

CSUCI named a top university for helping low income students improve their circumstances

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Data was collected through third-party sources such as Payscale, Inc. and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The index measured five criteria when compiling statistics: tuition cost; the percentage of the student body from low-income households; graduation rates; and the size of a school's endowment.

Quintero often works with students who are the first in their family to attend college, and these students are often from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reaping the greatest benefit from higher education as a tool for social mobility.

Quintero herself is the picture of social mobility. She rose from poverty to become the first of her family to attend college, ultimately earning a Ph.D. in Education from Claremont Graduate University.

"It was really tough. It was a hard, hard road," she said. "I worked full time the entire time I was on this path. I had to work two or three jobs in order to go to school. At times it was very lonely."

But in the end, she said, the sacrifice was more than worth it because she improved circumstances for her entire family, and for generations ahead.

Her advice to those who are seeking an education despite few economic resources is to "never give up," she said.

"It's not always going to be easy. Ultimately the sacrifice they're making is going to change the trajectory of their family forevermore," she said. "This is something much bigger than themselves."