# Advancing "Intersectional Servingness" in Research, Practice, and Policy With Hispanic-Serving Institutions

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*There has been a surge in the number of Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), which are degree-granting, nonprofit, postsecondary institutions that enroll at least 25% Hispanic/Latinx/e undergraduate students. Although HSI scholarship has increased dramatically since around 2010, there is still a gap in knowledge about individuals who fall within the "H" and the diversity among HSIs themselves. Using critical theory and critical methods, the articles in this special topic collection explore the complexities of the Hispanic/Latinx/e identity and the various ways that HSIs fall short of and meet the challenges of serving students at the intersections of identity. This introduction provides a brief overview of the eight articles in this collection and explains the need for this critical approach to HSI scholarship, which we call "intersectional servingness." We outline the contributions of these eight articles and call on practitioners, scholars, policy intermediaries, funders, and federal agencies to consider the complexities of the "H" while making decisions, advancing research, implementing policies, and creating funding streams that will enhance intersectional servingness.*

Keywords: *content analysis, higher education, Hispanic education, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, identity, intersectionality, Latino/a, servingness*

THE growth of the Latinx/e population in the United States has led to an increase in the number of Latinx/e students entering U.S. colleges and universities. Accompanying this increase has been a surge in the number of Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), which are enrollment-driven, degree-granting, nonprofit, postsecondary institutions that enroll at least 25% Hispanic undergraduates. As of the fall of 2020, 559 institutions were eligible to become federally designated as HSIs, which represents 18% of all colleges and universities in the country, and they enrolled 66% of all Latinx/e college students (*Excelencia* in Education, 2022). Moreover, HSIs generally enroll a larger percentage of Black and other non-Black students of color, low-income students, and first generation to college students (Cuellar, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

HSIs are poised to enhance the educational opportunities for Latinx/e and other minoritized populations but are still learning how to best serve students who have been historically underserved by colleges and universities. Although the federal government provides funding to HSIs through competitive grant opportunities, it does not provide guidance on how to develop infrastructure, policies, and practices for serving minoritized groups. Instead, individual campuses

are left to define servingness within their own context and with their own students. This lack of guidance makes it challenging for colleges and universities with no historical mission or purpose to serve Latinx/es and other minoritized students to enact servingness in practice (Garcia et al., 2019). This challenge is magnified by the extreme diversity of students at HSIs, including the diversity within the Latinx/e population, with students coming from a range of racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and migration backgrounds.

The purpose of this special topic collection is to complicate the "H" in HSIs by using an intersectionality lens. Despite the abundance of research with and about HSIs and the people within them, there is a dire need to understand the varied experiences and outcomes of individuals within the Latinx/e population at HSIs, with much of the early HSI research centering Mexican Americans and Chicanxs. This approach is not a bad thing, as there is a lot to be learned from existing empirical HSI research, yet it is inadequate for understanding the intersectional ways that Latinx/es, such as Afro-Latinx/es and Indigenous Latinx/es, experience HSIs and their needs in the context of servingness. It is also necessary to understand the outcomes and experiences of Latinx/es with other intersecting identities, including those who are

undocumented and DACAmented, low-income, and/or first generation to college.

The authors in this special topic collection make an important contribution to HSI research by offering varied, nuanced, and critical takes on HSI research. They build off the extant research about servingness and extend what we already know about Latinx/e students within HSIs and about the complexities of these colleges and universities. In this introduction, we briefly outline the contributions of the eight articles in this collection and call on practitioners, researchers, policy intermediaries, funders, and federal agencies to consider the complexities of the "H" while making decisions, developing scholarship, implementing policies, enacting practices, and creating funding streams that will enhance intersectional servingness. We urge readers to understand the nuances of serving minoritized students and use this knowledge as a policy lever for change. We also invite readers to interrogate the complexities of HSIs as organizations that operate within a larger system that is influenced by state and federal policies, with the organizations and the higher-education field being racialized (Garcia, 2019; Ray, 2019; Vargas, 2018).

Of final note, we intentionally chose *AERA Open* for this special topic collection about HSIs because we want to make knowledge more accessible to educators at HSIs, which are often underresourced and facing precarious financial constraints (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Ortega et al., 2015) and may not have access to some of the subscription journals that educational researchers publish in. *AERA Open* enables us to offer high quality, peer-reviewed, rigorous research that is accessible to practitioners, researchers, policy intermediaries, funders, and federal agencies who care about and work with and for HSIs.

## Defining "Intersectional Servingness"

Special topic collection authors were called on to use the conceptual framework of intersectionality, which was developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) in legal studies, expanded upon by feminists of color in such departments as sociology and women's studies (Cho et al., 2013; Dill & Zambrana, 2009), and eventually used in higher education research (Harris & Patton, 2019; Maramba & Museus, 2011). The goal of using intersectionality as an analytic lens is to understand not only how people experience multiple social identities but, more specifically, how interlocking systems of oppression and domination hinder equitable experiences and outcomes for people with minoritized identities (Núñez, 2014). Núñez (2014) proposes an intersectionality framework that can be used to understand how power systems specifically affect Latinx/e students' access to and success within postsecondary education. She provides three levels for analysis, including individual social identities (gender, national origin, immigration status, language

minority status, class, and race/phenotype), domains of power (organizational, representational, intersubjective, and experiential), and historicity (macrolevel, interlocking forces that evolve over time). Despite the complexities offered by Núñez, the bulk of intersectional research has focused on individual social identities. Intersectional analyses within the HSI context are still limited across all levels: students, institutions, state-level policy, and federal-level policy.

Although some of the articles in this special topic collection specifically use intersectionality theory as a guiding analytic tool (Herrera et al., 2022; Hora et al., 2022; López et al., 2022), others draw on critical theories, such as borderlands theory (Villarreal, 2022) and critical organization theory (Aguilar-Smith, 2021), to interrogate HSIs as racialized systems and highlight how systems of oppression affect students, faculty, and staff in HSIs. Some authors also use critical methods, including intersectional consciousness (Vega et al., 2022), critical discourse analysis (Casellas Connors, 2021), and pláticas and testimonios (Kovats Sánchez, 2021), to critically analyze how power systems affect Latinx/e people within HSIs. Using these critical approaches to research, authors highlight how organizations and policies often reproduce a reified narrative about servingness in HSIs that overlooks the diversity among Latinx/e students and HSIs. What they also demonstrate is that there are many ways to conduct critical, intersectional research that extends beyond the use of intersectional theory. The work of these authors is intentionally critical and social justice–oriented. Notably, a majority of the authors are self-identified Latinx/e (as noted in their positionality statements), and most either attended and graduated from, worked at, or currently work at HSIs, meaning that this work is personal and political.

Although the authors were not specifically called upon to use or interrogate the multidimensional conceptual framework for understanding servingness in HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019), many of them use this framework in conjunction with critical theories and methods to elevate an understanding of "intersectional servingness." The framework for understanding servingness provides researchers a tool for conducting analytic research about servingness and practitioners a model for enacting servingness in practice. The framework makes the elusive quest to understand what it means to serve Latinx/e students at HSIs more tangible. Garcia et al. (2019) suggest that there are "structures for serving" and "indicators of serving" Latinx/e students. The structures for serving are the organizational dimensions that HSIs must transform or alter, specifically centering Latinx/e ways of knowing and being, to better serve them within organizations that are racialized, continue to value Whiteness, and have minimal history or commitment to serve Latinx/e students (Garcia, 2017, 2019, 2023).

The indicators of serving are the measurable ways that HSIs can determine the extent to which their efforts to better

serve students by altering the structures is working. These indicators include academic, nonacademic, and liberatory outcomes as well as validating and racialized experiences (Garcia, 2021). Although extensive research shows how HSIs provide validating experiences for students, a growing body of knowledge is documenting the various ways that people within HSIs have negative, microaggressive, racialized, and sometimes violent experiences as a result of their social identities (Comeaux et al., 2021; Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016, 2020; Desai & Abeita, 2017; M. Martinez et al., 2017; Serrano, 2020). It is critical to talk about, address, and disrupt these types of experiences as part of the process of enacting servingness, with a majority of the articles in this special topic collection documenting the microaggressive ways that HSIs continue to invalidate racialized, gendered, and oppressed experiences. With these articles, we advance the idea of "intersectional servingness," highlighting the importance of accounting for intersecting individual identities while simultaneously accounting for domains of power and historicity. Using critical approaches, the authors interrogate organizational, representational, intersubjective, and experiential domains of power and macrolevel, interlocking forces that evolve over time. Although the framework includes White supremacy as a system that affects servingness, the authors extend this thinking to include other systems of domination, such as patriarchal systems of power, the coloniality of power, and nationalism, thus extending the original framework in important ways.

### Intersecting Social Identities of Latinx/e Students

One set of articles considers students at 2- and 4-year HSIs and uncovers how their intersecting identities shape their experiences and outcomes across their educational trajectories (Herrera et al., 2022; Kovats Sánchez, 2021; López et al., 2022). These three articles collectively show how the environments at HSIs continue to marginalize students based on intersectional social identities. However, these studies also show how students enact their agency to challenge oppression on campus and how certain spaces or actors within HSIs affirm students' whole selves.

Felisha Herrera, Victoria Rodriguez-Operana, Gabriela Kovats Sánchez, Aileen Cerrillos, and Briana Marquez uncover the experiences of women of color transfer students studying STEM disciplines in their article, "'It Was Hard, and It Still Is . . .': Women of Color Navigating HSI STEM Transfer Pathways." These authors highlight the racialized and gendered experiences of 21 women who self-identify as Latina, multiracial, Asian American, African American, White, Middle Eastern American, and Pacific Islander and contextualize these women's transfer experiences at 2- and 4-year HSIs in a West Coast region. The women of color describe how the underrepresentation of women of color in STEM at 2- and 4-year HSIs has produced environments

where they have encountered isolation and sexism. The authors find that gender is particularly salient for these women within STEM environments. Finding mentorship from other women and support networks is particularly important to navigate STEM spaces for these women of color. The authors recommend a series of curricular and programmatic changes at 2- and 4-year HSIs that will create more inclusive STEM environments, especially for transfer students who traverse these various institutional contexts.

In the article "The Uncertain Path Toward College: How Intersectionality Shaped the Experiences of Latinas Enrolled at a Hispanic-Serving Institution," Ruth López, Maria Honey, Stephanie Rendon, and Stephanie Pérez-Gill illustrate the challenges that Latinas at one research-intensive HSI have faced across their educational trajectories, focusing on three time points: prior to college, enrollment at an HSI, and experiences during college. Across these pivotal moments, the authors illustrate how racialized and gendered experiences have constrained these women's educational opportunities and show how opportunities have been further constrained due to dis/abilities and immigration status. They further connect these experiences to the inequitable schooling conditions (e.g., underresourced K–12 schools and access to a rigorous curriculum) students encountered in the Southwest (historicity). Many of the challenges documented are intertwined with systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, and furthered by ableism and nationalism. López et al. underscore the importance of HSIs recognizing the continued marginalization that women-identifying Latinas face on many campuses, despite enrolling in college in greater numbers than do men-identifying Latinos in higher education.

In the article "'If We Don't Do It, Nobody Is Going to Talk About It': Indigenous Students Disrupting Latinidad at Hispanic-Serving Institutions," Gabriela Kovats Sánchez explores the experiences and needs of diasporic Indigenous students. Kovats Sánchez examines the experiences of 10 Indigenous Mixtec/Ñuu Savi, Zapotec, and Nahua students at 2- and 4-year HSIs in California and uses Critical Latinx/e Indigeneities to account for the ways that the legacy of colonialism shapes the lives and experiences of Indigenous migrants in the United States. She shows how Indigenous students have found culturally relevant content in various courses centering Indigenous histories, although many of these spaces also cause frustration when the portrayals of Indigenous communities are limited, only historic, or outright problematic and inaccurate. These frustrations carry over into Latinx/e or Chicanx cultural spaces and microaggressive experiences among Latinx/e and Chicanx peers. Yet Indigenous students also resist dominant mestizo narratives at these HSIs by bringing their knowledge and culture into conversations and classroom spaces on campus. The author calls on HSIs to move beyond mestizo narratives of Indigeneity and recognize the presence and experiences of contemporary Indigenous peoples on our campuses to support and serve them.

## Domains of Power at the Organizational Level of Servingness

Three sets of authors analyze HSIs as organizations, resulting in articles highlighting how "structures for serving" can help or hinder intersectional servingness (Hora et al., 2022; Vega et al., 2022; Villarreal, 2022). These articles offer a distinct look at the organizational and structural ways that HSIs serve students, with the authors calling on HSIs to consider all the ways that servingness exists at the behavioral level, at the decision-making level, within faulty hiring practices, and at the co-curricular offering level. They also shed light on students' perceptions of these practices.

Matthew Hora, Matthew Wolfgram, Adrian Huerta, Changhee Lee, and Anita Gopal use a mixed-methods approach to explore the salient multilevel factors that serve as obstacles to Latinx/e students' involvement in internships in their study, "A Multilevel, Agent-Centered Analysis of Intersectionality in a Hispanic Serving Institution: The Case of College Internship Access for Latinx/e Students." Survey data show that only 22% of responders participated in an internship, with women (53%) participating at a slightly higher rate than men (47%). When asked about obstacles to internship participation, students cited heavy course loads, full-time employment, lack of transportation, and major as significant barriers, and they rarely reported only one barrier. Qualitative data elucidate additional barriers, including students' perceptions of competition for internships and/or their own confidence in securing a position. Other barriers that arose were students' inability to afford to move to a different region of the country to pursue opportunities and/or forgo current wages, due to financial limitations and need. These perceptions are important for HSIs to consider as they enroll a significant number of low-income, first-generation-to-college, and/or undocumented or DACAmented students who may have similar feelings. The authors call on HSIs to consider multiple factors that affect servingness, including structural elements and opportunities, students' access to knowledge, regional location, and White supremacy.

Blanca Vega, Román Liera, and Mildred Boveda illuminate the ways that HSIs operate as White institutions in their article, "Hispanic-Serving Institutions as Racialized Organizations: Elevating Intersectional Consciousness to Reframe the 'H' in HSI." The authors draw on their collective experiences as Afro-descendiente, Chicano, and Black Latinx/e education scholars attending, working in, and/or collecting data in HSIs and provide thick descriptions of their personal and professional experiences. They describe how cross- and interracial and cross- and interethnic interactions at different HSIs in different regions of the country made them question these institutions' commitment to servingness. They show how invalidating experiences within their own ethnic group (Latinx/e) were a form of *not* serving them as undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and researchers, and they conclude that AfroLatinx/es and Indigenous Latinx/es are rendered invisible in these institutions. They provide examples of the ways that race is decoupled from formal rules and policies, making it difficult for HSIs to adequately enhance Latinx/e ways of knowing, as suggested by the servingness framework. They also talk about how diverging from normative ways of being Latinx/e affects the distribution of power and resources at HSIs (mesolevel forces). They suggest that HSIs use a more complicated definition of Latinidad while centering Black and Indigenous people in their servingness efforts.

In the article "Servingness in the Borderlands: A Study of Faculty Hiring at a Hispanic-Serving Institution on the Border," Cynthia Villarreal examines how eight faculty search committee chairs enact HSI consciousness when hiring new faculty members at one HSI on the Mexico-U.S. border. Villarreal finds that the participants she interviewed were intentional in their efforts to hire new faculty to work at a campus that has 83% enrollment of Latinx/e students, many of whom are commuter students who traverse the border region daily. These participants had an observable commitment to serving the region and wanted to hire colleagues who understood the historical and cultural context of the region and the student experience. These participants also prioritized Latinx/e student mentoring, and they specifically wanted to hire qualified researchers who could also mentor students. Finally, Villarreal finds that participants sought colleagues who valued students' experiences in a way that is asset-based, whether it be their language, immigration status, or family status, all of which can bring value to the campus and the classroom. Villarreal presents an asset-based narrative of HSIs while acknowledging that coming into HSI consciousness is a process, one that she describes as a path to conocimiento of servingness, grounded in Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory.

## Policy and Interlocking Systems of Power in Servingness

In a final set of articles, two authors analyze how state-level policies and federal-level funding reinforce a race-evasive and identity-neutral approach to servingness, thus hindering the enactment of intersectional servingness (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Casellas Connors, 2021).

In the article "Constructing a Monolith: State Policy, Institutional DEI Plans, and the Flattening of Latinx/e Identity at Hispanic-Serving Institutions," Ishara Casellas Connors examines the interplay between state-level diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and institutional-level implementation of DEI plans within the context of Hispanic-serving community colleges (HSCCs) in three states: New York, Florida, and California. In comparing state-level DEI policies, Casellas Connors reveals that each state defines diversity in unique ways, showing that these

definitions within state-level policies matter, as they affect the institutional discourse and programmatic implementation on campuses. Moreover, she notes that the reductionist framing of ethnicity in state-level policies fails to account for the racialized nature of the Latinx/e experience, which can have adverse effects on the implementation of state-level DEI policies as part of HSI efforts to enact servingness. She adds that HSI status is not present in state-level DEI policies, which shows a disconnect between the ways that state and federal policies can bolster efforts to address long-standing intersectional inequities in Latinx/e community college students' outcomes and experiences. She calls on states and HSIs to use more intersectional framing in their DEI discourse to enhance servingness.

In the article "Seeking to Serve or $erve? Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Race-Evasive Pursuit of Racialized Funding," Stephanie Aguilar-Smith examines the reasons why a diverse set of HSIs, including public and private 2- and 4-year institutions, pursue federal HSI funding. She finds that "above all-student support" was a driving reason to pursue federal dollars earmarked for HSIs. Yet the motivation often framed students at HSI as deficient (e.g., really needy income-wise) and as a monolith (Hispanic). She notes that only one participant talked about the complexities within the "H," while most participants failed to account for ethnic diversity among Hispanic students and rarely talked about intersectional identities, such as race, gender, and language. Aguilar-Smith notes that this translates into race-evasive programs and support structures enacted with Title V funding. Beyond the desire to support students, Aguilar-Smith finds that some campuses pursue federal funding as a way to buffer declining state budgets and dwindling institutional budgets, while others view it as an elitist endeavor. With each of these motivations, the intersectional needs of Latinx/e students are not accounted for, and few conversations are had about systemic levels of oppression that Latinx/e students face. She suggests that HSIs access an intersectional and Latinx-centered lens when pursuing HSI funding.

### Exploring New HSI Futures in Research and Practice

This special topic collection advances research on intersectional servingness at HSIs across three distinct levels: individual, organizational, and policy. As these articles show, intersectionality within each of these domains is complex and necessary to consider in the quest to enhance servingness at HSIs. Rather than merely documenting these complexities, these authors invite researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers to create more equitable practices and policies that address the intersectional needs of Latinx/e students and HSIs. At the same time, this collection only scratches the surface of intersectional servingness at HSIs. We highlight the many contributions of this special topic

collection and offer thoughts for future research and practice anchored in intersectional servingness.

At the individual level, this special topic collection significantly advances our understanding of how Latinx/e students' experiences at HSIs are influenced by their intersectional identities, including the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, Indigeneity, language, and documentation. Yet some authors note that through policy, identities continue to be collapsed or reduced to one dimension. Future research should critically explore the experiences of various minoritized groups among Latinx/e, such as LGBTQIA, AfroLatinx/e, Asian Latinx/e, Latinx students with dis/abilities, and those speaking Indigenous languages or Portuguese. This research should inform practice, as educators and decision-makers must enact structures, programs, and practice that allow for the existence of intersectional experiences. Students want to be seen and valued in postsecondary spaces, which includes an acknowledgment of their multiple identities.

Most of the perspectives within this special topic collection are based on Latinx/e undergraduate experiences. Although the HSI designation is based on Latinx/e undergraduate enrollments, many institutions also enroll graduate students, and certain Title V and other HSI-specific grants can be used to advance postbaccalaureate access and success (i.e., Title V part B). Yet research with graduate students remains scant. More research on the graduate pathways is needed to consider the manner in which HSIs can become graduate-serving institutions, with research showing that HSIs enroll significantly fewer Latinx/es at the graduate level (Garcia & Guzman-Alvarez, 2021). Similarly, research with faculty across ranks, staff, and leaders is also underdeveloped within HSI scholarship but is much needed, especially regarding how HSIs can create affirming pathways into faculty and administrator positions. More research is needed on how staff, faculty, and administrators with intersectional identities at HSIs create curriculum and programs, make decisions, and cultivate long-term success among the students and communities they serve.

Several articles touch on the different types of HSIs, which can be considered intersectional organizational identities, especially because some institutions are underresourced and undervalued in a system of higher education that defers to elitism and Whiteness (Garcia, 2019). For instance, HSCCs are included in several studies, reflecting the lasting importance of these institutions as sites of postsecondary access for many Latinx/e students (Laden, 2004). Yet there should be more intentional interrogation in research of the ways that HSCCs may struggle to enact servingness when compared to 4-year institutions. For example, are HSCCs less likely to pursue and/or attain competitive federal grants? The landscape of HSIs has also changed since 2010, with more research-intensive universities attaining this federal designation (Marin & Pereschica, 2017; Martinez

& Garcia, 2020; Núñez, 2017; Paredes et al., 2021). Yet few studies have adequately defined what makes Hispanic-serving research institutions distinct. There may also be differences between public and private institutions in their ability to enact servingness. Others have begun to make sense of the intersection between religion and private 4-year HSIs (DeCostanza & Garcia, accepted; Garcia et al., 2021), yet more work is needed. Another underexplored area is the intersection of multiple minority-serving institution identities, such as Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, as several HSIs may hold several federal designations. Future research should consider the intersectional organizational identities of HSIs themselves, and more critical conversations are needed about what servingness looks like in practice at different types of institutions.

Accounting for state and regional contexts is another important layer to consider at HSIs, given that many Latinx/e students attend colleges that are close to where they live, often with their families, and also work close to home (Cuellar, 2019; Núñez & Kim, 2012). Hora et al. (2022) show how the surrounding location influences the internship opportunities available to students at HSIs, while Herrera et al. (2022) convey the interconnections between HSIs in a region, given students' transfer pathways. Moreover, Villarreal (2022) conceptualizes a borderland HSI as distinct. Although these studies begin to grapple with the interplay between institutional characteristics and place/region, these dynamics should be explored more deeply and across different spaces.

The racialization of HSIs and Latinx/e individuals within society and these institutions is a clear and consistent theme in the HSI literature (Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019), and this special topic collection further expands this knowledge across several articles. Future research with HSIs, especially those that are examining the racialized experiences of individuals within these settings, should consider how such concepts as mestizaje, blanqueamiento, and race-neutrality further contextualize these experiences, as some authors effectively do in this collection. In practice, there must be a concerted effort to disrupt and transform the organizational structures to elevate equity, justice, and liberation for all minoritized students and people in HSIs (Garcia, 2023).

Another valuable contribution across the articles is the innovative and varied methodological and theoretical approaches used to study intersectionality within HSIs. Critical discourse analysis, testimonials, authoethnographies, participatory action research, and social network analyses are among the approaches authors employ. Future studies should continue advancing critical methodological and interdisciplinary approaches to fully honor the lived experiences of individuals at HSIs as well as to capture the complex organizational and sociohistorical processes influencing the policies that govern and practices enacted within these institutions. Future research and practice at HSIs should adopt a transformative research paradigm and incorporate the perspectives of the students and communities they serve (Hurtado, 2015; Núñez, 2017). Expanding on approaches featured in this special topic collection, future research should employ youth participatory action research and community-based participatory research to yield more grassroots and ground-up solutions to enhancing intersectional servingness practices and policies at HSIs. In practice, too, these methods can be used with undergraduate students in courses and programs to include students in the intersectional servingness conversations happening on campus.

## Connecting to Policy and Funding

The scholarship in this special topic collection collectively points to multiple opportunities for HSI scholars and practitioners to enhance intersectional servingness in research and practice. Connecting this research to policy more directly, however, is a larger challenge. One key step is ensuring that research with HSIs and the people within these unique contexts is easily accessible to policy-makers, policy intermediaries, federal agencies, and funders as they advocate for, develop, and advance policies for HSIs and Latinx/e students. Access to knowledge is necessary to envision and create innovative solutions to address persistent educational and societal inequities at HSIs and with Latinx/e students.

One way is to translate HSI research with and for policy intermediaries and policy audiences and to foster connections with these entities. We are seeing an emergence of translatable research with HSIs, including briefs published by critical policy intermediaries (e.g., Espinosa et al., 2018; Garcia, 2022; Nellum & Valle, 2015), yet we need more. HSI scholars should develop relationships with organizations that serve as policy levers of change to advance a more translatable agenda. These organizations should also intentionally develop these skills with critical scholars. We had the honor of participating in an 18-month Student Experience Research Network Midcareer Fellowship Program to learn how to make our research accessible and used within a policy arena,[1] and yet we're still facing a steep learning curve. There should be more interchange between researchers producing critical scholarship and policy advocates and funders enacting change. We hope that this *AERA Open* special topic collection serves as one bridge between intersectional servingness research and the creation of practices and policies at HSIs that fully humanize and value Latinx/e students and HSIs.

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## Note

1. https://studentexperiencenetwork.org/sern-midcareer-fellows-program/

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