CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Arthturo's older sister, Dr. Raul Fernandez was placed in a gifted program which put him on a fast-tracked path leading to his credit on the diverse and well-resourced path leading him to attend some of New York City's public exam schools and later Boston University. If not for this life-changing opportunity, he would have ended up at the former Stevenson High School in the Bronx, which at the time was graduating three out of every ten students. He was himself an example in his classes to black students the importance of opportunities. "That's a key part of what allows you to view the world; it's the understanding I doubt not the experiences I've had, and the understanding that I've want to change outcomes for people, then we have to change the opportunities they are provided." Dr. Fernandez takes a semester off to earn money before returning to school. During that time, he found support amongst his Phi Iota Alpha fraternity brothers, who let him sleep on the couch and taught him to dance salsa. He also found community with his friends at Latinx Student Organizations as Alpha's chair. "They helped me get through it. If I wasn't for them, I wouldn't have made it," he said.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Dr. Fernandez questions the intention. "If I wasn't for someone like those, many of them would be lost," he said.

Hispanic Heritage Month is nationally recognized from September 15 to October 15. It honors the influence and contributions of the Latin American culture in America, and acknowledges its history, culture, and achievements. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have made it," he said.

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Today, Dr. Fernandez is a senior lecturer in the Higher Education Administration program at Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. He has over a decade of diverse experience in higher education and is part of a growing number of Latinx faculty at BU.

Dr. Fernandez — the first person in his family to graduate college — came to BU in 1995 without much understanding of the Higher Education landscape. He began as an engineering major but quickly realized he didn't have the support he needed to succeed. He decided to switch his major to community relations but found many obstacles. His father said he went to school to be an engineer; if he wanted to do something else, he'd have to pay for it himself.

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