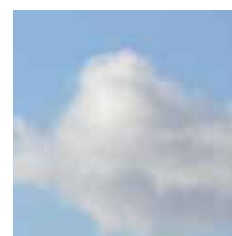
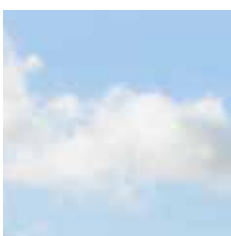


LEADING IN A CHANGING AMERICA

PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES FROM
HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS (HSIs)



EXCELENCIA IN EDUCATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE PRESIDENTS OF THE 12 HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS. WITHOUT THEIR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS THIS REPORT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

James Lyons

Past president, California State University—Dominguez Hills

Mildred Garcia

California State University—Dominguez Hills

Thomas Fallo

El Camino College

James Rosser

California State University—Los Angeles

Ernesto Moreno

East Los Angeles College

Fred Beaufait

Past president, City University of New York—New York City College of Technology

Gail Mellow

City University of New York— La Guardia Community College

Ricardo Fernandez

City University of New York—Lehman College

Antonio Perez

City University of New York—Borough of Manhattan Community College

Diana Natalicio

The University of Texas at El Paso

Richard Rhodes

El Paso Community College

Blandina Cardenas

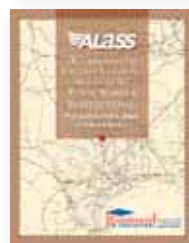
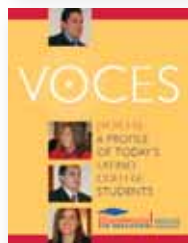
Past president, The University of Texas—Pan American

Shirley Reed

South Texas College

Pictured on the cover from top to bottom: Ricardo Fernandez, City University of New York—Lehman College; Mildred Garcia, California State University—Dominguez Hills; James Rosser, California State University—Los Angeles

PUBLICATIONS:



Coming soon:

Refining Measures of Success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Florida Policy Options to Accelerate Latino Student Success in Higher Education

Taking Stock of Higher Education's Capacity to Serve Latino Students

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A PDF version is available on the web at
www.EdExcelencia.org



Excelencia in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latino students, and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement. A 501(c)(3) organization, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce.

JUNE 2009

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extensive experience in education policy and research to the challenge of accelerating Latino student success.

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The brief was shared with the participating presidents for their review. The brief also benefited from a review by Sarita

Brown, President of *Excelencia* in Education, Margarita Benitez, Director of Higher Education at The Education Trust and Senior Associate at *Excelencia* in Education, and Diana Cordova, Director, Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity, Division of Programs and Research, at the American Council on Education. The author is solely responsible for any errors in content.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Lumina Foundation, its officers or employees.

FOREWORD

Today, the U. S. population includes approximately 50 million Latinos, more than double the figure reported in the 1990 Census. A heterogeneous group from many countries of origin, the Latino community includes recent immigrants and families who have lived here for generations. Despite these differences, current analyses document significant common patterns in Latinos' pursuit of higher education, which result in less than 10 percent of Latinos 25 to 29 years of age earning a bachelor's degree.

The presidents of the 12 Hispanic-Serving Institutions interviewed for this brief are implementing strategies to accelerate educational outcomes for Latino and other nontraditional students through innovation, tenacity, and data-driven decision making. As individuals and as a group, they are inspiring examples of a new brand of academic leaders. With outstanding qualifications and significant records of achievement, these professionals would be welcomed at institutions with well-established academic programs, solid endowments, and wealthy alumni as prospective donors. Instead of continuing the ascent to the ever-higher isolated ivory towers of academia, these presidents choose to put their skills to the test of altering our educational system to fit the needs of students and by so doing, effectively respond to today's America.

Confronted with large numbers of students inadequately prepared for the rigor of college courses delivered in a fixed format, these presidents do not lower academic standards.

Instead they work with their faculty and staff to identify and implement strategies to engage and support their students while respecting their culture and building upon their strengths. In describing success, one of the presidents interviewed for this brief said, "Institutional quality is dependent on one outcome measure—what happens to our graduates once they have completed their degree." These college and university presidents achieve results for their students, their institutions, and their communities.

Leading in a Changing America is the fourth brief in *Excelencia's* series on Hispanic-Serving Institutions and maintains our focus on what works to maximize this country's fastest growing asset—young Latinos. At *Excelencia* in Education, we pledge to continue to spotlight academic leaders and effective practices throughout the country that produce positive results for Latino students. We hope all institutions of higher education will take notice of these models to strengthen their own endeavors to improve the educational outcomes for the increasing number of Latinos seeking admission to college and full participation in American society.

Now more than ever, improving college degree completion for all students is vital to our national interests. Following the lead articulated by the presidents in this brief could make success contagious for all students.

Sarita E. Brown
President
Excelencia in Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although public policy still focuses much of its attention on traditional institutions serving traditional students with traditional measures, there is a growing recognition that the country will need to go further to radically increase the number of Americans with at least some college credential. This goal was articulated most recently by President Obama in a speech where he set the goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by the year 2020.¹ Given the current environment for higher education, the demographic shifts, and the state of the U.S. economy, institutions serving large concentrations of nontraditional students are poised for a period of increased influence and visibility. The fastest-growing of these colleges and universities are Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).² These institutions were not created solely or exclusively to serve Hispanic students, but have been identified for the large concentration of Latino and other nontraditional students enrolled at their campuses.

The institutions represented in this brief are rarely included or referenced positively in traditional policy discussions. However, the growth and geographic concentration of the Latino population has created a new environment that positions HSIs at the forefront of change in higher education policy. The HSI presidents interviewed for this brief lead institutions in some of the largest, wealthiest, and most populous states in the country: California, New York, and Texas. Their institutions rank among the top in the country in both enrolling and graduating Latinos. These leaders offer pragmatic approaches for serving students in the present and visions for the future of higher education that can inform the future of public policy to serve a changing America.

The HSI presidents interviewed are adjusting to changes in higher education by raising new funds and containing costs, by serving more students with limited resources, and by finding innovative ways to stay true to their mission as a public institution. In doing so, these presidents are also:

- educating a broader public by sharing student experiences to describe their institutional realities,
- reevaluating policies and procedures that address needs of all students in order to remove barriers that impede student success,
- emphasizing the need to change some traditional approaches, and
- pursuing a variety of resources to support their innovation.

The following summarizes some of the presidents' points of view and lessons learned on leadership of their institutions at a time of change in the higher education landscape.

Know who they serve. While they are committed to serve all students who enroll, serving all students does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach. As the representation of more nontraditional students increases on their campuses, these leaders are aware that nontraditional programs and services are needed to serve these students well. They are engaging their staff and faculty to better understand whom they enroll and develop programs to serve these students better to improve their success.

Prioritize tailoring education and services to their community. As public institutions located in communities with growing populations and educational needs, these leaders are aligning their programs and services to fulfill their mission to educate their current community. At times, this may not align with priorities to be nationally ranked for research, faculty, or selectivity.

Balance access, costs, and quality to meet their mission. While quality is a priority, it is not the sole priority and should not be attained at the expense of college access or increased college costs. As leaders, they are balancing costs, access, and quality in a tenuous financial and political environment. Their task is to serve as a public good to their community by providing access to college while containing costs and improving educational quality.

Seek external funding for innovation. As public institutions, their campuses receive limited resources. Yet changes to serve a growing nontraditional student body often require additional investment of programs and services to support student success. These institutional leaders aggressively seek external funds to support their innovation in programs and services to serve nontraditional students.

¹ *Transcript of President Obama's speech at the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, March 2009*

² *Hispanic-Serving Institutions are defined in federal legislation as public or private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more undergraduate full-time-equivalent Hispanic student enrollment. For the institutional aid program of Title V, these institutions must also have a high enrollment of needy students and low educational and general expenditures (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008).*

OVERVIEW

Public policy for higher education focuses primarily on traditional students enrolling in traditional institutions. However, today's undergraduate population is different than it was a generation ago. Traditional students—those who enroll full time in college immediately after high school graduation, are financially dependent on parents, are predominantly white, and do not work—are becoming minorities in higher education as the numbers of low-income, first-generation, commuting, part-time, students of color, and older college students continue to grow.

Beyond these changes in the higher education student body, other elements are converging to instigate change at a challenging speed: recent financial constraints, projected demographic growth, and the need for economic competitiveness. Yet higher education has been relatively slow to address some of these changes. This brief examines the leadership perspectives and adjustments made at one set of institutions that enroll large concentrations of nontraditional college students and are on the front lines of the changing higher education landscape—namely Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

The HSI identification was created in federal legislation in the mid-1990s to categorize institutions that have high enrollment concentrations of Latino students but limited resources to serve these and other low-income students.³ HSIs are institutions of choice for many Latino and other nontraditional students. While there were over 3,500 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States in 2006-07, over half of Latino undergraduates (54 percent) were concentrated in the 7 percent of institutions (265) identified as HSIs (Santiago, 2008). The growth and geographic concentration of the Latino population has created a singular environment that places these institutions at the forefront of change in higher education.

There is no “rule book” for leading HSIs. This brief summarizes leadership perspectives and institutional responses to changes in higher education from 12 HSIs in three states—California, New York, and Texas. It provides the perspectives of a sampling of institutional leaders who are managing the constant tensions of (1) the current fiscal, political, demographic, and economic environment and (2)



issues of institutional capacity, quality, affordability, and accountability, all in the context of serving high concentrations of nontraditional students. The institutions where these presidents serve are not the most selective or flagship institutions in their state, but they are positioned to integrate the educational needs of a growing and diverse population with the human capital needs of a competitive global marketplace. These leaders head institutions that are on the front line of change in higher education and are quick to respond to changes. They are student-centered in their efforts and are not afraid to examine what works to support student success and what does not.

This brief on institutional leadership is the fourth in a series that examines HSIs. Previous briefs have addressed the invention, student selection, and institutional practices of HSIs. This brief provides a summary of common leadership strategies at institutions with high nontraditional student enrollment, as well as leadership efforts to address changes in the student body and critical issues confronting higher education.

LEADERSHIP IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The majority of colleges and universities in this country are public institutions. The general mission of these institutions is to provide access to quality postsecondary education to students with the goal of strengthening a democratic society, increasing economic competitiveness, and providing opportunities for personal and professional advancement. Higher education is seen as an equalizer of opportunities for all students—traditional and nontraditional—to realize the American Dream.

Institutional leaders who serve large concentrations of nontraditional students—diverse, low-income, working, first-generation, and/or academically unprepared students—have to balance the traditional offerings of a college with service to a large student population that increasingly defies the traditional profile of students. They also have to balance the increasing pressures of competition and demands for accountability with their focus on

“We have to embrace our geography and demographics throughout the institution so that we can create a pathway that, in turn, creates capacity for graduate education that we can help students aspire to.”

access and institutional quality. And they have to engage in a perpetual struggle for sufficient resources to address immediate student needs while strengthening the longer-term stability of the institution. These leaders face many of the same issues as other institutions, but their concentrated enrollment of Latino³ undergraduate students also sets them apart.

The presidents in this brief participated in *Excelencia* in Education’s Latino Student Success Project series to examine how their institutions “served” their Latino students (Table 1). While these presidents were not randomly selected, their perspectives provide a rich array of viewpoints regarding leadership of institutions with large concentrations of nontraditional students. In addition, the institutions these presidents lead rank among the top institutions in the nation in enrolling and graduating Hispanic students (Table 2).

³ The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used interchangeably in this brief.

Table 1. Presidents and institutions participating in Latino Student Success Project Series

President	Institution	Tenure
James Lyons	California State University—Dominguez Hills	1999-2007
Mildred Garcia	California State University—Dominguez Hills	2007-present
Thomas Fallo	El Camino College	1995-present
James Rosser	California State University—Los Angeles	1979-present
Ernesto Moreno	East Los Angeles College	1998-present
Fred Beaufait	City University of New York—New York City College of Technology	1999-2004
Gail Mellow	City University of New York—La Guardia Community College	2000-present
Ricardo Fernandez	City University of New York—Lehman College	1990-present
Antonio Perez	City University of New York—Borough of Manhattan Community College	1995-present
Diana Natalicio	The University of Texas at El Paso	1988-present
Richard Rhodes	El Paso Community College	2001-present
Blandina Cardenas	The University of Texas—Pan American	2004-2009
Shirley Reed	South Texas College	1994-present

Table 2. National ranking in degrees awarded to Hispanics for 2006-07 by selected institutions

Institution	National Ranking	Institution	National Ranking
Public Colleges and Universities		Community Colleges	
The University of Texas—Pan American	3	El Paso Community College	2
The University of Texas at El Paso	4	South Texas College	3
California State University—Los Angeles	11	East Los Angeles College	4
California State University—Dominguez Hills	37	City University of New York—Borough of Manhattan Community College	13
City University of New York—Lehman College	49	City University of New York—La Guardia Community College	22
City University of New York—New York City College of Technology	200	El Camino College	52

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Completions, 2006-07

LEADERSHIP TO SERVE A CHANGING STUDENT BODY

The profile of students in higher education is changing. Statistics tell the story:

- Between 1980 and 2007, undergraduate enrollment rose 50 percent, from 10.5 million to 15.6 million. In the same period, undergraduate enrollment increased 194 percent (1.7 million to 5.2 million) for all minority students and increased over 300 percent for Hispanics (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009).
- Between 1980 and 2007, although undergraduate students enrolled full-time remained the majority, the number of part-time students rose 40 percent (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009).
- Between 1980 and 2007, the number of undergraduate females enrolled rose 62 percent; the number of males enrolled increased 35 percent (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009).
- The number of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college increased from 26 percent in 1980 to 39 percent in 2007. However, Latinos 18 to 24 years old were less likely to be enrolled in college, and their representation has not increased as rapidly that of whites or blacks. In fact, the enrollment of Latinos 18 to 24 years old in 2007 was equivalent to the enrollment of whites 18 to 24 years old in 1980 (27 percent) (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009).
- The number of young students has been growing more rapidly than the number of older students, but this pattern is expected to shift. Between 1995 and 2006, the enrollment of students 25 and over rose by 13 percent, compared to 33 percent for students under age 25.

“Too many institutions are investing their resources in the same way that they have in the past, even though demographics have changed and the needs of students have evolved.”

“The term HSI was foreign to most of our staff. Today, many more are aware, and the institution is talking a little more about cultural issues and flavor because it is seeping into the campus climate. However, being an HSI is more than just numbers and plurality to a campus. Being an HSI is creating history.”

However, from 2006 to 2017, the National Center for Education Statistics projects a rise of 19 percent in enrollment of people 25 and over and a rise of 10 percent in enrollment of people under 25 (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009).

Institutional changes that serve students from diverse backgrounds require leadership from the top and reinforcement all

the way down the institution. The institutional leaders interviewed had years of experience in multiple settings in higher education—from selective to open admissions institutions and from the classroom to administration—and they used those experiences to inform their vision and strategies for supporting community and student success on their campuses.

The presidents recognized that having their institutions identified as an HSI meant acknowledging their large Latino enrollment and their responsibility to serve these students, along with their other students, well. Some presidents noted that being an HSI meant additional grant opportunities from federal agencies, foundations, and other sources. Several presidents also acknowledged the challenges of defining HSIs beyond enrollment to articulate what it means to serve Hispanic students. However, there was overall consensus that being identified as an HSI involved leadership as trendsetters in higher education: Their institutions were at the forefront in serving the large and growing Latino population while continuing to play a critical role in the broader community.

The following section considers a few of the many varied characteristics of non-traditional students that presidents serve at their institutions and how HSIs fit into this context. It also provides a summary of presidents' perspectives.

DIVERSITY

The percentage of American college students who are minorities has been increasing, and many public institutions of higher education serve students from diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009). In 2007, 34 percent of undergraduates were minorities, up from 17 percent in 1980.

Much of the change during this period can be attributed to rising numbers of Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander students. The representation of Latino students in higher education rose from 4 to 12 percent, and Asian or Pacific Islander representation rose from 2 percent to 7 percent. In contrast, the representation of white students in higher education decreased from 81 to 64 percent from 1980 to 2007 (Table 1).

Another way to look at this diversity is to calculate the increase of the actual numbers of minority students enrolled. Overall, the minority representation increased 194 percent from 1980 to

“Increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups is a priority. These students are our present and definitely our future. As a leader of an HSI, I keep these students in the forefront in my decision making.”

2007, from 1.7 million to 5.2 million (Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman, 2009). During that period, the number of black students enrolled increased 105 percent and Asian or Pacific Islander students, 318 percent. The number of Hispanic students enrolled increased 342 percent from 0.4 million to 1.9 million (Table 3).

The set of institutions identified as HSIs have a more diverse student enrollment than the overall higher education community. In 2006-07, in the aggregate, 46 percent of students enrolled in HSIs were Hispanic, about 27 percent were white, 10 percent were African American, 9 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, 7 percent were nonresident aliens or unknown, and 1 percent was American Indian/Alaska Natives. It should also be noted that there is diversity within the group identified as Hispanic. There are recent immigrants as well as native-born Hispanics enrolled at HSIs, and there are Hispanics with origins representing over 20 countries.

Table 3. Total Undergraduate Enrollment in Degree-granting Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 1980 and Fall 2007, and Percentage Change

	Fall 1980		Fall 2007		1980 to 2007
	Total enrollment (in thousands)	% Representation	Total enrollment (in thousands)	% Representation	% Change
White	8,481	81	10,047	64	18
Total minority	1,779	17	5,222	34	194
Black	1,019	10	2,093	13	105
Hispanic	433	4	1,916	12	342
Asian/Pacific Islander	249	2	1,042	7	318

Source: Digest of Education Statistics, 2008, Table 226, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education

Presidential Perspectives

The HSI presidents interviewed were very aware of the diverse student body their institutions served. However, they uniformly asserted that being intentional in better serving one group of students did not diminish the institution’s ability to serve all students well. In fact, several leaders mentioned that the lessons learned about what works for Latino students on their campuses prompted administrators and faculty to consider the use of new and more effective services with other student populations. Smaller programs with evidence of effectiveness for Latinos could be scaled up to serve

“We believe that institutional activities that help Latino students succeed also benefit all students because many of them have common needs. By addressing the learning needs of Latino students, we have created supportive and competitive learning environments that benefit all of our students.”

other students more effectively. In their efforts to serve all students, they recognized the importance of acknowledging and targeting services to Latino students so these students’ needs and strengths were also integrated and addressed.

The institutional leaders acknowledged that their campuses had a distinctive character based on the students they enrolled. To serve these students, their institutions had groups and organizations that supported students’ academic and social goals, focused on their culture, and



Blandina Cardenas, Past president,
The University of Texas—Pan American

created an atmosphere for success crafted to meet their students' needs. Several institutions offered courses within their community and offered work on campus for students in financial need. Their institutions also set up activities specifically geared to Latino students, such as mentor groups and targeted outreach efforts. Presidents also worked diligently to increase the representation of faculty and staff that could serve as effective role models.

Student Diversity: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

We have to recognize the diversity of our student body when examining whom we serve and how to serve them best. Despite differences in origin, shared representation and language issues encourage more cohesion among Latinos.

Being a leader of a Hispanic Serving Institution brings a great deal of pride, but it also demands 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.

I am focused on the development of new talent and leadership for higher education. Our students do not see leaders and administrators that look like them, and too often there are not enough leaders with the knowledge and experience needed to bring awareness

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE-GOERS

College enrollment rates vary considerably with parents' educational attainment. In 1999, 82 percent of students whose parents held a bachelor's degree or higher enrolled in college immediately after finishing high school. The rates were much lower for those whose parents had completed high school but not college (54 percent) and even lower for those whose parents had less than a high school diploma (36 percent) (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The difference in enrollment rates supports the leaders' commitment to developing outreach programs that can raise the level of student preparation and readiness for postsecondary work. In 2003-04, 49 percent of Latino undergraduates were the first in their family to go to college, compared to 35 percent of all students (Santiago and Cunningham, 2005).

and innovation to address the needs of our diverse and changing student body.

We have increased the diversity of our faculty and the courses we offer, added academic support programs such as our Learning Communities Program, and expanded programs such as Supplemental Instruction. We have changed policies and processes and increased campus life opportunities to give our students a stronger sense of a university community that supports diverse students and values their cultural traditions.

For Latino students to be successful, we have to give them the same opportunities that are offered to other students regarding interaction with faculty, possibilities for research, and early access to college study.

Institutional success is tied to Latino student success. Our institutional role is to make sure Latinos get all the services we can provide and ensure they are quality services so that students get a quality education. And we recognize that focusing on Latino students does not have a negative impact on other students.

If we serve all our students, we will serve Latino students. We use data to see how the same institutional services impact students differently. It is hard to make distinctions because the traditional majority is a minority here. We rely on data to discern differences to better serve our students.

Being an HSI means we have to know who our students are and what it means to the institution (e.g., students balancing work and school). We are open to ideas that can help students to be more successful. For example, we try to offer services in the community or to offer special courses to address specific workforce needs.



Richard Rhodes, El Paso Community College

Presidential Perspectives

The institutional leaders shared their perspectives on the importance of providing role models for first-generation students, developing more intensive support services, and engaging the entire family in the educational process, not just the student. All of these efforts were either labor—or resource-intensive, but the presidents recognized the long-term benefits of short-term investments in first-generation college students in their communities.

First-generation college-goers:

(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)

By engaging the family, the institutions can succeed in getting students to enter and stay in college. That's Hispanic-enrolling and serving.

Families worry about the lost income, separation from family, and the possibility that the students will leave when they go to college. We invite parents and family members to our school orientations so that they can understand what is required to get a university education.

We know that many of our students are the first in their family to go to college. We don't want them to be the last in their family, so we are increasing our efforts to provide useful information to students, their families, and the Latino community. We know we have

been successful when we see parents enrolled as well as their children, and when siblings are enrolled in college.

We have a university seminar for freshmen that helps to build peer groups (cohorts) for students. Since many of our students are commuters, these peer groups allow students to get important information and support from peers to complement university resources.

Our institutional commitment to the students we serve is reflected in our changes in student support. We have created a case management approach to serving our students, and we link faculty, staff, and students so that, even though our students are commuters and the first in their families to go to college, they have the support system they need to be successful.

LOW ACADEMIC PREPARATION

An increasing number of students are entering postsecondary education underprepared for college-level work. Freshmen at public two-year colleges were more likely to enroll in remedial courses than freshmen at four-year colleges (42 percent vs. 24 percent) (Wirt, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen, and Tobin, 2004). At some postsecondary institutions, over 90 percent of first-time freshmen need to take remedial classes.

According to recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in 2005, 23 percent of high school seniors were proficient or above in math, and 35 percent were proficient or above in reading (NCES, 2007). More recently, for the high school graduating class of 2008, only 22 percent of students met the ACT College Readiness Benchmark scores in English, mathematics, reading, and science (ACT, 2008). Students of color, students from less affluent families, and students for whom English is a second language are greatly overrepresented in remedial courses. However, when comparing ACT tests, another ACT report found that Latino high school graduates from the class of 2006 were better prepared for college-level coursework and workforce training than those who had graduated in 2002 (ACT, 2007).

Over 75 percent of postsecondary institutions offered at least one remedial reading, writing, or mathematics course (Wirt, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen, and Tobin, 2004). HSIs have concentrated their efforts on undergraduate teaching and many offer remedial courses. In 2006-07, over half of HSIs were either community colleges or two-year private not-for-profit institutions. Only one-third of HSIs (88 institutions) listed master's or doctoral degrees as their highest degree offered. However, several presidents noted the added value

that the presence of graduate-level education offered for undergraduate teaching, and they said they were invested in expanding their graduate programs in critical disciplines where Latinos and other low-income students were underrepresented.



Shirley Reed, South Texas College

Presidential Perspectives

The presidents were committed to reexamining their system of higher education delivery to deal with students at various academic levels of preparation. Most, although not all, of the 12 institutions enrolled a high percentage of students who were not college-ready. They were committed to meeting students at whatever their academic level and providing real educational gain. They addressed this by offering remedial or developmental courses and by revising the structure, content, and support services linked to these courses in order to increase completion and subsequent transition to the college's core curriculum. Their institutions are also partnering with feeder high schools to better assess and prepare potential students, and increasing outreach to improve their targeting and recruiting of students who are college-ready. For example, one president said that his institution provides multiple locations for the college assessment test (especially close to where people live) so that students can prepare earlier and know where they need to improve their skill sets.

Less academically prepared students:

(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)

We know that the faster our students get through developmental education, the greater likelihood our students will complete a degree. We've used external funds to shorten the timeframe to completion by revamping our course offering.

Externally, we use institutional tools to work better with K-12 partners to better prepare our potential students. Internally, we work on alignment of curriculum so that students complete developmental work faster, which increases the chance they will persist and complete a degree.

We have set up data to monitor our program success in developmental education. We know 87 percent of students first enrolling on our campus are not college-ready. If they are to complete, our students have to be continuously enrolled when they are in developmental education. We have also incorporated develop-

mental grades into a student's GPA so that they cannot blow off these classes. We have also created retention specialists to follow up with students and monitor their progress. We are doing an extensive study on many institutional programs so that students can recognize some of the progress they are making.

To increase retention, we no longer allow late registration, we made advising mandatory, and we require that students meet with their advisor at least three times a semester. Also, we created a fee for students to take a course for the third time and added a fee for students who were not done with their paperwork in advance.

We have a college-wide student success director who works with faculty in gatekeeping courses and regular courses to ensure the curriculum is aligned and supporting our students' success.

Our free pre-freshman immersion program helps students catch up academically without using their limited financial aid funds, especially for those that need more remediation.

LEADERSHIP TO ADDRESS A CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Beyond the changes in student population, public institutions of higher education face many challenges in capacity, resources, evaluation, access, quality, and student success. In some states, capacity (the number of seats available) is being constrained at a time when more high school students are graduating college-ready and unemployed workers are seeking to be retrained. Federal, state, and private funding for higher education also face constraints as the recession grows and funders reprioritize their investments. At the same time, increased stress on accountability and scrutiny of efficiencies in higher education have shaken public support. Further, the awareness that the United States has dropped in the international rankings of adults with college degrees has begun to influence public policy. While these concerns are evident at institutions in all parts of the country, the three states where the majority of Hispanics live and enroll in college stand out.

- In California, large and repeated budget cuts to higher education have constrained institutional capacity at a time when a greater number of students are college ready. For example, the California State University system has had to limit its enrollment and turn away academically prepared and eligible students because of limited resources. In California's adult population in 2007, 10 percent of Hispanics, 22 percent of blacks, and 40 percent of whites had earned a bachelor's degree (Callan, 2008).

- Texas is beginning to fall behind in the college participation and success goals articulated in its higher education plan, Closing the Gaps by 2015. Further, the two flagship institutions, University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University—College Station, have virtually capped their enrollment. In contrast, HSIs along the U.S./Mexico border of Texas, which traditionally have fewer resources, are surpassing their enrollment goals (Santiago, 2008b). However, overall, other public institutions in Texas are struggling to increase enrollment capacity and completion numbers with resource constraints and high enrollments of students not college ready. In the state's adult population in 2007, 11 percent of Hispanics, 19 percent of blacks, and 35 percent of whites had earned a bachelor's degree (Callan, 2008).
- In New York, limited capacity, resources, and affordability and large college completion gaps between whites, Latinos, and blacks are also challenging the leadership of higher education institutions. In the state's adult population in 2007, 16 percent of Hispanics, 21 percent of blacks, and 40 percent of whites had earned a bachelor's degree (Callan, 2008).

The following section shares the perspectives of institutional leaders on the changing higher education context, and what they are doing to adapt to these changes to their institutions.

BALANCING COSTS, QUALITY, AND ACCESS

For the institutional presidents interviewed, as for many others, college costs, access to college, and institutional quality are interconnected. Findings from a recent report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education on perspectives of college presidents described the interconnection of these three higher education issues as the “Iron Triangle” (Immerwahr, Johnson, and Gasbarra, 2008). In addressing these three issues, presidents were concerned about balancing long- and short-term goals, community needs, fiscal responsibility, and institutional success with nontraditional students. As several of the HSI presidents noted,

- The issues of cost, access, and quality are interrelated—they are the legs of a three-legged stool, and we must address all three to ensure our institution and students are well served.

Institutional quality

There are many definitions and measures of institutional quality in higher education. Depending on who is asked, measures range from college price to time-bound graduation rates, from the amount of research funding to enrollment rejection rates, and from the prominence of collegiate sports to national rankings by *U.S. News and World Report*. The majority of HSIs are open admission institutions (they enroll all who choose to attend), and it is generally assumed that their priority is college access. While access was important to all presidents, institutional quality was ranked as the top issue to address in higher education.



Gail Mellow, City University of New York—La Guardia Community College

Presidential perspectives

The presidents were committed to offering a quality education as defined academically—with outcome measures. Ensuring access to quality education was also part of their public mission. However, in defining institutional quality, leaders were more likely to consider long-term results over short-term effects. They were more likely to identify

longer-term outcome measures for students, such as careers, community contributions, or broader components of the institution, such as faculty, curriculum development, and customer service.

- Institutional quality is paramount to our mission, but we need quality at an affordable price for our students. These issues are intertwined, and we cannot address one without considering the implications and the impact on the other.
- We are striving to maintain access and quality. We have to focus on both. I think our students assume that we are providing them a quality education, and our task is to make sure that we fulfill that expectation. In doing so, we cultivate our students' educational potential and prepare our students for the competitive workforce.

When pushed to rank the three issues, however, the presidents put institutional quality first, followed by access to college and college costs.

Institutional Quality:

(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)

Quality is a dimension of the intellectual experience that students have at our college. And this experience is not easily quantified or measured for legislators, the media, or the popular press.

Quality is about the productivity of our faculty and the preparation of the students we have enrolled. Therefore, quality is measured on an individual campus level and is not necessarily comparable to other institutions.

Quality institutions are proactive and student-centered and provide good customer service. These are not traditional measures of institutional quality, but if we do not respond to our constituency, we will not be efficient and effective in our provision of a quality education.

We are dependent upon our faculty to ensure rigor, relevance, and relationships. We are continually evaluating how all divisions of our institution can support and further our efforts to improve institutional quality.

Our institution's quality is defined by our accessibility to our community and our responsiveness to the community's needs. Quality is also defined by our professional staff and customer orientation.

The quality of our faculty and the access we provide to our students for institutional support and services define our institutional quality. I would also add measures of solid retention and graduation rates. Finally, students' demonstrated learning achievement and success in graduate school are measures of our institution's quality.

Institutional quality is dependent on one outcome measure—what happens to our graduates once they have completed their degree.

Institutional quality is defined by institutional output. It is the students you graduate, what they go on to do professionally, and where they make contributions to their community and to the broader society.

Access to college

Higher education is the gateway to the middle class or higher for many Americans. However, rising costs and capacity constraints are diminishing access to higher education, especially for those populations who have historically been underserved. States like California and Florida are already experiencing constraints on their capacity to serve more students and are either limiting admission to their top public institutions or increasing admissions requirements to cap access. HSIs provide more access to higher education than many other institutions because the majority (69 percent) are public institutions created to serve their communities. Further, over 60 percent of HSIs have an open admissions policy, compared to about 45 percent of all U.S. degree-granting institutions of higher education (Santiago, 2006). The HSI presidents ranked access to college as a close second after institutional quality among the three top issues in higher education.



James Lyons, Past president, California State University—Dominguez Hills

Presidential perspectives

The presidents at community colleges tended to agree that college was accessible but were concerned about limitations on their capacity to remain so due to fiscal and facility constraints. Presidents at public universities were less confident that higher education was universally accessible. When asked to provide more detail, some of the HSI leaders defined col-

lege access beyond enrollment/admission. They said that other components of college access included services that support student attendance. For example, one president decided to offer all the courses and support services for their associate program in specific disciplines on the weekends as well as during the week. In that way, students could continue to work and could enroll in courses and benefit from the academic counseling and tutoring previously only available during traditional school hours. Another president developed cooperative agreements with nearby universities to use their facilities at night to offer courses on their campus as a way to accommodate more students.

“Being an HSI opens up some doors and gives the institution a greater national presence than before, since the Latino population is growing. This label also creates greater attention and focus on what’s going on in our community that can impact the nation.”

College access: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

The question of access to and availability of college goes beyond college admission. Does your institution offer child care? Does it offer tutoring and other academic support students need to engage in their education more directly? All of these academic and support services are part of access.

Access to support services is really the issue, not enrollment access. We will be stretched in five years to provide those support services if the fiscal constraints that we are confronting now continue.

Theoretically I believe that higher education is accessible because we are an open admissions institution.

Over time, I fear that access to higher education will decrease due to increased costs, increased reliance on loans, and decreases in institutional capacity.

We currently are accessible, but the admissions standards have gone up in the last few years. Over the next five years, I think our admissions standards will continue to be ratcheted up and access may decrease.

I would like to think we are open to all, but I think too many students opt out because they are discouraged in the early stages of their education, when they see limited possibilities for getting a higher education.

There is a lot of misinformation about admissions, financial aid, and academic preparation that affects a student’s ability to go to college. Without addressing this misinformation, access is not universally available.

Access to and opportunity for higher education was the original mission of the institution, and that has evolved into equity of access. We had to develop programs keeping in mind that students who were not well prepared in high school could still be successful. We initially attracted lots of students who never would have thought of going to college. When we looked at the data, we could see the revolving door of students who’d start (got access) and then not complete.

We are using our current resources to offer courses at two of our nearby public universities because we don’t have capacity to serve the students who want to enroll at our campus. We also offer courses and support services on nights and weekends. It is our hope that this level of innovation can increase access and opportunity for our students.

College costs

Rising costs are threatening the fundamental belief that institutions can offer postsecondary education to every segment of American society. There is growing concern about the impact rising costs have on access to higher education, student choices, affordability for low-income students, financial aid options, and the quality of postsecondary institutions.

The HSI presidents placed college costs third in importance among the three critical issues they were asked to rank. This ranking may be due to the presidents' recognition that their institutions were generally lower cost relative to comparable institutions. At community colleges and at public universities that are HSIs, tuition is lower—and resources are lower—than at comparable institutions (Santiago, 2006). In addition, most HSIs have low educational and general expenditures and a high enrollment of needy students, according to information these institutions supplied to the U.S. Department of Education to be eligible to participate in the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) Program.

Presidential perspectives

The presidents were actively engaged in strategies to address college costs for their students, and they articulated the importance of cost to access, persistence, and completion for many of their low-income, first-generation, and Latino students. They also noted that increasing college costs had a most direct impact on these students because they were often the most vulnerable economically. With increases in tuition and fees and in the cost of gas and books, the presidents observed shifting patterns of enrollment and persistence of these students. The opportunity cost to attend college (income forgone to enroll) was also high for their economically vulnerable students and was an important factor in determining the college choices, attendance patterns, and persistence of their students' college experience. As leaders of their institutions, they were compelled to address these issues creatively. They said that, to tackle college costs, efficiency, innovation, and increased public support were vital. However, they noted real limits on efficiency because of the link between access and quality and concern that cutting out much more from their budgets could do real harm to their institutional missions.

College costs: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

The decline in public funding for higher education has resulted in some recent changes on our campus. We have seen an increase in the number of students who have to choose between purchasing a metro card and paying for breakfast. For example, we have a young Latino honor student who comes to campus homeless and hungry. We were able to get gift certificates donated by restaurants so that we could make sure

he eats at least one meal a day. We are also seeing more of our students becoming homeless and an increase in domestic violence.

If we could get financial aid to go up commensurate with college costs, we could retain our low-income students, but we would still be putting a squeeze on our middle class and lower middle class students.

Increased costs lock low-income students out of the college door. Higher costs will result in students needing to work more hours, and they will stay out of higher education. If they have to choose between meeting their family's needs or continuing their own schooling, they will choose their family.

We will see a greater impact on low-income students because they have more marginal incomes. Increasing college costs affects their access to, retention in, and successful completion of the education they began, whether in K-12 or in college. We know that the students most in need financially are the ones least likely to take advantage of the services we offer that can help them succeed.

With increasing costs, I predict that students who are enrolled full time will change and go part time, those going part time will take fewer courses, and many fewer low-income students will be on our campuses at all.

We have to find new and creative ways to address cost so that college remains affordable to students. It should not be a luxury to go to college. Our institutions need to offer better selections of course materials and improve the use of technology. We need to look at how we advise students and devise ways to decrease the time to degree. We need to get students internships so they can be paid while they learn.

To reduce costs, we should consider developing a joint program that goes from a community college to undergraduate and graduate programs so that students can get through more quickly.

Doing more with less is the name of the game today, and many of us are doing that. For example, our institution is trying to be more efficient and work with other institutions in our system to reach economies of scale in purchases and other services.

We are focusing on our core business and are very cognizant that we may have to consider jettisoning some of the niceties we offer in order to preserve our core.

The issue of greatest concern is efficiency, and by that I mean the economy of running public institutions. Our institution has historically faced tight fiscal constraints, and we have always found a way to do more with less. But I don't know if we can continue to do more with less—I think we may have reached a point where we will have to choose either to do less or to serve fewer.

COMMON STRATEGIES

Institutions are diversifying to address the current economic climate, economic competition, demographic shifts, and the push for accountability. The leaders interviewed are adjusting to these changes in higher education by raising new funds and containing costs, by serving more students with limited resources, and by finding innovative ways to stay true to their mission as a public institution. In doing so, these presidents are also (1) educating a broader public by sharing student experiences to describe their institutional realities, (2) reevaluating policies and procedures that address needs of all students in order to remove

“To be an HSI is to be at the forefront of change in higher education because of the change in demographics. We have an opportunity to be trendsetters, which is not a role in which we have historically been seen.”

barriers that impede student success, (3) emphasizing the need to change some traditional approaches, and (4) pursuing a variety of resources to support their innovation. From interviews and other interactions, it was clear that the institutional leaders shared four common strategies:

- Make educating their community a priority
- Use data to inform and reform existing practices
- Engage faculty
- Seek other public and private funding for innovation

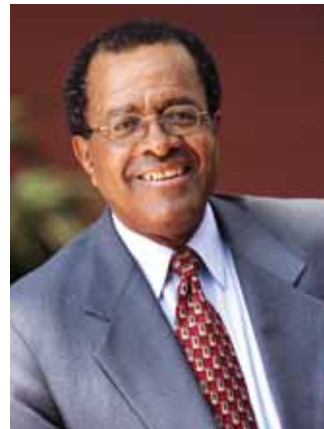
MAKE EDUCATING THEIR COMMUNITY A PRIORITY

Some public institutions have set serving their community as a priority while others are competing with private and elite institutions for recognition in research, fundraising, and athletics and even competing nationally and internationally for the best students. One of the hallmarks of higher education in the United States is multiple institutions with diverse missions and priorities. However, higher education has been slow to develop multiple and appropriate measures to compare institutions with these diverse missions. Many institutions that serve nontraditional students make it a priority to educate those in their community and reach back to improve the educational pipeline that feeds their enrollment.

HSIs are well positioned to collaborate to improve the educational pipeline since the majority of their students come from the community where they are located. In 2006-07, HSIs were located in 13 states and Puerto Rico, including such diverse states as Kansas, Washington, and Connecticut. However, almost 70 percent of HSIs were in three locations—California, Texas, and Puerto Rico. Further, HSIs were located in highly urbanized communities. Over half (54 percent) were located in large cities, and 25 percent were in large suburbs.

Presidential Perspectives

The presidents articulated their priority to serve their community and noted their service area had large Latino populations. They recognize and take seriously their public mission to play a major role in the social, economic, and intellectual development of the regions they serve. They were not looking to com-



James Rosser, California State University—Los Angeles

pete with institutions intent on national rankings or in increasing selectivity. They were focused on working with students at varying levels of academic preparation, and they provided a critical level of pragmatism mixed with creative approaches to tie their efforts to clear goals of student success. The leaders said that essential strategies included forming partnerships with K-12 and community-based

organizations, getting information out to the community, and preparing their community's workforce. For example, one innovative approach shared by a leader was to have representatives from his financial aid office join their counterparts from a nearby university to conduct joint workshops in the community to widen their sphere of influence and reach more people.

Prioritizing service to their community: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

Our priority as a community institution is to create meaningful partnerships with the K-12 system to help prepare our future students. A college education does not begin at the college doors; we know it starts much earlier. If we can make a contribution to the educational development of students early in their educational career, we will make a lasting contribution to their educational attainment.

Our institution is committed to providing a quality education to our community, and our core focus is to provide a real increase in learning.

We prepare the leaders in our community. We have alumni who have served as the community's mayor, as its sheriff, and in other important elected capacities.

We need to get more information out to our feeder high schools and to the communities we serve in our region. Only 52 percent of high school graduates in our service area go to college, so we need to do better at increasing access with information. There are too many in our community who could be enrolling in our college who are not able to seize the opportunity. In five years, we could change that if we invest now.

Our institution has a responsibility to recognize and be responsive to the people in our community, and Latinos are a large group in our community. We need to understand the external pressures they must deal with, their expectations, problems, and issues to help them have educational opportunities on our campus. We also have a responsibility to interact with other institutions with large Hispanic groups to

“We are continually reinforcing our commitment to student success. We must do well because a quality education makes a difference in our students’ lives and in our community.”

increase our understanding of how to serve our students better.

We have a unique charge because of the community. The institution has a positive image in the community, which helps to enroll more Hispanics from the community. Because we have a reputation for being “Hispanic-friendly,” we have the ability to serve.

We collaborate with other entities—K-12, public/private organizations, and the university work together—so the pathway to college is much easier in our community.

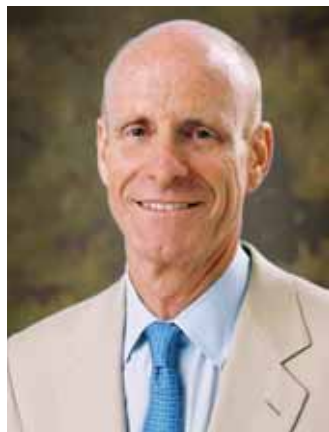
Outreach through collaboration has the most potential for change and positive impact because it creates greater awareness within the community.

Over the next five years, we will continue growing our P-16 partnerships and working together on integrated plans for building a college-going culture in our community.

We have a joint articulation committee, joint advertising, joint admissions, and a joint financial aid application with our local public university.

USE DATA TO INFORM AND REFORM EXISTING PRACTICES

Data-driven decision making in higher education is a central focus for a growing number of institutional efforts, in part because of a concerted push for increased student success, institutional accountability, and efficiency. There are many data that can inform institutional practices, but data are only as good as the way they are used. Data can be used for external reporting or internal decision making and can be used to encourage change or reinforce current practices.



Thomas Fallo, El Camino College

Presidential Perspectives

Presidents have involved their institutions in national efforts (e.g., Achieving the Dream, the Latino Student Success Demonstration Project, Equity Scorecard) and statewide efforts to use data to examine their institutional practices and determine how to improve student success as well as institutional efficiencies. Their staff look at their

data on transfers/articulation, as well as on gatekeeping courses, to inform their activities.

Using data to inform and reform practices:

(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)

In an effort to get our students to complete sooner, we encourage them to take more courses each semester. [We do this] to meet our priority to improve student outcomes, especially our graduation and retention rates, because we know those measures are critical for accountability.

We are using data every day because we want to share measures of student and institutional success and identify areas where we need to improve.

My leadership team and I are working to frame very concretely what institutional quality is, with benchmarks of student success. This means collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data on how many students get degrees and how many transfer. It means looking at student grades in gateway courses and their semester-to-semester retention rates. It means reviewing our standing with accrediting bodies and our annual and long-term fiscal stability. It also means considering the number of full-time and part-time faculty we employ and maintaining our curriculum in every discipline so that it is relevant and contemporary.

We need to develop internal institutional guidelines to talk about what students have accomplished while they are at our campuses and to be able to prove these accomplishments through ongoing measurement of real educational gain in learning by students. An internal assessment will also strengthen institutional practices and quality.

ENGAGE FACULTY

College and university faculty assume research, teaching, and service roles to support their institutions academic mission. Each of these three roles enables faculty to create and share knowledge with peers, students, and the general public. However, the balance among research, teaching, and service varies across institution types in both public and private sectors. Despite this variety, one additional role of the faculty is clear: They are the institutional representatives with the most student contact, and they play an influential role in the retention and success of their students. At HSIs, as in other institutions, faculty are also role models, mentors, advisors, and advocates.



Diana Natalicio, The University of Texas at El Paso

Presidential Perspectives

Presidents discussed the important role of faculty in educating students and supporting student success. Several presidents shared examples of faculty working as mentors or in research and publishing to enrich the student's education as well as the institutional environment. They are conscious of the importance of working with existing faculty and staff and

providing role models within the institution who are representative of the students they are serving. For example, several of the institutions have bilingual and bicultural staff in student services and academic support. In several others, administrators are also Latino. According to the presidents, these staff members are a valuable resource for students and help strengthen the campus climate. However, most noted they could do better in their representation and inclusion of diverse faculty and staff.

Engaging faculty: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

We highlight student success through Latino faculty and have speakers and community representatives that can identify with those we serve.

We have about 75 students who are academically very strong (3.3+ GPA), have 90 hours or more earned towards their degree, and were enrolled in the previous semester but are not currently enrolled. Our data tell us all of this. We are trying to track them down to see how the institution can help because we want to help them complete their degree.

We must find better ways to identify, employ, and nurture faculty and staff who value the proposition that excellence and diversity must go hand-in-hand. It took our faculty two or three years to understand that the demographics of the college were changing dramatically. But once it was clear, they became partners in serving our students well.

Because the faculty are the people who interact with the students, our institution conducts orientation sessions with new faculty each year to set the vision and tone of the institution and provide student profiles. We integrate this information into other institutional activities.

Our most important asset for student success is the commitment and buy-in of our faculty to our educational enterprise. Our faculty show that they are committed to student success. If faculty don't have high expectations and are not willing to work to ensure success, then Latino student success won't take place as needed.

Our faculty have to believe in each student's ability and be comfortable in their role of setting high expectations for students and getting them to achieve. They do this by being supportive and nurturing (not permissive) and by challenging students as well. Faculty must be expert in pedagogy so they can teach students as needed. For example, some faculty use a narrative process—telling one's story and reflecting on it—which can really engage students and allow them to feel they are a part of the community college yet are not giving up their own community.

Faculty are profoundly important for setting the stage for student success on our campus. They set the culture of the classroom, and their insistence on excellence in the subject matter they teach is critical. We know that students who strive for excellence do so because faculty ensure that standards are set high.

Faculty play a major role. Faculty can offer students possibilities they may never have imagined and play important roles inside and beyond the classroom. Many of our students become involved in research, publishing, and other academic opportunities because of faculty and end up pursuing graduate education.

We highlight our faculty diversity and the fact that our faculty can therefore relate to the challenges of our students.

SEEK OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING FOR INNOVATION

In these tough economic times, more and more institutions are feeling the pressures of constrained resources from their state governments, losses to endowments, increased costs of educating less prepared students, and overall public concerns about escalating college costs to support higher education. As institutions with generally fewer educational and other resources, many HSIs have felt this pressure for an extended period of time and have been assertive in seeking out other public and private funding to support innovation and improvements in their infrastructure and their provision of service. At the federal level, there are funds for institutional development that support new practices at such diverse agencies as the Department of Education, National Science Foundation, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Defense. In addition, a number of foundations are investing in institutional efforts to improve student access, persistence, and completion. These include the Lumina Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and more recently, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Antonio Perez, City University of New York—Borough of Manhattan Community College

Presidential Perspectives

The presidents actively sought external resources from federal agencies and private funders to improve the capacity at their institution, leverage public funds, and target service to their Latino students. They were constantly challenged to support and sustain programs and services they knew to be essential for their students'

success. The last place they wanted to cut resources was in their service to students, but that commitment was often strained in an uncertain funding environment. Therefore, these presidents were aggressive in searching for external resources to support their innovative ideas to serve students and increase efficiencies to address the changing context of higher education.

Seeking funding: *(Excerpts from interviews with the presidents)*

Identification as an HSI is an opportunity to improve the institution and the services it provides its students through targeted programs and funding. Such programs provide a safety net that allows us to build a reputation and strengthen our programs so that we can eventually compete with other prominent institutions.

We want all students to succeed and will go after earmarked and specific funds to provide quality services at our institution. This approach reflects our institutional leadership. We expect our programs to enhance Latino students' persistence, skills that promote college success, GPA, feeling of belonging and support, and ultimately retention and graduation rates.

The Title V program provides federal funds, which institutions can use to improve the institution and leverage to gain access to additional resources so they can offer the services they are interested in providing for all students on campus.

HSI funds help the institution serve all their students since most hurdles students face are the same. Getting funds to do a pilot project that helps our Hispanic students could help all students with broader implementation.

External funds and designation as an HSI allow us to talk about Latinos and conduct activities that target Latino students. Our activities funded by Title V, while targeting Latinos, address retention overall, which benefits all students.

SUMMARY

Institutions are diversifying to address the current economic climate, competition, demographic shifts, and push for accountability in higher education. The perspectives of institutional leaders that serve a nontraditional population of students can be informative to addressing these challenges.

In many ways, it is easier for institutional leaders to serve students in the traditional way of higher education, even if that does not serve their students well. However, these presidents shared their vision of an institutional culture where Latino students are welcomed as an asset to the institution, not considered a liability, and where a supportive environment promotes student success for all of their students. These leaders set the tone for institutional commitment and accountability for student success, and their mission to serve all students was reflected throughout the institution.

The HSI presidents interviewed were adjusting to changes in higher education by raising new funds and containing costs, by serving more students with limited resources, and by finding innovative ways to stay true to their mission as a public institution. In doing so, these presidents were also: (1) educating a broader public by sharing student experiences to describe their institutional realities, (2) reevaluating policies and procedures that address needs of all students in order to remove barriers that impede student success, (3) emphasizing the need to change some traditional approaches, and (4) pursuing a variety of resources to support their innovation.

The following summarizes some of the presidents' perspectives on leadership of their institutions in a time of a changing higher education landscape.

Leaders knew who they served

While they served all students who enrolled, serving all students does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach. As the representation of more nontraditional students increases on their campuses, these leaders were aware that nontraditional programs and services were needed to serve these students well. They were engaging their staff and faculty to better understand the students they enrolled to develop programs to serve these students better to improve success.

The presidents uniformly emphasized that their students were their priority, and they used examples to reinforce this priority, such as highlighting individuals and programs. They were also committed to celebrating successes and shared many examples of these successes with their staff, faculty, students, and funders.

As part of their commitment to addressing the needs of their current students, these institutional leaders also required significant investment in and coordination of data collection, review, and analysis. Further, they had to be willing to use this work to inform change in a concerted effort to improve student success. These leaders disaggregated their data to understand the strengths and needs of their students, and they actively pursued policies and practices to enroll and retain their students and ultimately to help their students succeed.

“Being an HSI means having an opportunity to explore new avenues of thought and work and can create a change in the basic understanding of the students we serve.”

Leaders set a high priority on educating their community

As public institutions located in communities with growing populations and educational needs, these leaders were aligning their programs and services to fulfill their mission to educate their current community. Given the large representation of first-generation college-goers and those less prepared for

college at their campuses, these leaders set a higher priority on developing supportive partnerships in their community, providing college-prep support, and increasing local outreach, over being nationally ranked for research, faculty, or selectivity.

Leaders sought external resources to support innovation

As public institutions, their campuses receive limited resources. Yet changes to serve a growing nontraditional student body often required additional investment in programs and services to support student success. These institutional leaders stretched their existing resources and aggressively sought external funds to support their innovation of programs and services to serve nontraditional students. This meant looking for support from private foundations and other funders as well as federal, state, and local resources.

Leaders put student success at the center of their efforts to balance costs, access, and quality

While institutional quality was a priority for all presidents, it was not the sole priority. As leaders, they were committed to balancing costs, access, and quality in a tenuous financial and political environment. They saw their institutions as a public good to their community with the need to provide access to college while containing costs and improving educational quality.

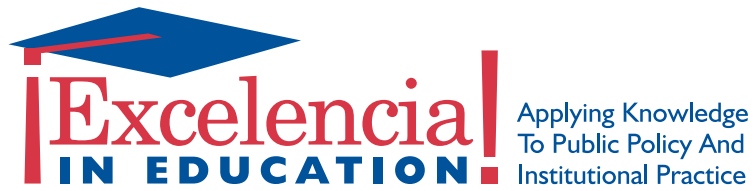
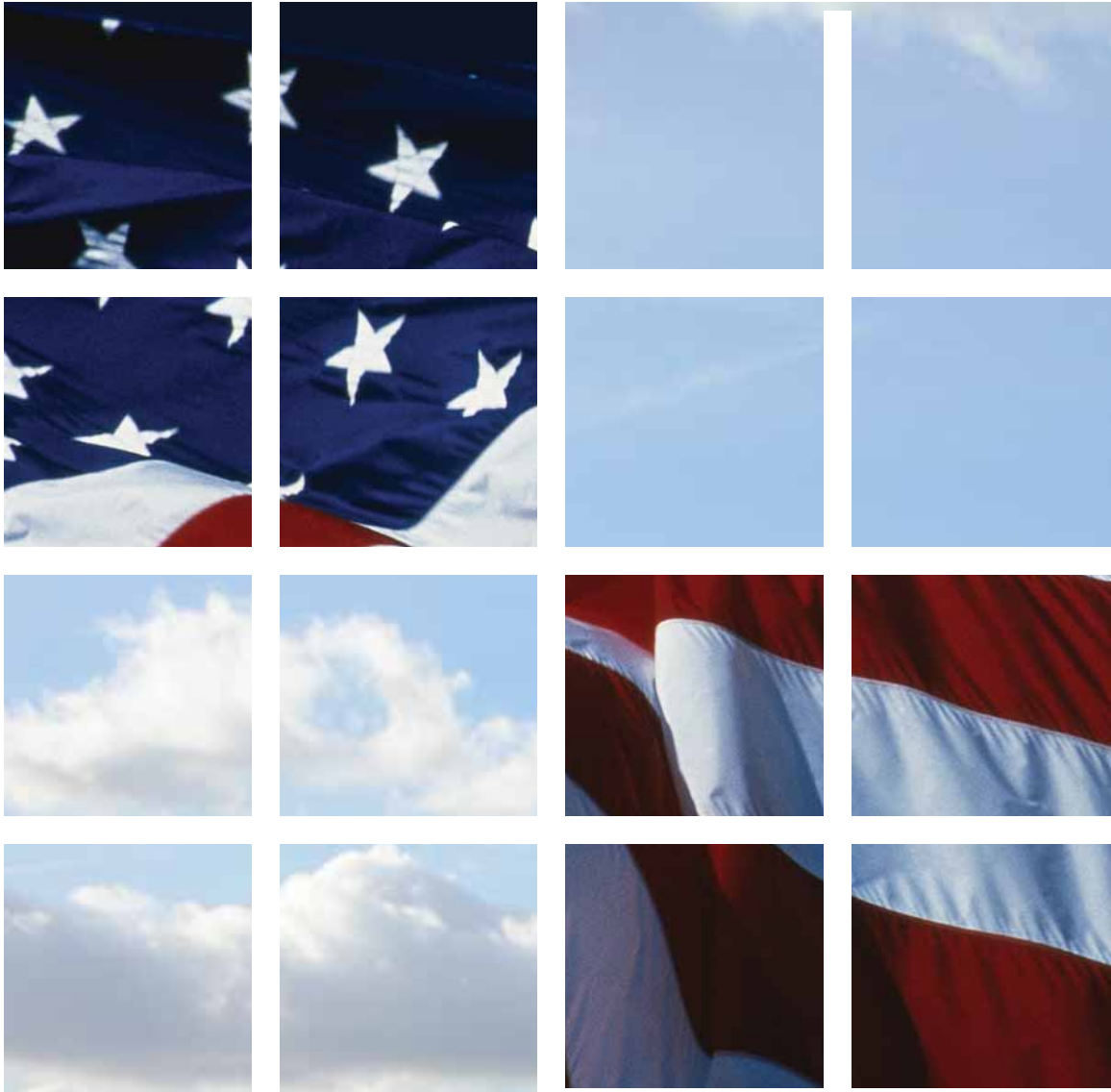
The leaders at these HSIs were not complacent about their current levels of student success by any traditional or nontraditional measure. They challenged themselves to create an institutional paradigm to improve student success that was focused on the students they had and, at the same time, to measure the success of the institution's improvement programs. What works at these institutions shows proactive leadership for student success and offers examples of what other institutions can do to serve Latino students on their campuses.



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