

**Realizing the Potential of Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Multiple Dimensions
of Institutional Diversity for Advancing Hispanic Higher Education**

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Realizing the Potential of Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Multiple Dimensions of Institutional Diversity for Advancing Hispanic Higher Education

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Unlike Tribal Colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that began with the explicit purpose of serving populations that have been historically excluded from higher education, the majority of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) began as predominantly-white institutions located in regions that have experienced significant demographic growth in terms of Hispanic births and immigration. Only a few institutions were established with the express purpose of responding to the educational needs of Hispanic/Latino students. These institutions include Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College and Boricua College (both located in New York), St. Augustine (Illinois) which offers bilingual higher education, and National Hispanic University located in California (Hurtado, 2003; Laden, 2004). Colleges and universities in Puerto Rico (56 nonprofit HSIs) were created with the express purpose of educating residents of the island, the majority of whom are Hispanic (Santiago, 2006), indicating distinct historical, political, and cultural foci than mainland institutions.

Several studies have pointed out that, with these specific exceptions, HSIs did not begin with an explicit mission to serve a large Hispanic student population (Laden, 2004; Santiago, 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Contreras, Malcom, & Bensimon, 2008). Instead, HSIs are institutions defined primarily by enrollment: At least 25% of their full-time equivalent (FTE), undergraduate student enrollment must be of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (Laden, 2004). Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1998 introduced Title V, the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions program, to provide funds to develop the capacity of institutions serving large numbers of Hispanic students. The Higher Education Act served to further define HSIs eligible for federal

appropriations as accredited, degree-granting, nonprofit institutions with a FTE enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic, and that provide assurances that not less than 50% of its students are low-income (see Santiago, 2006 for a chronology of this legislation). Eligible institutions must not only demonstrate an institutional need for financial assistance, but also must submit a “five-year comprehensive plan for improving the assistance of the Hispanic-serving institutions to Hispanic students and other low-income individuals” (Title V Section 511(c) (2), 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965). Institutions must report on their initiatives to the U.S.

Department of Education, and as a consequence, the provision of these funds has led to the development of specific programs on college campuses directed at improving the education of Hispanics. However, not all institutions that serve large numbers of Hispanics may meet eligibility for Title V funding, and consequently, institutional initiatives responsive to the needs of Hispanic/Latino students require a shift in institutional priorities. Rapid diversification of the student body presents new challenges and opportunities that require more coordinated responses that transform the structure, climate, and culture of an institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2005; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Hurtado & Dey, 1997; Peterson, Blackburn, Gamson, Arce, Davenport, & Mingle, 1978).

The fact that most HSIs were not initially intended to serve large numbers of Hispanics and that appropriations under Title V require a comprehensive five-year plan, indicates that most HSIs need to begin to systematically plan for the Hispanic population they serve now and will continue to serve in growing numbers in the future. To date, very little has been documented regarding the kinds of changes institutions have undergone or will need to undergo, in order to truly become “Hispanic-serving.” The purpose of this paper is to provide a blueprint for multiple areas of institutional diversity that need greater attention as institutions begin to recruit, admit

and ensure the success of Hispanic students. Making use of the Multi-contextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE) (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, and Arellano, 2012), research is summarized and a research agenda is proposed in order to address many of the areas of institutional development needed to increase the potential of these institutions in advancing Hispanic higher education. It is projected that three in ten individuals in the U.S. population will be of Hispanic origin by 2050 (U.S. Census, 2008), and based on the youth of the population, we can expect more institutions will begin to indicate they are “Hispanic-serving” as students seek admission to postsecondary institutions.

The Potential of HSIs

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) began in 1986 as a group of higher education leaders interested in overcoming persistent educational barriers and recognizing their special role as institutions responsible for educating large numbers of Hispanic/Latino students. It was not until 1992, however, that Congress formally recognized the role of HSIs as minority-serving institutions, allowing campuses to become eligible for federal appropriations to support the educational progress of their Latino/a students. HACU has helped to forge a collective “Hispanic-serving” institutional identity that has better positioned these institutions for funding nationally, monitored legislation, offered more leverage for policies that affect these institutions as a group, and has advanced partnership opportunities that benefit both the institutions and the Hispanic communities they serve (Laden, 2004; HACU, 2012). However, what is needed now is more research and documentation in terms of the initiatives unique to these institutions, evidence of how these institutions are making a difference in terms of student talent development, and evidence of a culture change within institutions that support the common goal of advancing the education of Hispanics. As a collective, these institutions have the

potential to define what it means to be “Hispanic-serving” in the changing context of an increasingly diverse and global society. HSIs have the potential to span many borders based on drawing a local and international Latina/o student population, faculty research across U.S. and international borders, and community partnerships to advance the economic, health, social and political lives of Hispanics in the U.S. and the Americas. More information is needed to understand how HSIs bring meaning to the “Hispanic-serving” designation in order to advance research and practice on these institutions and the students they serve.

While other colleges and universities may struggle with recruiting and admitting a diverse population, HSIs have already achieved a great deal of structural diversity or representation at the student level. By all accounts of existing reports and studies, HSIs educate diverse student bodies, and are responsible for over 50% of all Hispanic student enrollment (Mercer & Stedman, 2008; Santiago, 2008) and a large share of degree attainments (Solorzano, 1995; Santiago, 2006; Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder 2002). In terms of outcomes, HSIs top the list of institutions for the production of Hispanic associate and baccalaureate degrees in a number of fields each year (Santiago & Soliz, 2012), and about a quarter of Hispanic doctoral degree recipients have earned their degree at HSIs in spite of the small proportion of these institutions that offer doctoral programs (Malcom-Piqueux & Lee, 2011). This has become a source of pride for many HSIs, as their student diversity brings recognition to the large influence they play in the advancement of Hispanics in higher education. Because they educate large numbers of Hispanics near their local communities, they are also well-positioned to remedy such problems as the technological disenfranchisement of underserved communities. However, they may have fewer resources and planning strategies currently in place than many peer institutions (Alliance for Equity, 2004). Moreover, within HSIs, a diverse student body may not be widely regarded as an

asset. As one President of a HSI community college put it after a campus-wide meeting, “we realized the campus community’s vision of diversity was as a challenge and problem, and not as an asset” (Kezar & Eckel, 2005). Therefore, there are a number of concerns and challenges that have implications for HSIs’ continued progress in achieving their full potential in educating Latina/os and advancing the study of their communities

Identifying and Defining HSIs: A Dilemma for Research

Because the “Hispanic-serving” designation is tied to the enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students, research studies that attempt to provide descriptive statistics that highlight the impact of HSIs have based their studies on a variety of sample sizes, making it difficult to determine exactly which institutions are included or excluded in reports based on existing definitions. An examination of several reports using the same federal data source revealed that the number of HSIs is a moving target. For example, the first and only report focused on HSIs produced by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), tracked ten-year changes at 335 Title-IV, degree-granting institutions that met the 25% Hispanic enrollment criteria. A broad definition of HSIs is used in this report by including public and private non-profit institutions, for-profit institutions, U.S. residents, as well as non-resident aliens attending postsecondary institutions in the United States and Puerto Rico (Stearns, et al. 2002). This report provides a portrait of all students at institutions with high and increasing Hispanic enrollments, and to their credit, the researchers provide a description of HSIs on the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico, separately. However, its sample makes it difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the non-profit sector and the figures have become quickly dated.

Several other sources document Hispanic enrollments and degree attainments at HSIs on a limited basis as part of their initiatives. It was surprising to discover that two widely-

referenced, national data reports include for-profit institutions participating in federal aid programs in their HSI statistics: *The Condition of Education* (NCES, 2005) and *Minorities in Higher Education*, an annual status report published by the American Council on Education (Harvey, 2003).¹ The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans began to provide annual information on the national website of HSIs during the Clinton Administration, but these efforts were abandoned as the initiative shifted focus during the Bush Administration (Laden, 2004). The national website of the White House Initiative no longer contains data on HSIs. Excelencia in Education, a 501(c)(3) organization, has taken on the cause of providing up-to-date information on HSIs and plans to continue to do so in future reports supported by funds from foundations and corporations (see www.edexcelencia.org). They have produced a series of reports that rely on the same federal data bases but include only non-profit HSIs on both the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico, as well as provide a list of institutions by state, updates on student characteristics, and some qualitative information from HSI college presidents (Santiago, 2006; 2008).

In addition to these varying sources of information, two studies documented the agencies that maintain a list of HSIs that also have varying numbers, due in part to the purpose of the organization and to the numbers of HSIs that change from year to year (Contreras, Malcom, & Bensimon, 2008; Santiago, 2006). The U.S. Department of Education does not maintain a formal list of HSIs, and as stated earlier, data from NCES is submitted to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from all institutions that wish to participate in student aid programs (including accredited, for-profit institutions). The Developing HSIs program (Title V) office maintains a list of awardees, 195 of which received grants in 2012; The Office of Civil

¹ The Minority Status Report excluded institutions in Puerto Rico in their statistics (Bryan Cook: American Council on Education, personal communication, July 2006).

Rights maintains a list of 387 HSIs that include for-profit institutions but it has not been updated since 2008; and HACU maintains two lists, one including institutions that meet the federal definition (25% Hispanic FTE, and not less than 50% eligible for need-based aid) and another list of dues-paying, member institutions that are non-profit, accredited, located in the U.S. or Puerto Rico, and where total Hispanic enrollment (or “headcount”) is a minimum of 25% of the total enrollment (Santiago, 2006; HACU, 2012; for updates, see www.hacu.net/hacu/HSI_Definition1.asp). Federal agencies are using the guide of undergraduate FTE enrollment, and Laden (2004) explains how in the history of HSIs early policy discussions were based on “headcount,” which was also the criteria used when HACU was first formed as an organization.

Despite these differences across agencies and status reports, most agree that the number of institutions that may characterize themselves as “Hispanic-serving” has grown significantly in the past twenty years (Li & Carroll, 2007), and many more institutions may reach the 25% enrollment threshold to become federally-designated as an HSI in the near future (Santiago & Andrade 2010; Torres & Zerquera, 2012). This trend should accelerate the need for more research on HSIs. Moreover, current economic issues and resulting budget constraints at large public institutions have spurred more interest in obtaining federal support for serving larger numbers of Latina/o students. However, studies are likely to continue to vary with regard to choices researchers are making regarding institutions that qualify as “Hispanic-serving” using headcount enrollment percentages, FTE percentages, and geographic location (e.g. whether to include or exclude institutions in Puerto Rico). Few studies have applied the Title V eligibility criteria in determining a nonprofit HSI sample because this requires information about the percentage of Hispanic students that are low-income, a data element missing from institutionally-

based federal data (Bryan Cook: American Council on Education, personal communication, July 2006). Researchers have begun to turn to student aid information or other sources of student income information in an effort to begin to focus studies on Title V eligible institutions (e.g. Contreras, et al., 2008).

The Process of Becoming “Hispanic-Serving”: Multiple Aspects of Institutional Identity and Transformation

Perhaps a more important question than whether researchers can accurately identify the number of HSIs, describe their characteristics, and monitor their progress as a group, is whether these institutions are undergoing considerable transformation in response to changes in their student body. There are several issues that impede our current knowledge about how institutions enact the true meaning of “Hispanic-serving” in higher education. First, there is very little research to draw from that is directly focused on Hispanic-serving institutions and we draw more generally on case study research in higher education, organizational theory, studies of diversity in higher education, and use examples from research on HSIs where possible. Part of the problem is also that some studies do not always adequately identify HSIs when they are included in studies.

Second, the notion of becoming a “Hispanic-serving” institution has been an evolving concept in the last 25 years (Laden, 2004; Santiago, 2006) and there is little evidence that institutions have widely adopted a broad agenda focused on serving Hispanic students. Contreras et. al, (2008) state that the “Hispanic-serving” designation is a “manufactured identity,” shifting at institutions as the enrollment shifts, and they question the extent to which institutions embrace this institutional identity. Laden (2000) noted a great deal of variability among HSIs as to whether institutions identify themselves internally (as administrators were

more aware of an HSI identity than faculty within the same institution) or externally in terms of campus publications and public relations materials that are explicit about serving Latina/os.

Contreras et al., (2008) undertook a review of the websites of 10 HSIs eligible for Title V (equally divided between two and four-year institutions and varying by Latina/o enrollment), to determine if this institutional identity was reflected in mission statements and other public statements. Although most statements mentioned diversity, none of the institutional missions reflected statements about serving Hispanics and they were not able to discern a Latino agenda from this public representation of institutions. Only one of the ten institutions contained substantive statements about a priority to serve Latina/o students in a President's profile.

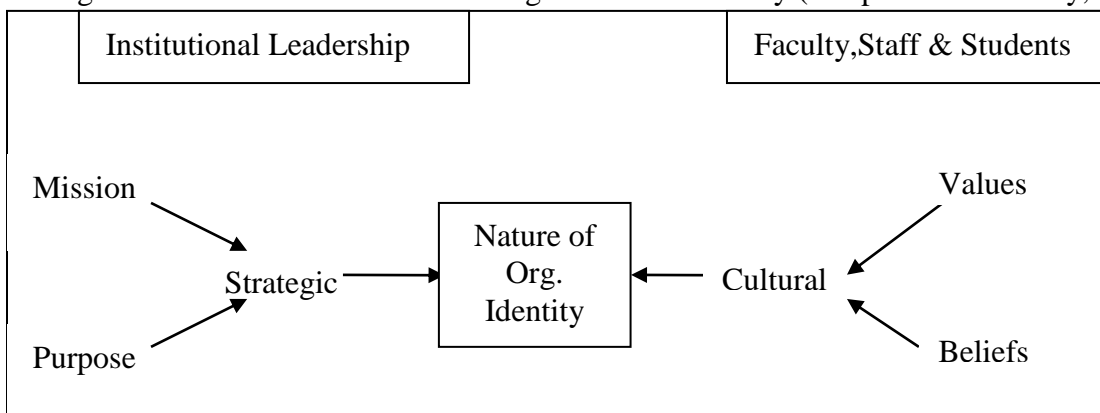
These researchers contend that the relative silence about becoming a Hispanic-serving institution could indicate that the concept is still new to institutions, the costs of anti-affirmative action climate in states with growing Latina/o populations outweigh the benefits of "going public," or that conversion into a Hispanic-serving institution has been accidental or evolutionary instead of strategic and planned. Peterson et al. (1978) found that institutions that were adaptive and responsive to changes in Black student enrollments were all "marked by supportive external conditions, internal patterns supporting the change, and strong leadership—a combination not found in evolutionary institutions" (p. 301). Subsequent studies on diversification of the faculty (Hyer, 1985) and institutional transformation associated with diversity suggests that a similar pattern of external conditions, internal support, and strong leadership must be in place (Eckel & Kezar, 2003).

Change and Multiple Institutional Identities

These studies begin to suggest that HSIs may have what organizational theorists have called a differentiated organizational identity. This occurs when conceptions of "who we are"

and sense of purpose in an organization vary according to an individual's position across the organizational hierarchy, organizational identity is flexible, and multiple identities co-exist—some of which may be in conflict—requiring leaders to manage identity differentiation in the face of turbulent and changing external environments (Corley, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the nature of organizational identity derived from a case study of an innovating organization undergoing considerable change (adapted from Corley, 2004). This framework indicates that leaders at the top of the hierarchy attempt to strategically redefine the purpose and mission of the organization in order to manage the organizational identity, while those at the bottom of the hierarchy view the organizational identity as the culture of the organization, constituting deeply embedded values and beliefs. This aptly describes academic organizations where faculty (particularly tenured faculty) are often in the organization for many more years than institutional leaders, and staff that work directly with students hold different perspectives on the organization's identity. Studies have shown that student peers and practitioners that work directly with students on a diverse campus are more critical of the institutional-wide commitment to diversity and skeptical of the commitment of top level administrators, even though over 80% of chief academic officers at four-year institutions report that diversity is part of their mission (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado, 2003; Rowley, Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2002).

Figure 1. Differentiated Nature of Organizational Identity (Adapted from Corley, 2004).



Kezar & Eckel (2005) interviewed 30 college presidents (including a sample of HSI presidents) engaged in diversity changes with a significant emphasis on the success of underrepresented students. The presidents used a strategy of dialogue and discussion in reflecting on the mission, examining their own and their institution's commitment to diversity, and helping the campus to examine its culture through its values and priorities. That is, it was not simply enough to declare a new mission; it was important to engage the entire campus in the adoption of new values that include a focus on the student success and commitment to diversity. In this regard, the college presidents viewed the need to shape institutional culture in order to begin to make "these values deeply a part of people's consciousness and behavior." They reinforced these values through "the strategic plan, rewarding people for meeting objectives related to diversity, holding people accountable, and providing them with necessary support and resources" (Kezar & Eckel, 2005). Other strategies involved hiring new people and altering the curriculum, which involves more long-term structural change—a topic we further discuss in the next section regarding evidence of transformational change.

While HSIs have attempted to form an alliance based on the common goal of educating Latina/os (HACU, 2012), we have to acknowledge that there exists multiple institutional identities both *across* and *within* these institutions that determine differences in function, goals, purpose, and activity. HSIs have much more variety in terms of institutional type and function compared to other minority-serving institutions; for example, the majority of Tribal colleges are community colleges, and the majority of HBCUs are four-year colleges or universities. In contrast, approximately 53% of the HSIs are two-year institutions, 47% offer bachelor's degrees, 19% offer masters degrees, and 17% offer doctoral degrees (Excelencia in Education, 2012).

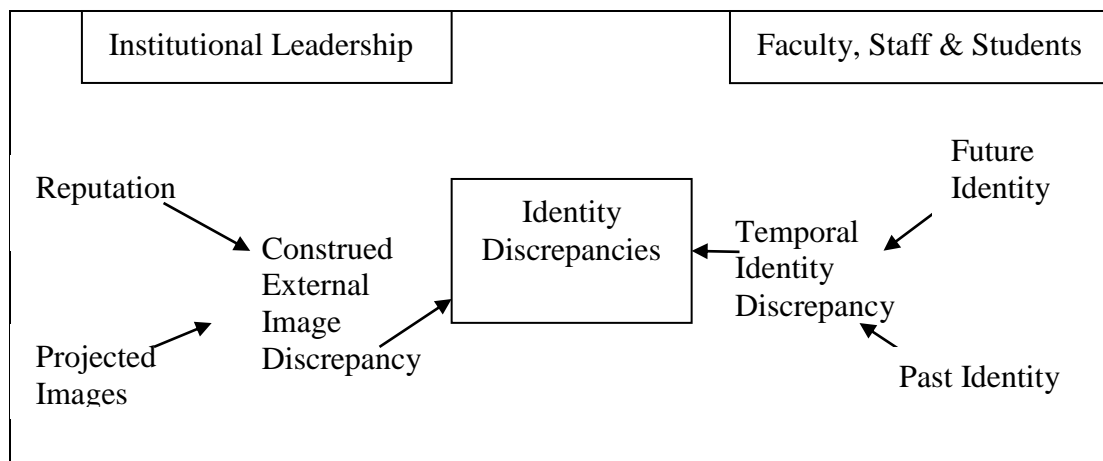
This suggests that while they share service to the Hispanic population, they are also attentive to all the issues and priorities they face as community colleges, four-year comprehensive teaching institutions, and research universities within their institutional peer group. Forging a common identity across these institutions as HSIs may be a much greater challenge than initially anticipated, however, it is important to document how these institutions are changing and may have formed alliances to achieve the common goal of advancing Hispanic higher education.

The view within changing organizations is also complex, as members find themselves facing “identity discrepancies between how they saw their own organization and how others saw the organization.” Community colleges face large challenges regarding identity discrepancies, as external observers may hold distinct images of these organizations, yet Levin (2001) documents they have undergone considerable change, alteration of mission, and philosophy of education that have resulted in new structures and expansion into a borderless world linked by new technologies. Some researchers have called it the “contradictory college” because it sometimes operates contradictory to its claims for economic and social mobility (Dougherty, 1994), which has implications for incompatible practices that focus on open access and responsiveness to the marketplace (e.g. training for the local economy) (Levin, 2001). They possess multiple institutional identities based on what the institution seems to be, what it ought to be, and what the institution actually does (Levin, 2001). Based on what the institution does, researchers have characterized community colleges as traditional (Cohen & Brawer, 1996), entrepreneurial (Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, & Russman, 1997), or developing an identity as a globalized institution (Levin, 2001). Rather than reducing multiple institutional identities to a single identity, leaders must integrate, compartmentalize, aggregate or delete former institutional identities to incorporate new ones (Corley, 2004). Multiple institutional identities are inevitable

as Levin (2001), for example, states that reverting to a single focus identity for a community college (e.g. a branch campus of a four-year institution) would be disastrous and result in an inferior institution. These studies highlight the fact that multiple institutional identities exist with one category of institution type whose primary mission is teaching. It may well be that four-year institutions that incorporate the teaching, research, and service missions also possess at least equally complex (if not more so), multiple institutional identities.

Figure 2 shows another distinction between leaders at the top of the hierarchy and others at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy in relation to identity discrepancies. Leaders are naturally most concerned with the reputation of the organization and projected images in an attempt to manage discrepancy in the construed external image of the organization, or how members (insiders) believe outsiders perceive the organization (Corley, 2004). These discrepancies emerge from media accounts, external assessments of the organization, or interactions with the community in which the organization is located. At the bottom of the hierarchy, identity discrepancies are viewed as temporal, reflecting a past and a future identity for an institution in transition. With changes in leadership occurring with greater frequency in higher education (an average of 5-7 years), those faculty and staff that have been in the institution for many years view these identity discrepancies as based in time, depending on changes in the central administration of an institution (i.e. the past as “who we were” and the future as “who we will be”).

Figure 2. Identity Discrepancies (Adapted from Corley, 2004).



Difficulty arises when organizational members view identity discrepancies as conflicting, rather than viewing them as part of a multiple institutional identity. For example, many institutions have embarked in planning, spending, and media releases to redefine institutional excellence using a resource and reputation model, basing their excellence in terms of the test scores of entering students rather than on the student talent development they are able to achieve (Astin, 1985). Many members of institutions still hold to the view that diversity and excellence are values that can co-exist but are in conflict (Richardson & Skinner, 1991), even though today there are more institutions achieving both diversity and excellence or are adopting the concept of inclusive excellence (AAC&U, 2012). . Because HSIs educate a large number of first-generation college students and students from low-income families (Hurtado 2003; Higher Education Research Institute, unpublished tabulations for 4-year HSIs), they are well-positioned for building an institutional reputation based on student talent development.² A talent development approach toward institutional excellence will require greater attention to regular assessment of Latina/o students along many dimensions beyond raw numbers of degrees and graduation rates. Most outsiders might assume that HSIs do a much better job of graduating Latina/os, but insiders are well aware of the retention problems they face (Maestas, Vaquera, &

² One institution in Los Angeles advertises on the local NPR station to tout their services to Hispanic students.

Muñoz, 2007). Contreras et. al. (2008) indicate that the HSIs in their study did extremely well in attracting and enrolling Latina/o students relative to the population of high school graduates; however, with a few institutional exceptions, Latina/os were not achieving degrees relative to their representation in the undergraduate enrollment at both the two-year and four-year institutions. Bringing greater awareness to issues and institutional intentions, acknowledging the past and articulating plans for the future, and building an institutional identity based on student success, are strategies for dealing with discrepant institutional identities. Institutional leaders must manage multiple institutional identities during the process of transformation so that both outsiders and insiders may begin to view the institution as on the move toward becoming “Hispanic-serving.”

Finally, it is important to note that the basis of the identity change is often articulated in new language used by leaders (signaled by identity and image labels), while those at the bottom of the hierarchy look for new meanings that are based in managerial and institution-wide actions (Corley, 2004). Thus, while it is important for central administrators to articulate new ways of thinking about diversity and institutional priorities, it is just as important to make sure these translate into actions in individual units across the institution. This coincides with the notion that transformational change must be deep and pervasive (Eckel & Kezar, 2003).

Evidence of Transformation

Eckel & Kezar (2003) define transformational change in institutions as the type that affects the institutional culture, is deep and pervasive, is intentional, and occurs over time. Though they contend that institutions will not develop a completely new culture (as they share norms with peer institutions), deep change reflects a shift in values and assumptions that underlie daily operations. Pervasiveness indicates that the change is not isolated but is felt across the

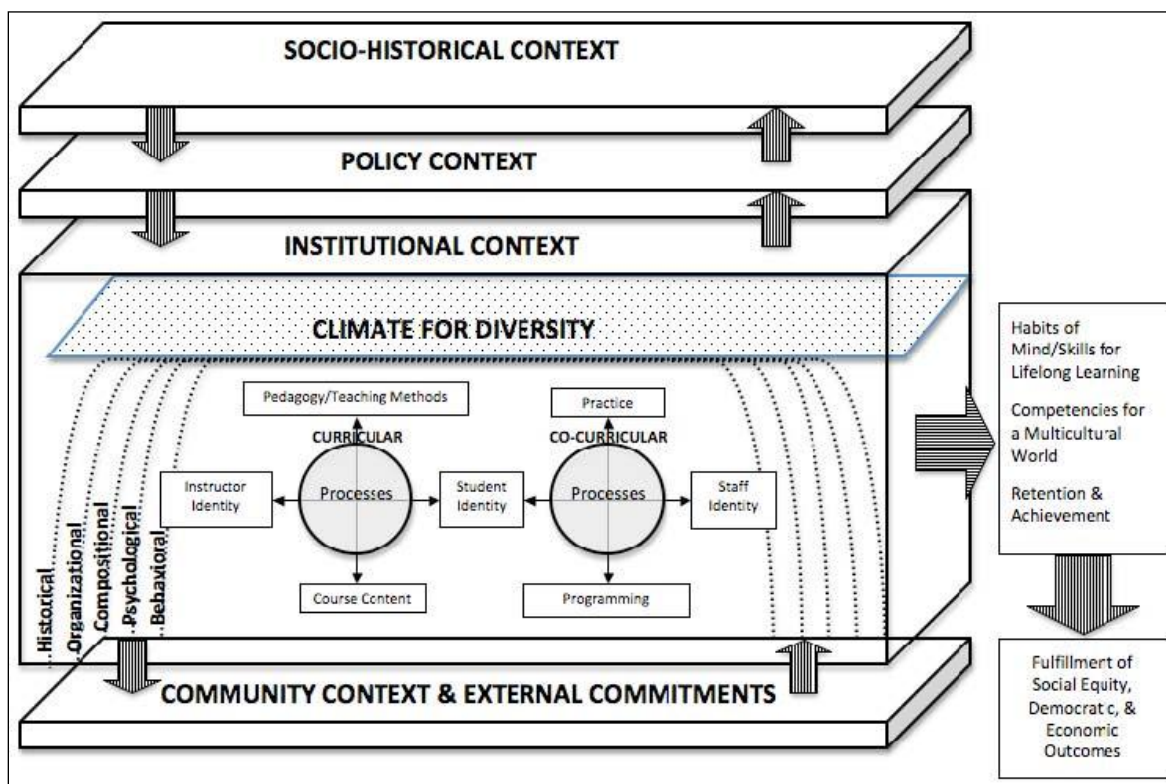
institution. They distinguish transformation from other types of change that include *adjustments* that continually happen in academia that are neither pervasive nor deep (e.g. the introduction of a diversity course, not requirement), *isolated change* that may be deep but limited to one unit or program area (e.g. a Hispanic Mother/Daughter outreach program), or *far reaching change* that affects many across the institution but lacks depth (e.g. use of the affirmative action statement on all hiring and recruitment materials). Institutional responses to changing student enrollments that are proactive and responsive, instead of reactive and resistant, are likely to be characteristic of transformational change (Peterson et al., 1978).

According to Smith (1995), diverse representation at the student level may not necessarily translate to large scale organizational transformation relative to diversity in other areas of higher education organizations. Changes in the structure of the institution are likely to reflect institutional transformation, including changes to the curriculum, pedagogies and delivery methods, student learning and assessment practices, alignment of institutional policies with newly articulated goals and values, alignment of budgets with new priorities and values, and the creation of new departments, institutional structures (e.g. student learning center), and decision-making structures (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Moreover, structural diversity or the representation of diverse people throughout the institution is key for improving the climate and culture because it influences perceptions about diversity, behaviors, intergroup relations, and interaction patterns across the institution (Hurtado et al., 1999). However, it is important to understand how and what takes place within institutions to affect improved outcomes for Latina/os that will result in social equity, democratic pluralism, and greater economic stability and vitality of the nation.

A Model for Diverse Learning Environments: Placing Latina/o Student Identity at the Center

If HSIs adopted the priority of placing student identity at the center, what do they look like today and what would they look like in the future? What kinds of changes would need to occur to transform institutional identity? We offer the potential of a multicontextual model for diverse learning environments (MMDLE) as a lens to understand HSIs' climate, practices, goals for student outcomes and transformation of the larger society. Hurtado, et al., (2012) provide an overview linking many areas of research with aspects of the model in Figure 3. The multiple policy and socio-historical contexts inform and create pressures on institutions that inform the climate for teaching and learning. It is current demographic change that produces changes in institutions that result in an HSI designation, but the larger societal change also collides with changing policy and socio-historical contexts, particularly socio-economic issues that face these largely public institutions in key states. For example, institutional budget cuts as a result of reduced state resources have been a top area of stress among over 83% of faculty at public colleges and universities in the last two years (Hurtado, Eagan, Whang, & Tran, forthcoming). Santos and Saénz (in press) describe the trends coinciding with changing Latina/o demographics, including threats to reduce access and financial aid policy changes, as a "perfect storm." Add to this mix the increased accountability demands for degree attainments and institutional effectiveness. In this context, HSIs will come under greater scrutiny but these institutions have the fewest resources to work with students who are often first generation and low income—a combination that inevitably leads to relatively low degree attainments (Titus,2006).

Figure 3. Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (Hurtado, et al., 2012)



It is important to note that both the institution and the student also have links with the local, external community, as a relatively high percentage of Latina/os elect to attend college locally. More specifically, using national data on over 16,000 Latina/o students, Cuellar (2012) found that Latina/os were more likely to attend an HSI or Emerging HSI (than a non-HSI) if they said an important reason for their choice was that the college was close to home. This migration pattern based on Latina/o college choices results in enrollment changes of the institutions near large Latina/o populations. Finances also play an important role, as Latina/o students are more likely to attend an HSI if they prioritize college costs (Santiago, 2007). Specifically, Latina/o freshmen enrolling in HSIs were less likely to rely on parents for financial support or on grants from the institution (Cuellar, 2012), further evidence that students at these colleges choose the lowest cost option where living at home and working nearby is an option. Nora (2003) refers to

some of these external community connections as “pull factors,” though family remains an equally important form of support for Latina/os attending HSIs, Emerging HSIs, and non-HSIs (Cuellar, 2012).

Internal to the institution are important factors related to student encounters with faculty in curricular contexts and staff in co-curricular contexts. The MMDLE model posits that various dimensions at the organizational level (including historical legacies, composition of faculty, staff, and students, and organizational structure) and individual level (psychological and behavioral) affect the overall campus climate for diversity. For example, high achieving Latina/o students reported lower levels of subtle and overt forms of discrimination at institutions with higher Hispanic enrollments (Hurtado, 1994). Thus various aspects of the climate, in turn, affect several processes such as validation in the classroom, community building in the form of sense of belonging to the campus community, and socialization occurring within curricular and co-curricular contexts. With the identity of the student at the center of practice, it is important to understand the special circumstances and unique cultural attributes of Latina/os students at HSIs.

Table 1 begins to describe the attributes and identity of faculty, staff, and students that are at the center of the model where interaction takes place. At the core of the MMDLE is student identity and Table 1 demonstrates that Hispanic students are indeed at the center of HSIs with an average Hispanic undergraduate FTE of 53.4% at these institutions. This figure is in stark contrast to the 7.1% Hispanic FTE across all higher education institutions. Another important aspect of the student identity segment of the model is that more than a quarter of students (26.9%) at HSIs were age 25 or older. This supports prior research suggesting that HSIs, especially in the two-year sector, are disproportionately serving students who “do not fit the profile of a traditional college student” (Nuñez, Sparks, & Hernandez, 2011). Further

demonstrating this point, the most recent NCES report on minority-serving institutions (based on 2004 data) highlights that 41% of Latina/os at HSIs worked full-time while enrolled compared to 30% at non-MSIs. Moreover, 43.6% of Latina/os at four-year public HSIs were low-income compared to 35.9% of Latina/os at all higher education institutions (Li & Carroll, 2007). Nuñez, et al. (2011) also found that Latina/o students who attend HSIs have a higher number of “risk factors” (e.g. delayed enrollment, having dependents) than those attending non-HSIs.

In terms of instructor and staff identities, Latina/o faculty, administrative/managerial, and other professional staff are all alarmingly underrepresented at the national level, especially considering that there were 177 Emerging HSIs with Hispanic enrollment between 15 and 24.9 percent in the year these data were collected (Excelencia in Education, 2007) and that this number of institutions has only continued to increase. At HSIs, almost a third (31.1%) of faculty, just over a third of administrators/managers (36.9%), and 43.4% of other professional staff were Latina/o. Though these figures are higher than the national average, many still argue that they are not high enough given the “Hispanic-serving” identity these institutions have acquired (de los Santos & Vega, 2008; Haro & Lara, 2003). As the student identity of an institution shifts, must the instructor and staff identities also reflect the student population? In a qualitative study of eight HSIs, both students and administrators expressed the importance of having staff that reflected the demographics of the student body in order to aid with cultural challenges (Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, & Plum, 2004), yet in 2006, only 22 states had an institution with a Latina/o chancellor or president, and 94% of those leaders were concentrated at the community colleges in 10 states (de los Santos & Vega, 2008).

With regard to the curricular sphere of the model, instructors at HSIs are slightly more likely to incorporate class discussions, group projects, and reflective writing/journaling into all of

their courses – all pedagogies that have been tied to social justice outcomes (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007) and communication skills (Colbeck, Campbell, & Bjorklund, 2000), and critical thinking skills (Cooper, 1998). Additionally, these teaching methods reflect a student-centered pedagogy, which research suggests leads to higher levels of student engagement (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). It is important to note that although the percentage of faculty that incorporate these practices into all of their courses is higher at HSIs, there is still room for improvement since less than a quarter of instructors use group projects or reflective writing in every course. The content segment of the MMDLE in Table 1 reflects that instructors at HSIs were also more likely to provide opportunities for students to engage in community service and allow them to participate in choosing course topics. A slightly larger percentage of faculty at HSIs than at non-HSIs reported conducting research focused on racial or ethnic minorities. The 2.5% difference between the two groups might appear small, but it is notable given that HSIs are largely institutions that focus on teaching rather than research. A final segment of the MMDLE worth noting is community contexts and external commitments, which we discussed at the student level in the previous section. At the instructor level, just under half of all faculty at both HSIs (45.8%) and all institutions (46.2%) collaborated with the local community in research and teaching.

Table 1. HSI Data Mapped to Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments.

MMDLE Segment	All HSIs (n=265)	All Institutions (n=3,293)
<i>Student Identity</i>		
Hispanic	53.4%	7.1%
Female	60.6%	56.0%
Age 25 or older	26.9%	21.2%
<i>Instructor Identity</i>		
Hispanic Faculty	31.1%	3.1%
Female Faculty	50.3%	46.3%
Non-Tenured Faculty	36.6%	46.5%

Staff Identity

Hispanics in Executive/Administration and Managerial Positions	36.9%	3.4%
Hispanics in Other Professional Staff Positions	43.4%	4.5%

*Pedagogy/Teaching Methods of Faculty**

Type of Instruction Included in All Courses:		
Class Discussions	67.2%	64.7%
Group Projects	20.0%	15.7%
Reflective Writing/Journaling	15.9%	9.8%

*Course Content**

Type of Content Included in All Courses:		
Community Service as Part of Coursework	4.5%	2.6%
Student-Selected Topics	12.3%	6.8%
Faculty conducted research focused on racial or ethnic minorities	23.1%	20.6%

*Community Context and External Commitments**

Faculty collaborated with local community in research/teaching	45.8%	46.2%
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Source: 2006-2007 IPEDS and 2007 HERI Faculty Survey (indicated with *) data. All figures based on FTE counts.

Matching Identities? Approximately one-third of HSIs are led by a Hispanic President, with the majority of increases occurring in recent years at two-year institutions (de los Santos & Vega, 2008). According to Haro & Lara (2003), more progress has been made in Latina/o appointments to senior administrative positions in student affairs and middle management, but very little progress has been made in the area of academic administration—particularly in four-year, research institutions. This is primarily influenced by the availability of tenured Latina/o faculty who may be eligible for positions as Deans, Provosts, and Presidents. Most Latina/o faculty are concentrated in public institutions (rather than private colleges) and the majority are in untenured positions, either in the assistant professor track, or employed as lecturers and instructors (Ibarra, 2003). Tenured faculty are employed by institutions for long periods of time, and are largely responsible for the approval of hires/promotions and the curriculum at many institutions. These observations suggest that the leadership and decision-making bodies in the administration are largely predominantly white, raising questions regarding the responsiveness of an institution to the rapidly changing student population. Diversification of the faculty at all

ranks is the single most important long term, structural change in institutional transformation because faculty may be employed for up to 30 years at a single institution (with adequate support and promotion) and it becomes the most effective way to diversify the curriculum, broaden research foci, and increase connections with minority communities (Antonio, 2002; Hurtado, 2001). Moreover, presidents that brought about significant diversity change in institutions resoundingly agreed that hiring faculty of color is the most important strategy for ensuring the success of students of color (Kezar & Eckel, 2005).

Changes in the structure of the institution must be accompanied with evidence of change in normative attitudes, interactions, and beliefs of members of the organization (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Evidence of culture change and institutional transformation were found in new patterns of interactions across units, students, and faculty; new language and shared concepts; types of conversations and inclusiveness; the abandonment of old arguments; and new relationships with a variety of stakeholders (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Although we may be able to document structural changes at HSIs using national data, these elements of culture can only be identified through extensive interviews and observations to gain familiarity with each institution.

Student Outcomes that Result in Societal Transformation. Although there is developing research on a set of outcomes for HSIs, here we focus on the three areas in the MMDLE: habits of mind for life long learning, competencies for a diverse and global world, and retention and achievement—all of which lead to improved equity, democratic, and economic outcomes. As college presidents acknowledged, the success of Latina/os now determines the success of institutions in the current accountability context (Santiago, 2009). Much work has yet to be done to understand how Latina/o college students acquire the skills to become lifelong learners. However, we know that along with increased skills come additional academic-self confidence in

one's writing, mathematics and general academic ability. Comparing Latina/os at HSIs with those at Emerging HSIs and non-HSIs, Cuellar (2012) found increased academic self-concept at HSIs, controlling for all factors of ability, preparation, and experience. This suggests that a great deal of talent development is occurring among Latina/os in HSIs, at least to the extent that there are improvements of academic self-concept. Emerging initiatives such as the Fast Start Program at the Community College of Denver work to accelerate students through remedial curriculum so that they move more quickly toward credit earning classes and completion (Bragg, Baker, & Puryear, 2010). More research is needed to understand the adaptability and diffusion of this innovation in moving students through the curriculum at HSIs.

In addition to improving students' learning capacities, addressing critical areas of citizenship in a multicultural and global world are key for student development. Increasing students' values and commitment to change are important and we know that the diversity of a campus (composition, interaction with diverse groups, and diversity in curricular and co-curricular activities) plays an important role in advancing many dimensions of students' civic capacities during college (Hurtado, Ruiz, & Whang, in press). Findings specifically for HSIs are limited, although one study found that by the end of college Latina/o students at HSIs, Emerging HSIs, and non-HSIs are relatively similar in their commitment to social agency and change—despite the fact that Latina/o students at non-HSIs begin higher on this scale (Cuellar, 2012). This suggests that Latina/os at HSIs experience greater increases in values associated with agents of social change, but again, replication of these findings are necessary with a broader range of competencies for citizenship in a multicultural world to verify the unique role that HSIs play in these outcomes.

Lastly, we address one of the key accountability outcomes, and that is retention and degree attainments. Two recent studies using national data have confirmed that a more diverse campus also results in six-year degree attainments for Latina/o (Arellano, 2011) and students of varying income backgrounds (Franke, 2012), when all other factors are controlled. However, Malcom (2010) found that the story of accountability outcomes at HSIs is more complex. Focusing specifically on four-year public institutions in 10 states, she found that HSIs with less than 33% Hispanic enrollment graduate Latina/os at the highest rates but also have a relatively large gap in graduation rates between Latina/o and White students. In contrast, HSIs with a Hispanic enrollment of 33% or higher have the lowest six-year graduation rates for Latina/os, but also have the smallest gaps in graduation rates between Latina/os and Whites. HSIs with Hispanic enrollment above 33% are also characterized by high Latina/o participation rates in STEM degree programs, and by a high proportion of Latina/o administrators and a growing proportion of Latina/o faculty. These complexities demonstrate that HSIs across the spectrum are making positive strides but that more research on best practices is certainly needed to bridge the gap between demonstrating commitment to the Hispanic-Serving designation and achieving accountability in degree attainments.

Planning for Change: Institutional Awareness

Transformative change that is deep and pervasive sets a high bar for institutions in achieving a “Hispanic-serving” identity, while the majority of these institutions may actually be at different stages of multicultural awareness. These stages have been described as monocultural, nondiscriminatory, or multicultural (Stewart, 1991; Foster, Jackson, Cross, Jackson, & Hardiman, 1988; Richardson & Skinner, 1991). Hurtado and Dey (1997) suggest that these different stages of institutional multicultural awareness are linked with planning, budgeting and

evaluation processes within institutions. A monocultural institution in this schema is one in which there is a lack of recognition on the part of institutional actors concerning the need to serve new populations of students. For example, these institutions do not recognize that the needs of Hispanic students might be different than other students at their institution. Therefore, no special funding is directed at initiatives for these students, nor is evaluation systematically conducted on these students to determine if they have distinct needs.

In the nondiscriminatory stage, there is limited recognition about the need to serve new populations. Planning includes top-down directives and temporary committee structures, budgeting for diversity initiatives that rely on special funding sources (there is no reallocation of institutional resources), and evaluation that is conducted on an ad hoc basis. The orientation is toward making relatively minor adjustments to existing structures and policies as opposed to fundamentally rethinking institutional processes relative to diversity created by the increasing Latina/o enrollments.

In contrast, in the multicultural stage of awareness, institutions have achieved a consensus about the need to serve new populations, and participants see this as a goal throughout the institution as opposed to something imposed by leaders. There is broad-based participation in diversity planning and investment in the achievement of diversity goals. Planning and implementation of diversity goals become aspects of many operating units on campus, with coordinated oversight at the highest levels of institutional governance. While the development of these models originated from case studies, they are largely hypothetical because we currently do not know the extent to which HSIs are at various stages of multicultural awareness or implement budget and planning processes to coincide with each stage.

Holland (1999) states that institutions do not experience transformation uniformly, different organizational units and levels of the organization may be at different stages and move at different paces. She offers a stage process for change that reflects the idea of “change as an act of scholarship” and suggests a role for administrators in defining key organizational challenges, a role for faculty in developing informed responses and recommendations, and partnerships with like-minded organizations at the regional and national level. The stages involve *self-assessment* (of an institution’s history, culture, assets and limitations) and the *creation of a distinctive mission* to guide changing priorities, develop broad consensus, and measure organizational performance. This latter stage is one where the “Hispanic-serving” institutional identity can be further developed. The *restructuring* stage and subsequent stages require building organizational capacities and realignment of allocations to reflect the mission; building *networks* to promote shared learning, *curricular reform*, and *creating an infrastructure* for new strategies and initiatives. She encourages *redefining scholarship* as one stage in the transformation process, as faculty roles and rewards determine what the institution values. The final stage is *sustaining change*, shifting the organizational culture to match the mission, and ultimately participating in continuous self-assessment (the first stage of the change process).

Bensimon (2004) developed the Diversity Scorecard project as a model for institutional change that begins with developing a deeper awareness within institutions about the magnitude of inequities for underrepresented students, moving campus teams to set goals, and develop plans of action to address these inequities. Equity in educational outcomes are addressed in several areas and examples include: 1) *access* to an institution’s programs and resources, 2) *retention* rates by academic program, completion of basic skill courses, and degree attainments, 3) *institutional receptivity* in the form of structural diversity at all levels of the campus, and 4)

excellence in terms of the racial/ethnic representation of students in courses or majors that lead to advanced study, high levels of student achievement, and the pool of students eligible for graduate study. Approximately eight HSIs have been involved in the project to examine the level of equity (or inequity) among their student body, faculty, staff, and administrators relative to a desired equity goal. Evidence teams on each of the campuses are responsible for selecting the indicators they wish to focus on, analyzing the results, and sharing the results with the president and other decision-makers. This evidence-based approach has engaged campus groups in collaborative inquiry and discussions about the state of equity on their campus and has increased individual commitment to address it.

While the Diversity Scorecard project was designed to encourage institutional change, the Academic Equity Indicators have also been used across institutions in California to advance policy and provide a framework for accountability focused on racial/ethnic equity of outcomes (USC California Policy Institute, 2005; Bensimon, Hao, & Bustillos, 2003). Findings indicate that Latina/o faculty are severely underrepresented relative to the student enrollment in both California community colleges and UC campuses (Receptivity Indicator). Latina/o and African American students enroll at lower rates (Access Indicator) and receive proportionately fewer degrees from UC and CSU schools (Retention Indicator) compared with other racial/ethnic groups and relative to their population of high school graduates and their representation in the state, respectively. Contreras et al.'s (2008) subsequent use of equity indicators at 10 HSIs demonstrate that Latina/o students are still not achieving equity in specific majors and degree attainments that result in high paying/high skilled jobs relative to their representation in the undergraduate population. These results with equity indicators suggest one method by which

HSIs can monitor their own progress, or researchers can monitor their progress as a group, in order to increase their potential for the advancing of Latina/o success.

Conclusion: Next Steps in Research on HSIs

The goal of this paper was to stimulate research about what constitutes a “Hispanic-Serving” institution, and to move institutions from rhetoric to institutional action in realizing their potential for advancing the education and the well being of a growing Hispanic population. This initial review of the existing literature on HSIs as a distinct institutional identity within higher education revealed large gaps in our knowledge base about who they are, how they operate, and the differences they are making in advancing Hispanic higher education. This is not to say that these institutions are not innovating or embracing their “Hispanic-serving” role. We simply do not have enough information regarding their distinctiveness as organizations outside of their student enrollments. What is certain, however, is the fact that more institutions find themselves today with larger numbers of Latina/o students on campus and that some degree of institutional change has and will continue to occur. The question that looms is whether these have resulted in minor adjustments in institutions that will leave the larger academic culture untouched, or whether institutional responses are indicative of more broad-based transformation that give significant meaning to the “Hispanic-serving” designation.

Important Issues for Future Research

Several areas may be important foci for advancing our knowledge about the role HSIs play in American higher education. In general more documentation is needed in terms of the initiatives unique to these institutions, evidence of how these institutions are making a difference in terms of student talent development, and evidence of a culture change within institutions that support the common goal of advancing the education of Hispanics. For example, a minority serving

(MSI) collaborative funded by the Walmart foundation was designed to help innovating HSI campuses work with other HSI campuses that have a strong desire to improve degree attainment rates. A wide variety of practices and long-term strategies were shared among the campuses, and although the results of these efforts may not be known for some time, campuses need to begin to document practices in relation to student outcomes. Evaluation reports are also needed to spur further development of initiatives and to become evidence-based practice that becomes part of the daily work of faculty and staff. Large scale data bases cannot capture these practices in detail but they are useful in monitoring changes in student development related to the three key outcomes described in the MMDLE. On a national level, several additional recommendations are offered:

1. Obtain Greater Consistency Across Studies and Reports on HSIs. Researchers and policymakers should establish a general agreement about the need to obtain consistent reports from federal data on HSIs. At minimum, researchers using similar data sets should provide adequate detail in their reports to understand how HSIs and their students are reflected in national data. In some cases, providing actual lists of institutions included in their studies would be helpful. This allows others to determine which HSIs were included or excluded in reports and studies. Otherwise, those attempting to study HSIs face a dilemma due to the variety of sources, definitions, and types of HSIs upon which to base their studies. Researchers may decide to exclude for-profit institutions from national data, or examine them separately, in order to focus their studies on the accomplishments of the non-profit sector of higher education.
2. Identify HSIs in Studies. The U.S. Department of Education awards for grants at one point indicated the need to include minority-serving institutions in funded studies, but not

all quantitative and qualitative studies identify HSIs when they are analyzing data or publishing results. Case studies have been the most valuable in evaluating institutional change strategies, particularly as it relates to diversity. Wherever possible, HSIs should provide their permission to be identified in studies so that we can adequately account for aspects of institutional transformation and change that may be unique for these institutions.

3. Evaluate the Institutional Impact of Title V. Under current Title V provisions, each institution is awarded a grant for a five-year period, after which, an HSI must wait two years before re-applying for a new grant. According to recent studies of institutional transformation involving the success of diverse students, most institutional change takes longer than five years to effectively implement and evaluate (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kezar & Eckel, 2005). Moreover, it suggests that Title V may be encouraging short-term initiatives among institutions and programs rather than broad institutional transformation. Studies of Title V institutions may also provide insight into the use of these funds for distinctive programs, a potentially fruitful area of research for scholars interested in advancing institutional practice (Laden, 2004).
4. Study the Impact of Hispanic Enrollments and Institutional Change. To date there is no comprehensive study of the impact of Hispanic enrollments in creating institutional change in the same way that Peterson et al. (1978) monitored changes across institutions in response to Black student enrollment increases. Various organizational theory frameworks and general principles derived from case study research on institutional change can be helpful in determining the ways that HSIs (and individuals within institutions) respond to changes in diverse student enrollments and other aspects of their

external environments. Changes in institutional culture and broad-based institutional change are best derived from such institutional case studies.

HSIs play a significant role in educating a growing Latina/o population and serving local communities with partnerships and research. There is a growing body of research on these institutions but it is at a nascent stage relative to many other issues in higher education. The research can serve to highlight the contributions of these campuses as well as identify areas for institutional improvement for advancing inclusive excellence and the consequent economic and civic life of Latina/os in a changing society.

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