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University Park, IL,
June
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2022

Recruiting specialist honored with 40 under 40 award



[Governors State University's](#) Bilingual Recruiting Specialist Emmanuel Lopez was recognized in a "40 Under 40" list, which paid homage to young Latino leaders making a difference.

At the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement's (HACE) 40th annual leadership summit, Lopez, 28, was honored for his efforts to build up and empower Latino youth, a passion that brought him to GSU. Here at GSU, he helps oversee the deployment of key communication for recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

For Lopez, being recognized by the organization-- which is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of Latino professionals-- is an honor.

"Being recognized by the largest non-profit organization dedicated to Latinx career enhancement was extraordinarily special to me. This recognition affirmed my direction as a Latinx leader and professional," said Lopez, who came to the university a year ago with experience in various facets of higher education, including admissions, leadership programs, first-year experience, scholarships, and student life. "HACE provided me with my first ever headshot and internship experience. I am indebted to them for what they have poured into me. The journey from being an intern with HACE in 2015 to now being recognized as a 40 under 40 recipient is proof that hard, consistent, and visible work does pay off."

Lopez, born in Harvey, Illinois, began his higher education journey with earning an associate degree from Prairie State College and a bachelor's degree in communication and public relations at Indiana University Northwest, where he had a dual minor in psychology and Spanish. He didn't stop there. Lopez then went on to earn his master's degree in higher education. He reached those goals as a first-generation student, an accomplishment he credits to his parents.

"My parents' sacrifices give me tremendous focus to achieve my goals," he said. "I will never stop honoring them with my accomplishment."

Due to his experiences as a first-generation student, Lopez has an informed understanding of what incoming students need to thrive as they enter school and how GSU can help meet those needs, whether it's the support offered through the [Academic Resource Center](#) or with GSU's expert faculty and staff.

"These experiences help me express a level of care and patience that is unique," he said. "It takes a lot of energy to always go the extra mile; however, I love what I do. I am grateful for my experiences. That gratitude fuels me every day and allows me to express compassion."

With major contributions from Lopez, GSU has made great strides in improving the way it serves Latinx populations. Lopez helped relaunch the [Association of Latin American Students](#) (ALAS), which has 65 student members and has become one of the most active clubs on campus. He also helped create two different landing pages on GSU's website to help prospective Spanish speaking students and families get in contact with Spanish speaking staff.

In the future Lopez hopes to build on his work with Latinx students by creating a Latinx professional coalition to unite the voices of students, faculty, staff and university leadership.

"GSU is evolving," he said. "We have new leadership so that allows the university to undergo new changes. I think the incorporation of a Latinx Resource Center on campus could really put GSU on the regional and national spotlight. The truth is that we simply are not doing enough, but we are one step away from changing that forever which is why a Latinx Resource Center excites me."