

# Students hope to open doors



MIKE ELIASON / NEWS-PRESS

Rufina Cortez, second from right, joins other students and the instructor in talking about classwork during an ENLACE session.

## ■ Education: Program aimed at young Latinos, parents

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Veronica Hernandez remembers the frustration of homework time in her Spanish-speaking household, where no one had completed more than an elementary education.

"I would cry because I wanted to do it right and my mother couldn't help me," Hernandez, now a 20-year-old UCSB student, told classmates in the UCSB sociology group studies class Education for Social Change.

The 24 students are participating in a four-year program, financed by a \$1.5

## for the young

million grant, to improve education for Latinos so that more get college degrees. Most of the students themselves are Latinos.

Andrea Padilla, 21, remembers planning for college while attending a rural high school in the Central Valley town of Chowchilla. She wanted to attend Stanford or a UC school, but her counselors only pushed Fresno and Chico State. She secretly applied to UCSB.

Both are working on ENLACE — Engaging Latino Communities for Education — the new program with a dual goal: to improve outreach to Latino elementary students, their parents and siblings, and to track which programs are successful.

The concept is in step with an increase in outreach by the University of California system to high school and even elementary students since affirmative action was banned

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**Andrea Padilla,**

UCSB student discussing one benefit of the Engaging Latino Communities for Education outreach

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# UCSB and SBCC students reaching

## ■ OUTREACH

*Continued from Page B1*

beginning in 1998.

"This is something I could totally take back to families in the Central Valley," said Padilla, who is considering returning to her home county and helping more Latino kids get college degrees. "They're going to see that we can relate to them, and I think we're going to serve as role models."

The program got its start thanks to a \$100,000 grant in 2000. A second \$1.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich. will see those ideas implemented.

Santa Barbara City College students will

team up with UCSB to work on the outreach. More of those students are from this area and are familiar with programs on local elementary and high school campuses, UCSB Professor Denise Segura recently told the UCSB class.

Many immigrant parents have a strong desire to improve the lives of their children through education, but without experience in the system themselves, families are sometimes at a loss, students said.

"This is really not about culture, it's about class," Segura said in a written statement. "The culture of the Latino student is one that very much honors education, but the economics of the situation don't allow that respect to translate easily into an enriching educational experience."

UCSB Professor J. Manuel Casas of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education is co-director of the program with Segura.

For the ENLACE program, Isla Vista Elementary School will serve as the lead school in the network. It will identify families of sixth-graders who would like to participate in the program. Eventually the group expects to reach 500 people, including expansion of existing programs offered by local social service agencies that serve students through high school.

Two student mentors, one each from UCSB and Santa Barbara City College, will be assigned to each family.

They will help with basic information such as explaining report cards and financial aid, which can be confusing to any parent, Segura

## out to young Latinos

said.

The student teams will also work with the families to identify needs and help hook them up with services. More than 40 social service agencies have also signed up as partners.

Ventura and Oxnard leaders are organizing their own programs.

Oxnard College will produce and air informational broadcasts to promote the college. It will also create video histories of student and community leaders. Community groups will promote computer literacy and continue to provide literacy programs.

Organizers in the Ventura area will create a family development plan to work with students and families on issues including education, health and welfare.

The UCSB and City College leaders will track enrollment in college preparatory courses as well as college enrollment in the area to gauge the success of the programs.

In all, the Kellogg Foundation awarded \$28 million to 13 programs in states with large Latino populations. Each program is customized to the individual communities, but all have the same mission of promoting higher education programs for Latinos.

Ideally, those programs can serve as guides to improve other communities.

"We want to help more Latino people move into the middle class and get good jobs," said Betty Overton-Adkins, director of higher education programs for the Kellogg Foundation.

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