

Latino Student Success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Findings from a
Demonstration Project

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This publication is available on the Latino Student Success project link at www.edexcelencia.org.

In addition to this summary brief of initial findings the project produced:

- An overview of the institutional presidents' perspectives, available at www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/pres-sum
- Information about the six participating campuses in data tables available at www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/HSI-tables
- Information collection tools including the Institutional Profile-Focus on Latino Students and the Campus Comparison Chart (see the templates and suggestions for their use at www.edexcelencia.org/project).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost half of Latino students in higher education are enrolled at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). One approach to study Latino student success is to focus on these institutions. The purpose of the Latino Student Success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) demonstration project was to develop greater understanding about institutional leadership and practices that promote Latino student success at six participating HSIs.

- California State University—Dominguez Hills
- California State University—Los Angeles
- City University of New York—Lehman College
- City University of New York—New York City College of Technology
- The University of Texas at El Paso
- The University of Texas at San Antonio

The six HSIs were current recipients of the federal Title V: Developing HSIs program, with institutional practices and strong institutional leadership that could inform a broader public discussion about Latino student success. This demonstration project was partially supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education.

This brief summarizes the discussions by the participating institutions over a 12-month period and their views about institutional practices that facilitate Latino student success. The brief also examines characteristics of institutions that serve Latinos, as well as ways to measure Latino student success and institutional effectiveness.

The six HSIs had consensus on three key policy issues:

1. Enrolling Latino students is not sufficient to characterize HSIs; Hispanic “serving” institutions must actively promote Latino students’ success. Analysis of institutional elements beyond Hispanic enrollment should be conducted that better illustrate effective service to Latino students.
2. While the six HSIs concurred that one important element of Latino student success is the completion of a baccalaureate degree, other elements of success, such as student engagement in campus activities, continuous enrollment, employment beyond graduation, and enrollment in graduate education should also be considered in defining student success.
3. Multiple measures of institutional effectiveness and incentives for educating Latino students, rather than penalties based on what some perceive as low persistence or graduation rates, are critical as HSIs look to lead and develop innovative practices that promote student success.

The participating HSIs identified the following practices as facilitating Latino student success:

- Use disaggregated data of students and institutional services to identify areas of need, target limited resources, and emphasize educational success for Latino students.
- Partner with “feeder” high schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations to increase Latino student access and their preparation for transition to a baccalaureate-granting institution.
- Have proactive institutional leaders who actively facilitate Latino student success.
- Adopt a holistic approach to serving Latino students—incorporating leadership, institutional research, academic programs, support services, and student life programs.
- Implement institutional practices that facilitate Latino student success to ultimately improve the learning and development of all students at an institution.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Latinos are enrolling in colleges and universities at historic rates. They are one of the fastest growing groups enrolling in higher education and currently represent 10 percent of students. About 85 percent of Latinos in higher education are enrolled in public institutions and almost half (45 percent) are enrolled in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Further, a majority of Latino students in higher education (over 55 percent) are enrolled in three states: California, New York and Texas (NCES, 2003). While there is documentation of Latino participation in higher education, there is little research focused on Latino student success.

What is success for a Latino college student (and Latinos as a group), how is success facilitated, and how is success measured? To explore these questions, representatives from six institutions serving a large percentage of Latino students were invited to participate in a 12-month research project that compared institutional practices and outcomes for Latino students. This demonstration project entitled, “Latino Student Success at Hispanic Serving Institutions” was partially supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education.

Two public baccalaureate-granting institutions from each of the three states with the most Latino students in their higher education systems (California, New York, and Texas) were invited to participate. The institutions were identified as current recipients of the federal Title V Developing HSIs program, with institutional practices and strong institutional leadership that could inform a broader public about Latino student success. Joining these academic institutions to facilitate student chapters was the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute.

Only 20 percent (47) of public HSIs offer bachelor’s degrees (IPEDS, 2001). Of these, the six HSIs in the project represent 13 percent of public baccalaureate-granting HSIs, and together enroll over 36,500 Latinos in higher education (about 10 percent of Hispanic students at HSIs). While these six institutions are HSIs, they are all diverse. Some of the institutions have a long history of serving Latino students while others are only now facing a large Latino student body. Combined, their Latino representation on campus ranges from 27 to 73 percent of their undergraduate students. Over 94 percent of their students commute, and between 70 to 90 percent receive some form of financial aid. In addition, 30 to 45 percent of their students enroll part-time, and 50 to 75 percent of their students are female.

The president of each participating institution selected staff from the offices of institutional research, academic services, and student life to form campus teams that examined institutional data, resources, and practices pertinent to Latino student success. These campus teams then participated in an extended multi-campus dialogue with other project members on Latino student success and compared institutional activities that facilitate this success.

The participants addressed three areas:

1. Understanding what it means for a college to be “Hispanic serving” and how an institution facilitates Latino student success.
2. Defining Latino student success.
3. Exploring useful and appropriate indicators for institutions to hold themselves accountable for educating Latinos.

Three of the top five institutions awarding bachelor’s degrees to Latino students on the U.S. mainland in 2001 participated in this project:

1. Florida International University
2. The University of Texas-Pan American
- 3. California State University-Los Angeles**
- 4. The University of Texas at San Antonio**
- 5. The University of Texas at El Paso**

(IPEDS, 2001-02)

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HISPANIC SERVING

The identification of a set of institutions as HSIs originated in the 1990s and placed the emphasis on large Hispanic student enrollment. HSIs are defined in federal legislation as public or not-for-profit institutions of higher education that enroll 25 percent or more undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent students, have low educational and general expenditures, and a high enrollment of needy students (Higher Education Amendments of 1998). While these institutions were not created with specific missions to serve Latinos, HSIs do enroll a large percentage of Latinos in their student body.

The large growth of the Latino population and the increasing number who enroll in college has led to a growth in the number of HSIs. Diana Natalicio, President of The University of Texas at El Paso, stated in an interview that Hispanic-Serving Institutions are at the forefront of change in higher education because of the shift in demographics and thus have an opportunity to be trendsetters. For these institutions, Latino students' enrollment patterns and diverse pathways to degree completion challenge institutions to reconsider their traditional measures of success, provision of student support services, academic programs, and community outreach.

- In 2002, there were approximately 230 HSIs located in 12 states and Puerto Rico.
- California has the most HSIs (with 68), followed by Texas (37), New Mexico (18), and New York (12).
- Further, 50 percent (114) of HSIs are public community colleges, and 20 percent (47) are public baccalaureate-granting institutions. The remaining 30 percent of HSIs are private institutions. (IPEDS, 2001-02)



Institutions should give Latino students all the opportunities they need to be successful and help lower the barriers they face to succeed. And we must ensure they receive quality services.

-Ricardo Fernández, President, City University of New York-Lehman College

The six HSIs participating in this project have had to address the needs of this “non-traditional” student body. In doing so, they have also examined the meaning of being Hispanic “serving” institutions and have identified characteristics beyond the federal definition that give way to a deeper understanding of how institutions serve Latinos.

While enrolling large numbers of Latino students at an institution may be sufficient to define an institution as an HSI for federal legislation, the leadership of the six HSIs concurred that serving Latino students and supporting their educational success requires more than a focus on enrollment numbers. The six HSIs concluded that a Hispanic “serving” institution:

- is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students from diverse cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds,
- has particular commitment and expertise in meeting the educational needs and ensuring the academic success of Latino students, and,
- has an explicit mission that accepts responsibility for the learning and academic achievement of all its students.

Beyond this description, the six HSIs also identified the following specific characteristics of a Hispanic “serving” institution during their discussions.

Strengths

- Has clear goals and specific outcomes for its students, including Latino students
- Maintains high expectations of its students, faculty and staff
- Offers culturally sensitive programs and services
- Exhibits pride in its status as an Hispanic-Serving Institution
- Provides proactive programs and services that challenge and support its students, especially in the first two years of enrollment
- Celebrates student effort and achievements
- Employs faculty who value their primary responsibility for teaching

Challenges

- Faces challenges of a public, urban, commuter campus
- Manages growing enrollments of both recent high school graduates and older, returning students, many of whom did not have an adequate secondary school preparation for college academic work
- Has limited financial resources from tuition, state and federal sources
- Has limited institutional support for faculty opportunities in research, scholarly pursuits, publication, and possibilities in external funding

The majority of students at a Hispanic “serving” institution come from diverse national origins, cultural backgrounds and economic circumstances, but often shares the following strengths and challenges:

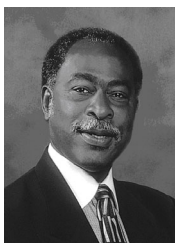
Strengths

- Motivated to pursue higher education
- Appreciate a work ethic
- Respect and value their family
- Believe in the value of higher education
- Often bilingual/bicultural

Challenges

- First in their family to attend college
- Come from low-income families
- Work 20 or more hours per week

Serving Latinos while Serving All Students



We are serving all students, and reaching out to do something for specific groups to enhance their opportunity for success does not put other students down. For example, as a result of the investment we are making to serve Latinos, we have developed practices that we can now provide to all students so that all benefit.

-James E. Lyons, President, California State University-Dominguez Hills

Most public institutions of higher education serve students from diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds, and the six participating HSIs are no exception. They considered some difficult policy questions in their discussions about serving Latinos while serving all students. What choices can institutions make that support improved academic achievement for Latino students without fragmenting their services or alienating other ethnic groups? In an effort to serve all, do Latino student needs and strengths get lost?

Several participants observed that when Latinos are a minority on campus, Latino student-centered and targeted activities are often viewed as appropriate for encouraging their involvement and engagement with the campus. However, campus administrators may be reluctant to target Latino students because of sensitivity to other student groups and a fear of implying an exclusionary

message. In contrast, when Latino students are the majority on campus, administrators may feel it inappropriate or unnecessary to target services and activities to them exclusively.

The participating institutions agreed that there must be a balance in serving all students, but rejected the position that institutions cannot target specific groups for services to facilitate their educational progress. In fact, institutions that do an effective job of disaggregating their data to understand the strengths and needs of their students and actively engage their policies and practices to retain their students and help them succeed are the institutions that serve all of their students well.

Institutional Activities

The six participating HSIs acknowledged that some institutional activities are designed to serve all students, and some programs specifically target Latinos. Each participating HSI has one or more federal grants to strengthen the quality of their institution and to better serve their Latino students. Their activities include developing seminars to provide students with the information and skills they need to persist in higher education, developing learning communities, creating student development plans, and establishing cooperative agreements with community colleges that transfer students into their institution. These institutional activities represent examples of ways to serve Latino students and to facilitate their educational success.

The institutions identified four main areas as important to facilitating Latino student success: 1) institutional leadership, 2) academic programs and services, 3) student support programs, and 4) community outreach. While these areas are not unique to Latino student success, effective institutional practices in these areas have laid the foundation for Latino students to do as well as other students.

Institutional Leadership

Being a leader of a Hispanic Serving Institution brings a great deal of pride, but also commitment and accountability to make a difference in the lives of Hispanic students, families, and communities by helping Hispanics participate in higher education and complete degrees.

-Ricardo Romo, President, The University of Texas at San Antonio



Commitment to Latino student success begins with the president and the administration and permeates throughout the institution. These institutional leaders set the tone for institutional commitment and accountability for student success. They acknowledge the changes in their enrollment demographics and lead institutional efforts to change their activities to better serve their students. In addition, these leaders use data to see how all of their students are performing. If Latino students are not completing degree programs, institutional leaders take responsibility for determining institutional practices that can improve students' opportunity to succeed.

California State University-Los Angeles ranked 10th in the nation for bachelor's degrees awarded to Latinos in mathematics (2002).

At the top, the president is seen as a role model. Their mission to serve all students and the decisions they make to support this mission are reflected throughout the institutions. Together, institutional leaders can create an institutional culture where Latino students are welcomed as an asset to the institution, not a problem, and where creating a supportive environment that promotes Latino student success is a priority.

This institutional leadership can take many forms. For example, the President of CUNY-Lehman College, Ricardo Fernández, is Latino, as are many of the administrators and staff. They are visible role models and a constant resource for Latino students at their institution. Fred W. Beaufait, President of CUNY-New York City College of Technology, and his institutional leaders know the communities they serve, and work to identify relevant and effective ways in which they can improve institutional services for their students. James Lyons, President of California State University—Dominguez Hills, takes the opportunity during new faculty orientation to share his vision and set the tone for the institution. He shares the campus student profile and engages the faculty in conversations about ways to serve their students well.

The faculty is a critical component of institutional leadership. According to Diana Natalicio, President of The University of Texas at El Paso, faculty who are committed to student learning, who reflect in its composition the student body, and who have high expectations and are willing to engage in the success of Latino students are critical. James Rosser, President at California State University—Los Angeles prioritizes the recruitment of faculty who have the same commitment and vision as the institution—that excellence and diversity go “hand-in-hand”. Similarly, Ricardo Romo, President of The University of San Antonio, points out that many students become involved in research, publishing and academic opportunities because of faculty and decide to pursue graduate education.

Academic Programs and Services



My job is to develop a culture that believes every student can excel at the highest level and to create opportunities for them to succeed at those levels.

-James M. Rosser, President, California State University—Los Angeles

Several of the participating institutions have developed learning communities and holistic approaches that combine academic programs with other institutional services to support their Latino students’ success. For example, the CUNY-New York City College of Technology, developed *The Improving Retention Through Career-Based Learning Communities Project*. The project implemented career-based learning communities for entering students and infused career content in the basic skills courses. The project also included the creation of a New Student Center with advising, registration and career counseling, the provision of academic support systems for entry-level courses, and the provision of training for full-time faculty in interactive instructional strategies. In part due to this project, a greater proportion of participating students returned to the institution and was retained into their second semester.

The University of Texas at San Antonio combined a student support program with academic services and financial aid to facilitate Latino student success. The *Access College and Excel (ACE) Scholar Program* provided academic resources such as the College Success Seminar, Supplemental Instruction, specialized academic advising, and a staff mentor for students. Freshmen participating from three high-risk high schools received the services along with a scholarship. Follow-up data indicated that the 2001-02 retention rate for ACE scholars was 87 percent, compared to only 66 percent for the entire freshman cohort.

CUNY-New York City College of Technology ranked 13th in the nation for the number of minority students earning associate degrees in computer and information sciences (2002).

Another academic program developed to serve Latino students is the *Enhancing Critical Literacy Project* at California State University-Dominguez Hills. This project focused on increasing

the literacy of upper-division transfer Latino and other students at the institution. It combined faculty development with curriculum development and an assessment of student learning to improve students' writing abilities. The project also offered an enhanced writing center to provide tutorial services and access to computers and software to facilitate improved writing.

CUNY-Lehman College strove to improve student retention through the *Implementation of a Comprehensive Student Development Program*. The program was designed to increase the retention of first-time, full-time, regularly admitted freshmen at CUNY-Lehman College, nearly half of who are Latino. The project helped students progress through a model of intellectual, professional, and personal development. The program included tracking student development, linking support services in academic and student affairs, establishing new advising and counseling protocols, developing a peer program to enhance academic advising, career counseling, and personal counseling, and involving faculty to help students succeed.

Student Life Programs and Services

Student support programs that serve Latino students provide reinforcement beyond the academic programs to facilitate success. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) developed a strategy to improve student retention by enhancing its *Entering Student Program*. The program provided a first-year seminar, learning communities, tutoring, and developmental education with the goal of improving the academic success of new students. The seminar began with 18 sections in 1998 but by 2001-02, had increased to 128 sections. As a result, the percent of first-time freshmen who enrolled in the seminar increased to 87 percent that year. Evaluation results show that first-time, full-time freshmen who successfully completed the seminar persisted to their second year 8 to 10 percent more than other students in the original cohort. Based upon their success, UTEP made a commitment to expand the program.

California State University-Los Angeles had a *Chicano/Latino Student Resource Center* that supported the advancement, recruitment, and retention of the Latino student community while also enriching the cultural and social awareness of the entire campus. By presenting workshops, films, seminars, and other programs, the center promoted cultural preservation, education, and self-determination related to the Chicano/Latino community. The Chicano Studies and Latin American Studies Department provided courses and programs that address Chicano/Latino issues and created an intellectual presence on the campus for Chicano/Latinos.

In addition to student support programs, student life activities are important for facilitating Latino student success. As part of the demonstration project, each campus was asked to conduct an environmental scan of existing student organizations. The six participating HSIs developed *student chapters* on campus in partnership with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute. The student chapters support the academic and professional success of Latino students and encourage them to consider careers in the public sector through academic skills workshops, leadership activities, and career development. Working directly with student life representatives from each participating institution allowed for the implementation of a student-centered support mechanism that meets the distinct needs of each campus.

For example, the student chapter at CUNY-Lehman College had internship opportunities sponsored by the State Black, Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Caucus and community service

The University of Texas at El Paso ranked 10th among universities in the number of Latino bachelor's recipients who went on to complete doctorates in science and engineering (excludes universities in Puerto Rico). (1997-2001)

activities in the Bronx. Student chapter members at California State University – Dominguez Hills worked with their faculty advisor to create a career portfolio for public sector jobs. The student chapter at California State University – Los Angeles highlighted campus and community activities and opportunities associated with career development and student retention. The University of Texas at San Antonio had over 100 students actively involved in the chapter and partnered with Latino organizations to increase the opportunities available to their students. The student chapter at The University of Texas at El Paso took advantage of campus resources for their programming, including the Center for Civic Engagement, strong career services, and a variety of leadership programs. The student chapter at New York City College of Technology invited prominent political leaders throughout the state and community to address the student members.

Community Outreach



We have a responsibility to recognize the community we serve, to be inclusive, and to be responsive.

-Fred W. Beaufait, President, City University of New York-New York City College of Technology

Since many Latino students in higher education are enrolled at institutions located in large urban Latino communities, institutional programs that strengthen community outreach and partnership provide external support for Latino students and engage additional resources. For example, CUNY-Lehman College participates in ENLACE, a program that strengthens and creates partnerships with Hispanic-serving institutions, local school districts and businesses. The goal of ENLACE is to encourage and facilitate Latino students in entering and completing college and to implement this goal by linking together the students and the community. As an HSI, CUNY-Lehman College serves as a model for community and educational change and supports higher education/community partnerships that create an atmosphere of educational success for Latino and other students. Similarly, The University of Texas at El Paso participates in the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, an integrated K-16 initiative. This community initiative includes the three major public school districts, El Paso Community College, UTEP, and other partners from the community, business and industry, and civic organizations. It focuses on improving the educational achievement of all El Paso students so that they can pursue a college degree and successful careers.

California State University-Dominguez Hills had two of its bachelor's degree programs rank in the top 10 nationally for degrees awarded to Latinos: liberal arts & sciences and public administration (2002).

DEFINING LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

The “traditional” college student enrolls full-time upon high school graduation, is financially dependent on his/her parents, lives on campus, and either works part-time or not at all. However, traditional students represent only 40 percent of students in higher education today (American Council on Education, 2002). The majority of students in higher education are “non-traditional,” including many Latino students. They are financially independent, are enrolled in community colleges near where they live, attend college part-time, commute to college, work significant hours, and often have family obligations. Further, many Latino students in higher education are first-generation college

students, are low-income, have less academic preparation than their peers, and are concentrated geographically in a small number of states and institutions of higher education throughout the U.S.

CUNY-Lehman College ranked third in the nation for bachelor's degrees awarded to Latinos in computer science (2002).

Almost half of Latino students in higher education begin at a nearby community college, and many do not transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution. Many who do enroll for the first-time at a baccalaureate institution do not graduate (Fry, 2003). Only about 16 percent of Latinos in the U.S. between 25 to 29 years of age had a bachelor's degree in 2002 (Census, 2002). In comparison, about 21 percent of African Americans and 37 percent of whites graduated with a bachelor's degree. Given that so many Latino students in higher education are not "traditional," how can institutions facilitate their success in higher education?

The participating institutions concurred that a principal measure of Latino student success should be the completion of a baccalaureate degree. While this measure may seem self-evident, there are many circumstances that mitigate this measure of success which institutions cannot control. For example, while retention and graduation rates are valid indicators used by all institutions, the "time to degree" (time it takes to complete a degree) and the value added to a student's education are not generally measures that are considered when determining the effectiveness of an institution in serving its students. In light of what is known about "non-traditional" students' participation in higher education—they attend part-time and have other obligations that may prolong their enrollment and time to degree—there are other institutional measures that can also measure Latino student success and can inform and improve institutional practices.

USEFUL AND APPROPRIATE MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

We must never shirk from seeking high standards and creating structures that support these standards for our students.

-Diana Natalicio, President, The University of Texas at El Paso



For the majority of institutions in the U.S, the rankings by publications such as the *U.S. News and World Report* are not appropriate or useful measures to reflect an institution's mission or its success in graduating students, especially "non-traditional" students. Such rankings highlight research funding and endowments, enrollment acceptance rates, one-year persistence rates, and six-year graduation rates. However, these measures do not reflect the complex realities of most urban and commuter institutions and their student bodies. The valuable service these institutions provide to students are not measured with traditional indicators.

The six participating HSIs implemented various measures of success used by their systems and states but highlighted the need to consider other measures of success for "non-traditional" students, including Latino students. To better understand Latino student success and the role of institutions, the six HSIs examined their institutional data and its use in campus decision-making.

- What data are needed to better understand Latino student access, participation in campus life, progress toward a degree, and graduation?
- Given system or state requirements for reporting institutional success, are there other measures to consider and/or modify?

The demonstration project emphasized the importance of analyzing trends in Latino student progress toward a degree. The institutions suggested several additional institutional benchmarks and measures to consider, including the following:

- The available pool of Latino college applicants in a community (i.e. the annual number of Latino high school graduates, the number of those high school graduates who completed a college-preparatory curriculum, and the high school drop-out rates of Latino students from feeder school districts and state-wide) compared to the number that enroll;
- The number of Latino first-time freshmen applying to and the percent accepted by an institution, as well as the Latino percent of all first-time, full-time freshmen enrolling at the institution;
- The percent of Latino first-time freshmen who are the first in their families to pursue a bachelor's degree;
- The percent of Latino undergraduates who receive financial aid and/or scholarships, broken out by first-time, full-time freshmen and by upper-classmen;
- The one-year retention rate for Latino first-time, full-time freshmen and Latino transfer students (especially those from community colleges);
- The success rate of Latino students in "gateway" courses;
- The representation of Latino students in majors in which they have historically been underrepresented, particularly science, math and engineering;
- The six-year, eight-year and ten-year graduation rates of Latino first-time, full-time freshmen, as well as four-year and six-year graduation rates for Latino transfer students;
- The number of Latino baccalaureate recipients who apply for, are accepted and continue on to graduate school; and,
- The number of an institution's Latino baccalaureate recipients who receive a master's and/or doctoral degree.

Other relevant descriptive measures that help to analyze an institution's support of Latino student success include the percentage of Latino faculty, administrators, and staff, and the number of Latino-focused or multi-cultural degree programs, courses, and student services and organizations.

In 2000, Indiana University implemented the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to examine "benchmarks" of effective undergraduate educational practice, including the levels of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. Many U.S. higher education experts view this approach as a promising option to assist faculty in strengthening student learning. The NSSE program subsequently identified The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) as one of 20 colleges and universities that have higher-than-predicted scores on the five benchmark clusters and also higher-than-expected graduation rates. Participation by UTEP in NSSE's Project DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practice Project) may generate yet another accountability tool to help better understand Latino students' experiences and the factors influencing their academic success.

POLICY ISSUES

This project took place during a very difficult time in public higher education. California, New York and Texas, and thus the six public HSIs in this project, were all facing large cuts in higher education expenditures due to state-wide budget crises. These cuts will have serious implications for institutional capacity, as well as student access to higher education, academic programs, faculty hiring, support services, and quality education. In tandem with the budget crises, all of the institutions were experiencing increases in applications from students eligible for enrollment.

Project participants emphasized this limited capacity of state university systems to accommodate the expected enrollment growth, and noted that Latinos represent a large amount of this expected growth. This limitation, along with the increasing shift to loans and less need-based financial aid to students at the federal level, and the growing demand for institutional accountability will have a serious impact on institutions' ability to effectively serve their students.

Within this context, the six HSIs discussed three critical policy areas for Latino students in higher education:

1. Understanding what it means for a college to be “Hispanic serving” and how an institution facilitates Latino student success
2. Defining Latino student success
3. Exploring useful and appropriate indicators for institutions to hold themselves accountable for the educational success of Latinos

While serving Hispanic students is expected of HSIs, especially those institutions that receive grants from Title V, identifying institutional practices that explicitly serve Latinos and facilitate their success is more complicated. The mission of most institutions is to serve all students. In doing so, institutions that disaggregate their data and examine the data on a regular basis to analyze how students are doing and then act on the information in ways that help students, including Latinos, succeed are those that “serve” their students well.

This examination of Hispanic “serving” institutions, beyond the federal definition, provides a more in-depth perspective on the role of institutions in Latino student success. While the federal definition of an HSI is more focused on Latino student enrollment, the discussions of this demonstration project make clear that student enrollment does not necessarily translate into student success. Analysis of institutional elements beyond Hispanic enrollment including academic progress in specific curricular areas, as well as participation in student life and leadership development activities, should be conducted to better define the term Hispanic “serving” institution.

Graduation is a prime measure of Latino student success. However, the pathways to graduation, and time to completion, may be different from “traditional” students. While the six HSIs concurred that one element of Latino student success is the completion of a baccalaureate degree, other elements of success, such as student engagement, continuous enrollment, employment beyond graduation, and enrollment in graduate education should also be considered in defining student success.

Measuring success and holding institutions accountable for the success of their students is gaining momentum in the current political environment. The examples of multiple measures for accountability provided in this brief can be informative as policymakers seek to more accurately

evaluate the impact of institutional practices in promoting success with today's diverse student population. Providing incentives for educating Latino students, rather than penalties based on what some perceive as low persistence or graduation rates is critical as these institutions look to lead and develop innovative practices that facilitate student success.

CONCLUSION

Latinos are one of the fastest growing and youngest ethnic groups in the United States. Given the limited focus on Latino college students in much of the higher education research and analysis to date, the findings of this demonstration project are useful for institutions and policymakers to consider. Specifically, the project focus on institutional support programs and the role of appropriate and meaningful accountability measures of Latino student success can inform future higher education policy.

The six participating HSIs agreed that their discussion yielded more questions and concerns than could be addressed by the short 12-month time frame of the demonstration project. The most pressing concern to the institutions is the increasing emphasis on six-year graduation rates for public accountability systems. This "time to degree" does not reflect as accurately the educational challenges faced by many Latino students and others from families of limited economic resources who may take longer, but do persist to graduate. Other questions and concerns requiring additional research and policy analysis include the following:

- How can institutions better use the data currently collected to inform their strategies around Latino student success, while also conceding the limitations of data in accurately describing Latino students' experience?
- How can more comprehensive data on success be collected beyond the currently mandated measures?
- In an environment where baccalaureate-granting institutions are eliminating remedial education, raising admissions requirements and limiting enrollment, what is the institutional responsibility to educate students who may not have received an academically rigorous K-12 education?
- What would be the socioeconomic implications of not educating this growing group of future taxpayers?
- What role do faculty expectations and instructional practices play in Latino student success?
- How can educational institutions and community organizations facilitate the transition of Latino students from high school to community colleges and universities and then from the baccalaureate to graduate education?
- What kinds of incentives should be provided for institutions that educate students with the most needs, such as the majority of Latino students, and how can policymakers assist in creating such incentives?

Next steps for action by the higher education research field should be to use the findings from this demonstration project to examine the practices of HSIs and other institutions in facilitating Latino student success. The next steps for policymakers should be to:

- 1) challenge institutions to better understand how they can more effectively "serve" Latino students;
- 2) support continued research on institutional practices that serve Latino students;

- 3) seek improvements in federal and state accountability systems to acknowledge the context and level of effort required by Latino students and others from low-income communities to pursue a baccalaureate degree; and,
- 4) advocate for increased institutional effectiveness in serving all college students.

The university presidents and campus teams of the Latino Student Success demonstration project concluded that fiscal and intellectual resources must be invested to address these important higher education issues. The success of Latino students at HSIs and other colleges and universities is too important for the future of the United States to ignore these issues.

Copies of this publication and accompanying documents are available on the Latino Student Success project link at www.edexcelencia.org.

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Federal Title V: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) Grants*- Projects at the Six Participating HSIs

California State University – Dominguez Hills

Enhancing Critical Literacy: Integrate reading, writing and critical thinking skills into the curricula

Cooperative program with El Camino College: Focus on assisting transfer students who are interested in becoming teachers

California State University - Los Angeles

Enhancing the Transition Experience for Hispanic and Low-income Students: Improve advising services for transfer students and implement an electronic transcript transfer system

City University of New York - Lehman College

Improving Student Retention through Implementation of a Comprehensive Student Development Program: Use technology to enhance advising and counseling

Collaboration with Bronx Community College: Improve support services for transfer students

City University of New York - New York City College of Technology

Electronic Student Portfolios: Develop collaboration with LaGuardia Community College to assist transfer students with enrollment in baccalaureate programs

Improving Retention through Career-Based Learning Communities: Create a new student center, along with curricular and instructional changes

The University of Texas at El Paso

Growth and Development of Entering Student Seminar: Create a freshman seminar to assist in the transition from high school to college

Increasing Enrollment of El Paso Community College Transfer Students at UTEP: Develop procedures for planning and information exchange to improve transfer experiences

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Learning Communities: Develop a model to address instruction in gateway courses, as well as a freshman seminar and a college success seminar for students and parents

*An institution meeting the legislative criteria defining an Hispanic-Serving Institution can compete for a U.S. Department of Education Title V grant. It is possible to receive up to two grants, if one is a collaborative project with another HSI.



Excelencia in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students. Launched in June 2004, *Excelencia* links research, policy, and practice to serve Latino students and the institutions and programs where they participate. *Excelencia* provides data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latino students and highlights education policies and institutional practice that support Latino academic achievement. *Excelencia* is also building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers, adding value to their individual efforts by building the means and momentum to create a long-term solution to the U.S. economy's need for highly educated workers.

For more information please visit www.edexcelencia.org or write to:

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