEASE USE AS MUCH SPACE AS NECESSARY. PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY BY E-MAIL TO <u>STUDY@SI.EDU</u>.

About Your Experience with the Latino Graduate Training Seminar (GTS)

1.	When did you attend the Smithsonian GTS on Latino issues?	1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001
2.	How did you hear about the GTS seminar?	SMITHSONIAN INFO COLLEGE FACULTY COLLEGE INFO FRIEND OTHER (SPECIFY) Comments?
3.	Did you consider going to any other museum based or similar programs instead of GTS?	YES NO Comments?
4.	What did you expect to get from attending the GTS? (<u>underline</u> all that apply)	CONTACTS CAREER INSIGHTS JOB LEADS CLASS CREDIT LATINO INSIGHTS SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE OTHER (SPECIFY) Comments?
5.	Were your expectations met by GTS? (Please explain)	YES NO Comments?
6.	Overall, how would you rate the value of GTS to you?	OUTSTANDING EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR Comments?
7.	What were two important contributions of GTS to you?	2)

Your Rating of GTS

 GTS made you more qualified to do research on Latino issues. 	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
research on Launo issues.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
2. GTS taught you specific research skills.	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
3. GTS let you make contacts with Latino	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
scholars.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
4. GTS let you explore career options and	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
opportunities.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
5. GTS gave you experience with specific	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
types of museum research activities.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
6. The topics and classes in GTS were	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
relevant for Latino students.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
	Comments?
7. GTS provided contacts with GTS	TOTALLY AGREE NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE
staff/lecturers that are useful for recommendations or references.	+2 +1 0 -1 -2
recommendations or references.	Comments?
8. If a friend asked, would you recommend	YES NO
going to GTS? Why?	WHY?
9. Are you actively doing research on Latino	YES NO
issues?	Comments?
10. 11	
10. Have you remained in contact with other GTS participants?	YES NO
r	Comments?
11. Have you remained in contact with anyone	YES NO
at the Smithsonian?	Comments?

12. How could GTS be changed to make it more effective in supporting research on Latino issues, subjects, and topics?

GTS and Your Career Choices

1.	What type of degree program were you in when you attended GTS?	BACHELOR MASTERS POST PHD NON-DEGREE OTHER (SPECIFY)
2.	What is your highest level of education now?	BACHELOR MASTERS PHD POST PHD
3.	Describe your current occupation. What are your job responsibilities?	OCCUPATION? RESPONSIBILITIES?
4.	Do you work in a museum or museum related organization	YES NO
5.	Did the GTS make you more or less interested in a museum career?	MORE LESS NO EFFECT Comments?
6.	Does your present occupation take advantage of the GTS experience?	YES NO Comments?
7.	Would you be interested in working at the Smithsonian or another museum?	YES NO Comments?
8.	Have you ever applied for a Smithsonian graduate fellowship?	APPLIED AND GOT APPLIED, DID NOT GET NOT APPLIED Comments?
9.	Have you ever applied for a job at the Smithsonian since GTS?	APPLIED AND GOT APPLIED, DID NOT GET NOT APPLIED Comments?
10.	How could GTS be changed to make it more effective in getting Latino students into museum careers?	
11.	How could GTS be changed to attract more applications from Latino graduate students?	