

**Platform Issues  
and  
Recommendations  
for  
Presidential Candidates in  
2012**



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## HACU'S PLATFORM ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN 2012

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) respectfully submits for consideration by Presidential candidates and their political parties a series of critical issues and related recommendations. These issues and recommendations are intended to guide Presidential candidates and their parties on major concerns related to the education of the more than 54 million Hispanics across the nation, the largest and fastest growing ethnic population in the U.S. Millions of Hispanic voters may decide the next presidential election in key states.<sup>1</sup>

The issues addressed in this document reflect the vision of HACU and its more than 400 member colleges and universities throughout the country; these institutions enroll 4.8 million students and two of every three Hispanic students in college today. The document aims to elicit an official response from Presidential candidates, assure inclusion of Hispanic educational issues in party platforms, and encourage public discourse on substantive matters of special interest to Hispanics.

While significant barriers to Hispanic educational success persist, Hispanic parents have consistently emphasized the importance of higher education for their children.<sup>2</sup> Yet Hispanics continue to underachieve in PK-12 and higher education. For example, U.S. Census data about educational attainment indicate that, for every ten Hispanic students entering kindergarten, only one is likely to earn a bachelor's degree. Since Hispanics account for more than half of U.S. workforce growth between 2005 and 2009<sup>3</sup>, the nation as a whole, especially the federal government, needs to immediately increase its investment in Hispanic educational success. The economic well-being of the nation is at stake.

### Issues

1. The nation's still stagnant economy underlines the importance of action on workforce development, especially the still pending reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The increasingly large share of Hispanics in the American workforce demands explicit attention to Hispanics and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in this reauthorization.
2. Persistent federal underfunding of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic higher education remains a major impediment to Hispanic educational success.
3. The continuing exclusion of HSIs from key federal legislation that authorizes targeted funding for higher education is a barrier to institutional capacity-building for Hispanic student and faculty success.
4. The lack of adequate federal support for greater collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education is a national concern for Latinos, especially with respect to HSIs and school districts with large concentrations of Hispanic students.
5. As the United States struggles to create the next generation of scientists and engineers, the growing Hispanic population offers an obvious talent pool to meet this need long-term. Capitalizing on this opportunity requires that more federal support be targeted to increasing the aspiration to and the college readiness in STEM fields among Hispanic students and to building capacity at HSIs in order to strengthen their key role in providing Hispanic access to STEM degrees and careers.
6. The lack of federal attention to a broken immigration system, especially legislation like the DREAM Act to permit undocumented immigrant youth that have resided in the U.S. more than five years and have graduated from U.S. high schools to receive financial aid and other federal assistance to attend college, is perpetuating a loss of talent and high-skill workers that the national economy can ill afford.

<sup>1</sup>Between 2004 and 2008, among Latinos 18-29 years of age, voter turnout rose from 35.5 to 40.7 percent, according to The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University (Emily Hoban Kirby and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, "The Youth Vote in 2008," August 2009).

<sup>2</sup>See, e.g., Pew Hispanic Center, "National Survey of Latinos: Education," January 2004, Summary and Chartpack, Chart 12. Retrieved from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/7.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). Table 588, Civilian Population – Employment Status by Sex, Race, and Ethnicity: 1970 to 2009. Labor Force, Employment, and Earnings, U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0588.pdf>.

## **Issues (continued)**

7. The severe under-representation of Hispanics in the federal labor force, especially in management and executive positions, is an unacceptable disparity. Hispanics are the only ethnic population under-represented in the federal workforce (8.0%, compared to 13.6% of the civilian workforce).<sup>4</sup>
8. There is a corresponding under-representation of Hispanics among top-level political appointees in federal agencies (especially in those with greater resources for higher education institutional capacity-building, academic programs, support and outreach services, and research). This disparity is equally unacceptable. It raises questions about the political will for inclusion, and creates the risk of Hispanics and Hispanic issues being overlooked in agency policies and practices.
9. Executive Orders from several administrations, and resources to oversee their implementation, have proven inadequate to achieve full Hispanic inclusion.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are numbered to correspond with each of the preceding issues.

1. The President should take the lead in making the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act a priority as a key stimulus to employment and the American economy. Legislative language which recognizes the growing importance of a well-trained Hispanic workforce and strengthens the central role of Hispanic-Serving Institutions in preparing such a workforce is essential to this reauthorization process.
2. HSIs, on average, receive only 66 cents for every federal dollar funding all other higher education institutions.<sup>5</sup> HSIs receive only 2.08% of all federal science and engineering obligations and only 1.84% of federal research and development dollars but account for 9% of all institutions of higher education.<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that:
  - a. A comprehensive study should be directed by the President through the Office of Management and Budget in collaboration with a HACU advisory board to analyze strategies for closing the HSI federal funding gaps.
  - b. Within six months of beginning his/her term, the President should issue an Executive Order directing all federal agencies to assess their allocation of funds to higher education institutions and programs for greater HSI and Hispanic participation with appropriate objectives and annual progress reports to the White House.
3. Numerous federal statutes and regulations focused on higher education fail to explicitly include HSIs and Hispanics in capacity-building grant opportunities, especially for international educational programs. It is recommended that:
  - a. The President should establish by Executive Order a Presidential Advisory Board on HSIs to advise the White House and the Secretaries of all relevant jurisdictions about appropriate approaches and resources to remedy such exclusions of HSIs and Hispanics.
  - b. The Presidential Advisory Board should be comprised of Presidents of HSIs and emerging HSIs, including the Chair of HACU's Governing Board, should be staffed by the Office of the Secretary of Education, and should report to the Secretary and the President's Domestic Policy Advisor.
  - c. The President should direct international education and outreach agencies to target funds and technical assistance for HSIs and Hispanic higher education to work with institutions abroad, especially in Spanish-speaking countries, in promoting international education.

<sup>4</sup>Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program FY 2010 report, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Jan. 2011, p. 10. Retrieved from [http://www.opm.gov/About\\_OPM/Reports/FEORP/2010/feorp2010.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/About_OPM/Reports/FEORP/2010/feorp2010.pdf).

<sup>5</sup>HACU analysis of 2007-2008 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) information.

<sup>6</sup>HACU analysis of data from National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, "Survey of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Non-Profit Institutions, FY 2007."

## **Recommendations (continued)**

4. The President should work closely with Congress to enhance federal legislation and funding to increase and strengthen collaboration between PK-12 and higher education, particularly between school districts and HSIs in areas of the country with high concentrations of low-income and underachieving populations.
5. The President should direct the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and other federal agencies with a stake in STEM education, to create programs dedicated to building STEM educational capacity at HSIs, including the preparation of appropriate and adequate budget requests to assure dedicated funding to such programs.
6. The President should take the lead with appropriate Congressional leaders to advance comprehensive immigration reform, particularly DREAM Act legislation, to foster educational opportunity and create a highly educated workforce to meet the needs of the national economy.
7. The President should issue an Executive Order for all federal agencies to commit to close Hispanic employment gaps at all levels, especially at the management and senior executive service positions.
8. The President should implement strategies to assure the inclusion of Hispanics in Cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments. It should be the goal of the President for the cadre of top appointees to reflect the diverse face of the nation. This is especially important with regard to the Presidential appointees within the U.S. Department of Education.
9. The President should charge her/his Domestic Policy Advisor to review Executive Orders and recommend appropriate action to the President for equitable Hispanic inclusion.

HACU would appreciate a response to each of the preceding recommendations on or before March 9, 2012.

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### About HACU:

HACU represents approximately 450 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, Portugal and Spain. HACU's more than 400 member institutions across the nation enroll two of every three of the two million Hispanic college students and a total of 4.8 million students from diverse backgrounds. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) with general headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, a government relations office in Washington, DC, and a regional office in Sacramento, California.