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Helping ‘At-Promise’ Students Succeed

Research on students who overcome adversity to successfully navigate higher education has shown that emotionally relevant educators often make the difference, by fostering the resilience that makes success possible. No one knows that better than Victor Rios, whose own life was forever altered by a high school teacher who saw his potential and became his mentor.

At a Chancellor’s Community Breakfast hosted by UC Santa Barbara Chancellor Henry T. Yang and the UCSB Affiliates, Rios, a professor of sociology at UCSB, will discuss the importance of emotional support from an authority figure in the lives of marginalized students. He will explore how community members can play a powerful role in guiding students who have been left behind, and will provide examples of policies and practical strategies that work in helping these “at-promise” students succeed in their educational trajectories.

Rios’s talk, “Juvenile Justice, Education, and Social Change: The Role of Emotional Support in the Lives of Marginalized Students,” will begin at 7:30 a.m. Thursday, March 9, at El Paseo Restaurant, 813 Anacapa St., #10 in Santa Barbara. The cost is $25. Admission is free for UCSB Affiliates, Gold Circle and Chancellor’s Council members and for UC Santa Barbara Foundation Trustees. Reservations may be made by calling Percy Sales at (805) 893-8260 or by sending a check — payable to the UC Regents — to the UCSB Affiliates, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

A specialist in juvenile justice, Rios is the author of “Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys” (NYU Press), in which he analyzes how juvenile crime policies, punitive policing and criminalization affect the everyday lives of urban male youth. In his forthcoming book, “Human Targets: Schools, Police, and the Criminalization of Latino Youth” (University of Chicago Press), he examines the quality of interactions between gang-associated youths and authority figures across institutional settings.

Rios, who completed his Ph.D. at UC Berkeley, has worked with local school districts to develop programs and curricula aimed at improving the quality of interactions between authority figures and youths. Using his research findings — along with his personal experience of living on the streets, dropping out of school and being incarcerated as a juvenile — Rios has developed interventions aimed at promoting personal transformation and civic engagement among marginalized youth. These programs have been implemented in Los Angeles, juvenile detention facilities and alternative high schools.

Rios is also the author of “Project GRIT: Generating Resilience to Inspire Transformation,” “Street Life: Poverty, Gangs, and a Ph.D.,” and “Buscando Vida, Encontrando Éxito: La Fuerza de la Cultura Latina in la Educación.”

Questions about the Chancellor’s Community Breakfast can be directed to percy.sales@ucsb.edu.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.