

Bierce Library Films

Stand and Deliver (103 min, DVD).

Story of Jaime Escalante, a math teacher at East Los Angeles' Garfield High School, who pushes and inspires Hispanic students who were struggling with math to become math whizzes. The math teacher motivates record numbers of Latino students to study for the rigorous Advanced Calculus exams. Students pass the exam raising suspicions. Investigators from Princeton Testing Center visit the school, but find no evidence of cheating; however, students retake the exam—they pass. Many more pass in following years.

The Graduates – Los Graduados (120 min, DVD).

This two-part special examines the many roots of the Latino dropout crisis through the eyes of six inspiring young students who are part of an ongoing effort to increase graduation rates for a growing Latino population.

The Great Debaters (124 min, DVD and streaming).

Melvin B. Tolson is a professor at Wiley College in Texas--a small African-American college. In 1935, Tolson inspired students to form the school's first debate team. He turns a group of underdog students into a historically elite debate team which goes on to challenge Harvard in the national championship; based on a true story.

Freedom Writers (122 min, DVD).

A true story about a teacher in a racially divided school who gives her students what they've always needed, a voice. Erin Gruwell comes to a southern California high school bubbling over with naive optimism. She quickly discovers that her unruly classroom is not easily won over by her good intentions. After a few floundering attempts to connect with her students, Gruwell gives them the assignment of keeping journals about their own lives which bonds them together and pushes racial rivalries aside. Draws heavily from the published journals of the real students themselves.

Get In, Stay In (133 minutes, streaming).

Issues of race and class have turned the college experience into an obstacle course that is deterring many of America's brightest students from graduating with a four-year degree. This video counters cultures of low expectation and social isolation with three stand-out initiatives that are helping students get into college—and stay in. Featured in this video are: the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, a national model for talented minority students studying science, engineering, math, and computer science; The Puente Project; the East Los Angeles College program, which bridges the transition gap between two- and four-year institutions; and the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program, which is raising educational aspirations among Indiana's low- and moderate-income families.

Expect the Best (133 min, streaming).

To have a shot at college, students must first believe they can get into college. This program shows the positive things that can happen when the dream of a college education is nurtured in classrooms and communities where expectations previously had been low. By spotlighting innovative approaches for motivating and teaching children—from the Upward Bound initiative in Cleveland that can only serve a few students, to GEAR UP's creation of a college-going culture in a Latino community in Texas, to the efforts of Project GRAD in Atlanta to get all 8th-graders ready to succeed in high school and then in college.

The Pact (85 min, DVD).

Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt and George Jenkins already knew too much about the drugs, crime and grinding poverty that colored their world. They pledged to help each other make it to college and even medical school. The doctors beat the odds and return to their community to practice medicine. Despite grueling workloads, they face an even more daunting task--inspiring others to stay off drugs, out of gangs, and in school.