

CCWT FALL 2022 SEMINAR SERIES

Examining the postsecondary education pathways and successes for former gang members: A qualitative analysis

Monday, September 19, 2022, 12pm CST (US)

Wisconsin Idea Room, 159 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall

Across the U.S., gang-associated youth are often “pushed” to the social and academic margins in schools and the local community. Targeted practices by educators and other school personnel contribute to only 50 percent of gang youth graduating from high school and only five percent earning a college degree compared to non-gang-involved peers (Pyrooz & Sweeten, 2014). Virtually absent from the social science literature are the experiences and motivations of former gang-involved youth to reach and graduate from college. This study draws from two-part qualitative interviews with former gang members who earned four-year and advanced degrees. Findings center on the precollege experiences, motivations to enroll in college, and processes of becoming a collegian. The desistance scholarship has documented that education engagement is a tool to decrease criminality; however, many questions remain about how former gang members navigate the complex educational process and the individual motivations to earn college degrees.

Dr. Adrian H. Huerta is an Assistant Professor of Education in the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. His research focuses on boys and young men of color, college access and equity, and gang-associated youth. During his fellowship, he is focusing on former gang-associated individuals who have gone on to earn a postsecondary education degree or credentials to understand what and who contributed to their successes. He hopes to help education and social service personnel understand how to better support gang-associated individuals throughout the educational pipeline. Dr. Huerta is a past recipient of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Minority Dissertation Fellowship and earned his PhD in Education at UCLA.

Use the following link to live stream the event: <https://go.wisc.edu/3206c7>



Special Guest: Dr. Adrian H. Huerta
Assistant Professor, University of
Southern California

The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) is housed within the Division of Continuing Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. CCWT's mission is to conduct and support research, critical policy analysis, and public dialogue on how college students experience the transition to the workforce. CCWT strives to inform policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.

