

Language Matters: Latine, Latinx, Chicanx

In crafting communications across university channels - from campus events to external partnerships - using inclusive language ensures every member of our diverse community feels represented and valued. Rather than limiting terms that may exclude certain groups, opt for broader language like "campus-wide" or "community" events that naturally encompasses students, faculty, staff, and partners regardless of their background, role, or affiliation. This approach strengthens institutional communications while fostering a more welcoming and accessible environment for all.

Examples used in the past:



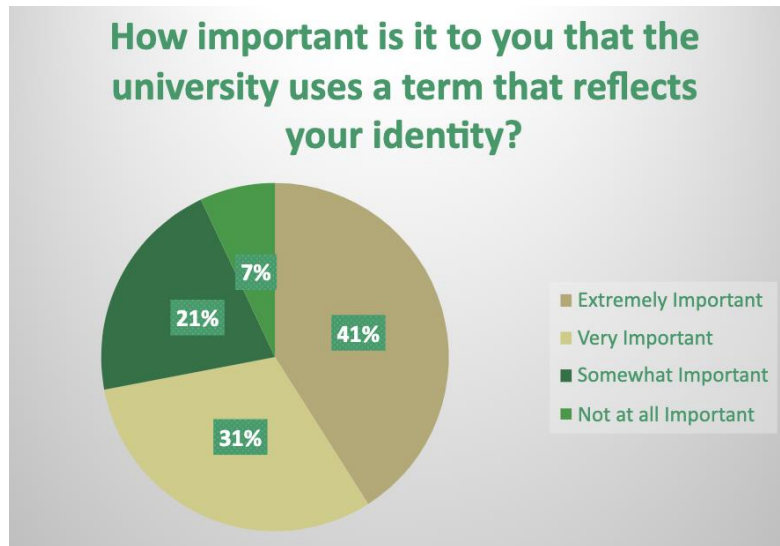
Hispanics help fuel the region's economy, but face significant inequities, report shows

Sacramento State News

\$2.6M grant aims to open Sac State's Latino teacher pipeline

A campus wide survey was launched to engage Sacramento State's Latine Community. In which we engaged them with several questions. In addition, we held a Lunch & Learn workshop where we engaged with students, staff, and faculty. The data collected from the survey and research was presented and we engaged in dialogue. Here is the data and research that informed the decision to move forward with the term Latine.

When the campus community was asked how important it was to them for the university to use terms that reflected their identity, this is what they responded:



Hispanic

- In her book *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*, G. Cristina Mora (2014) links the use of the term in the U.S. to the census. With this group having previously been classified as white with European ancestry, activists knew that this meant many were not being counted as their own group and, therefore, could not be accurately represented; they compromised on the term Hispanic, using the Spanish language to group different nationalities and cultures into one ethnic group. This meant businesses and media now had a group they could market to and serve and a whole new group of people for politicians to pander to, changing the racial and political landscape in the United States (Mora, 2014). However, this was not the perfect compromise as the term erased the uniqueness of these cultures and the diversity of races and backgrounds that came with these differences, attempting to turn them into a monolith. Moreover, by using the term Hispanic, it still put European influence and whiteness front and center, creating the illusion that all Hispanic or Latine people are white, light-skinned, or brown. This perpetuated white supremacy and continued the erasure of Black and Indigenous peoples. It also completely ignored the different political and immigration relationships that these countries held with the United States, which were important as these had the power to create division and strife among Hispanic and Latine groups (Soto-Luna, 2023).

Latino/Latina

- In Spanish, *Latino* (masculine) or *Latina* (feminine) as a noun or adjective is gendered in relation to specific objects. In English, the masculine form is usually applied universally, or a slash is used to register two possible gendered possibilities: Latino/a (Rodriguez, 2014).

Latinx

- The term Latinx embraces and acknowledges people’s lives, genders, histories, cultures, and languages (Salinas & Lozano, 2021).
- Latinx is proposed as a gender-expansive and inclusive term that encompasses people whose gender identities are of the binary – who identify as Latino or Latina – as well as those whose identities do not conform to the traditional binary model, including TGNC and queer people (Scharron-del et al., 2020).
- Latinx is primarily about being as inclusive as possible with respect to gender and sexual diversity (Cardemil et al., 2019).
- **Latinx removes gendered language constraints. However, some resist this term since "x" recalls Spanish colonizers' suppression of indigenous languages.**

Chicana, Chicano, Chicax

- Although it is not entirely clear who first appropriated “Chicano” for this usage, it is generally accepted that at one time, the word circulated in Mexican Spanish as a negative reference to the “lower classes.” Its appropriation by students and activists transformed it into an empowering alternative to “Mexican,” “Mexican American,” or “Hispanic.” To name oneself as “Chicana” or “Chicano” is to assert a gendered, racial, ethnic, class, and cultural identity in opposition to Anglo-American hegemony and state-sanctioned practices of representing people of Mexican descent in the United States. As it evokes the “radical” politics of cultural nationalism, “Chicano” stands against the institutionally normative “Hispanic” as well as the linguistically insistent “Latino” (Contreras, 2017).
- Chicax, the “x” signifies fluidity and mobility, setting aside the conv conventions of ideological, philosophical, and medical binaries that assign humans to one gender identity out of two when they are born. The “x” in “Chicax” is nonbinary (Contreras, 2017).

Latine

- Latine is meant to serve as a gender-neutral option for Latino/a, replacing the a or o with an e, and can be used for other nouns that are gendered (e.g., amigue, niñas, etc.) (Soto-Luna, 2023).

Why Latine?

We are moving into a space where we mostly use Latine. **Latines have intersectionalities of various identities.** Although we know that one term will not encompass all those identities, we use Latine to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for people in our community who come from those various identities. However, we would like to acknowledge that the discourse around which term to use is complex and evolving. Every person has the right to use the term that captures who they are and that feels the most welcoming to them. Regardless of which term you prefer to use, Sac State is committed to learning and continues to work towards an inclusive and welcoming community.

Additional Resources

- [Call me Latine.](#)
- [The X in Latinx is a Wound, Not a Trend](#)
- [What does “Latinx” Mean, Exactly?](#)

References

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