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O F C O L L E G E S &
U N I V E R S I T I E S

Platform Issues and Recommendations for Presidential Candidates in 2020

Official responses requested by September 25, 2020.



HACU'S PLATFORM ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, 2020

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) submits for consideration a summary of critical issues and related recommendations for 2020 presidential candidates. This reflects the vision of HACU and its more than 500 member institutions throughout the country. HACU-member institutions enroll more than 6 million students, including two of every three of the 3.8 million Hispanic students in college today.

In 1992, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act recognized Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) for the first time in federal legislation and defined them as non-profit colleges and universities with an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic. In 1990, there were 782,400 Hispanic students enrolled in U.S. higher education, representing 5.7 percent of the total enrollment. In 2020, 3.8 million Hispanics attend college, or over 20 percent of the nation's total enrollment. Two thirds of Hispanic students attend HSIs, whose number has grown from 189 in 1994 to 539 in 2018.

HSIs not only serve the majority of Hispanics but also educate more African Americans than all HBCUs combined, more Native Americans than Tribal Colleges and Universities, more Asian Americans than any other cohort of institutions, and a sizeable number of white students. HSIs are the most diverse community of colleges and universities in the nation.

Significant barriers to Hispanic educational success persist, resulting in under-attainment by Hispanics students in PK-12 through higher education. U.S. Census data indicate that for every 10 Hispanic students entering kindergarten, only one is likely to earn a bachelor's degree. However, the Hispanic share of the labor force is projected to increase more than that of any other racial or ethnic group from 17.5 percent in 2018 to 20.9 percent in 2028. In fact, Hispanics will account for one out of every two new workers entering the workforce through 2025. This rapid growth underscores the urgent need to invest in pathways for educational success and college degree attainment. According to the U.S. Census, 66,000 Hispanics turn 18 years of age every month and projections through 2060 show continued Hispanic demographic growth in the U.S. In the last three decades, the Hispanic labor force nearly tripled from 9 million in 1988 to 26.8 million in 2016. The economic well-being of the nation largely depends on the educational success of the burgeoning Hispanic population.

HSIs are a key driver of prosperity in America as engines of economic mobility. In 2018, Opportunity Insights ranked institutions of higher education on the economic mobility of their graduates. Seven of the ten leading institutions were HSIs, including the top one.

The recommendations below are intended to guide presidential candidates on critical concerns related to the education of the more than 62 million Hispanics across the nation. Hispanics are the largest and second fastest-growing ethnic population in the United States. An estimated 32 million Hispanic voters will play a critical role in electing the next president. HACU will widely share candidate responses with its membership and supporters across the nation and will promote voting in this year's election.

HACU seeks an official response from presidential candidates before Friday, September 25, 2020, on the issues and recommendations below and urges their vigorous public discourse.

Issues and Recommendations

- 1) The persistent federal underfunding of HSIs and Hispanic higher education remains a major impediment to Hispanic educational success. U.S. Department of Education data, as of FY 2016, shows that HSIs, on average, received \$3,117 per student from all federal revenue sources, compared to \$4,605 per student for all degree-granting institutions, or just 68 cents on the dollar received by all institutions, to educate a disproportionately low-income and first-generation student population.

It is recommended that:

- a. A comprehensive study should be requested 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 taking office, the president should issue an executive order directing federal agencies to assess their allocation of funds to Minority-Serving Institutions and programs for greater HSI and Hispanic participation with appropriate objectives and timelines; annual progress reports should be published by the White House.
- c. The president's annual budget request should include targeted programs for HSIs, especially in the science and research-intensive agencies to boost the pool of Hispanics in STEM degree programs.
- d. The president should recommend to the U.S. Congress an HSIs capital financing program of \$10 billion in federally guaranteed loans of 0.5-1.5 percent interest rates under the Higher Education Act authorities or other legislative vehicle.

- 2) HSIs and Hispanics are excluded from participation in numerous federal capacity-building grant opportunities because federal statutes and regulations fail to explicitly recognize them or because federal agencies do not engage and assist them to participate. Their relative lack of resources puts HSIs at a competitive disadvantage with better-endowed institutions.

It is recommended that:

- a. The president should appoint a Presidential Advisory Board on HSIs to advise the White House and federal agencies about effective approaches and resources to afford equity of federal resources to HSIs and Hispanics.
 - b. The HSIs Presidential Advisory Board should be comprised of presidents of HSIs and emerging HSIs, including the chair of HACU's governing board, staffed by the Office of the Secretary of Education and report to the Secretary and the director of the Domestic Policy Council.
 - c. The president should direct international education and outreach agencies to target funds and technical assistance to HSIs to work with institutions abroad, especially in Spanish-speaking countries, in promoting international education, including support for academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges.
- 3) The dearth of federal support for greater collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education is a national concern for Hispanics, especially at Hispanic-Serving School Districts (HSSDs) and HSIs.

It is recommended that:

The president should work closely with Congress to enact federal legislation and funding to increase and strengthen collaboration between PK-12 and higher education, particularly between HSSDs and HSIs, and especially in areas of the country with high concentrations of low-income and underrepresented populations.

- 4) No federal legislation exists to permit undocumented immigrant youth that have resided in the U.S. for more than five years and graduated from U.S. high schools to be deemed eligible for financial aid and other federal assistance to attend college; this perpetuates the loss of talent and high-skilled workers demanded by the national economy, particularly in the critical areas of science and engineering.

It is recommended that:

The president should take the lead with Congressional leaders to advance comprehensive immigration reform, including the DREAM Act, to foster educational opportunity and create a highly educated workforce for the needs of the national economy. In the interim, it is critical to continue such executive administration protections as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

- 5) The U.S. is facing a significant health care provider shortage that is particularly acute for the Hispanic population. According to 2018 data, only 5.8 percent of all active physicians are Hispanic despite being nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population. It is imperative to close this exceedingly wide gap in Latino/a representation among U.S. physicians.

It is recommended that:

The president should take the lead with Congressional leaders to advance a consortium of medical schools in the U.S. and Latin America that can offer slots to highly qualified medical students and prepares them for not only careers in medicine, but also with the cultural and Spanish language skills to better serve the dramatically underserved population of U.S. Hispanics. The program should also include incentives for these graduates to serve in historically underserved communities.

- 6) The severe under-representation of Hispanics in the federal labor force, especially in management and executive positions, is an unacceptable disparity. Senior executive positions had a decrease of Hispanic new hires from 3.3 percent in FY 2016 to 2.5 percent in FY 2017. In 2000, Hispanics were 6.5 percent of the federal civilian workforce. In comparison to 2017, the workforce had only increased to 8.9 percent. An increase of 2.4 percentage points in 17 years, compared to an increase of 12 percentage points in the national Hispanic civilian workforce, is not acceptable.

It is recommended that:

The president should issue an executive order for all federal agencies to commit to closing Hispanic employment gaps at all levels, especially in management and senior executive service positions.

- 7) 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 their core issues being overlooked in agency policies and practices.

It is recommended that:

The president should implement strategies to assure the inclusion of Hispanics in cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments. The president should aim for a cadre of top appointees that reflects the diversity of our nation. This is especially important in the presidential appointees at agencies with jurisdiction over education, health, science, and technology, including the U.S. Department of Education.

- 8) The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically exacerbated the urgency and importance of the preceding issues and recommendations. The pandemic has impacted most gravely Hispanics and other underserved populations across the nation. HSIs have been seriously affected, some beyond recovery. As the effects of the pandemic are expected to be long-lasting, it is crucial that Hispanics and HSIs be a focal point of all federal programs aimed at helping with recovery efforts from the pandemic's aftermath.

It is recommended that:

The president should explicitly identify Hispanics and HSIs as priority populations for Covid-19 federal assistance considering their disproportionate share among those impacted by the pandemic, including aid for undocumented students and families.

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About HACU

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents more than 500 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, Spain, and school districts throughout the U.S. HACU is the only national association representing existing and emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The association's headquarters are located in San Antonio, Texas, with regional offices in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, California. Additional information is available at www.hacu.net.



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