

Hearing from Presidents of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Defining Student Success, Measures of Accountability, and What it Means to be an HSI



A product of the
Latino Student Success Project Series

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This brief was compiled and edited by:
Deborah A. Santiago, Vice President for Policy and Research, *Excelencia* in Education

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Acknowledgments

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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.

1752 N STREET, NW, 6TH FLOOR ■ WASHINGTON, DC 20036 ■ TEL: 202-778-8323 ■ FAX: 202-955-5770 ■ www.EdExcelencia.org

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Overview.....	3
Defining Student Success	4
How would you define student success at your institution?.....	4
What is Latino student success?	6
What is your institution doing that is having a positive effect on Latino student success?.....	7
What role does faculty play in Latino student success?	9
Measures of Accountability	10
What measures of accountability are appropriate for assessing institutional effectiveness in educating Latino students?.....	10
What it Means to be an HSI.....	13
As an educational leader what does it mean to you be a “Hispanic-serving” institution?.....	14
How does your Title V-Developing HSIs grant impact Latino student success?.....	15

Hearing from Presidents of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) Latino Student Success Project Series

Introduction

Institution presidents help to set the vision, tone, and priorities for institutional practices. Direct involvement from campus leaders proved critical to the Latino Student Success (LSS) project series. From 2003 to 2006, 13 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in three states participated in the Latino Student Success Project Series led by *Excelencia* in Education to examine how to academically serve Latino students. *Excelencia* staff conducted interviews with each of the presidents in the Latino Student Success Project. This brief profiles responses from individual interviews with all of the college presidents to better understand three main topics:

1. Defining student success;
2. Measuring institutional accountability; and,
3. Describing what it means to be an HSI.

The presidents and institutions participating in the Latino Student Success Project Series are listed below.

President	Participating Institutions:
James Lyons	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	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
Ricardo Romo	The University of Texas at San Antonio
Blandina Cardenas	The University of Texas—Pan American
Shirley Reed	South Texas College

Overview

This overview provides a summary of the responses from presidents participating in the Latino Student Success Project Series. Following this overview, the brief provides quotes by presidents grouped into the following areas: defining student success, institutional practices, the role of faculty in student success measures of accountability, defining what it means to be a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and the use of Title V- Developing HSI grants for student success.

Defining student success: The presidents all acknowledged the traditional definition of student success: graduation and retention rates. However, each also offered additional characteristics to define student success at their institution, such as improved GPA, student engagement, and students achieving their educational goals. The LSS presidents did not distinguish characteristics of student success by ethnicity. However, several presidents noted important

factors affecting Latino student success: ensuring equal opportunity to resources, the importance of disaggregating data to know how Latino students are performing, and the importance of institutional leadership.

Institutional practices that are improving Latino student success: Each president observed that their institutional mission is to serve all students well. They also indicated that their enrollments are either majority Latino, or majority/minority students (combined Latino and African American enrollment representing over 50 percent total enrollment). Therefore, the presidents held that most of the institutional programs and services they offer all students also serve Latino students. However, they mentioned engaging staff, improving instruction, collaborating with others, and creating support groups were having a positive effect on Latino student success.

Role of faculty in student success: 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.

Measures of institutional accountability: Each president pointed out the complexities of developing measures applicable to all institutions, given the diversity of institutions in higher education. Beyond the traditional graduation and retention rates as measures for institutional effectiveness, they offered alternatives and suggested that multiple measures of effectiveness would better represent the "value-added" to a student's experience provided by the institution.

Defining a Hispanic "serving" institution: Each president indicated that being identified as an HSI meant that their institutions acknowledged their large Latino enrollment and took responsibility to serve these students well. Some presidents acknowledged the benefits of being an HSI meant additional grant opportunities but expressed some challenges on their campuses of defining HSIs beyond enrollment. Other LSS presidents believe that being identified as an HSI involves more—institutions identified as HSIs serve as "trend-setters" in higher education by serving the large and growing Latino population and must play a critical role in the broader community.

How Title V support will affect Latino student outcomes: In general, the presidents valued the ability the HSI program gave them to improve the capacity at their institution, leverage funds from other sources, and specifically target their Latino students.

Defining Student Success

In general, student success is understood to mean degree completion. But this definition is too narrow to capture the benefits of a college education for a growing number of students.

How would you define student success at your institution?

- I define student success in two ways: first (success) is helping students achieve what they sought to achieve when they enrolled. For some it may be a bachelor's degree, but for others it may be to get sufficient skills to change careers, to get a post-baccalaureate, to get a teaching credential, or to get a master's degree. The second definition of student success is degree completion.

- A successful student is persistent (he returns each semester), improves his GPA over time, is connected to the university in some way beyond the classroom, and ultimately completing a degree.
- Student success is defined by institutional retention and graduation rates, but not at the velocity that other schools use. Institutions should consider up to 10 years for graduation rates to more accurately reflect the graduation process for many of our students. The first year retention rate is an important indicator of institutional success in facilitating the transition from high school to college, so it should also be used as a measure. We also conduct surveys of alumni to determine their professional competitiveness.
- In a perfect world, students should graduate within a reasonable period of time. However, this is not realistic for many because they are also working to support their family and attending college part-time. A lot depends on the drive of the individual too; the institution can provide them all the opportunities they need to be successful and help lower barriers they face.
- Because most students take a great deal of time to graduate, progress has to be a part of student success.
- We believe success is educating the “heck” out of students. There are several modalities of success: economic success, exposure to algebra and calculus, their ability to speak in public, and exposure to science and literature. We also deem success as students being self-reflective and owning their own education process and goals. For example, we like to know that students got a degree because they know where they are going rather than just because they need a degree. Success means having aspirations; more than half of students aspire to master’s degree or more and that’s a big sign of hope. It’s our job to keep hope alive.
- For us, success is a broad goal; I guess it’s helping students meet their individual dreams/goals. For some, their goal is to get language skills, while for others, their dreams are to a much higher goal, whether skills to get job, language, associate degree, or transfer. Regardless of their goals, we try to get them there as fast as possible. I am concerned about the accuracy of reported educational aspirations for our students. For example, to qualify for Pell, students need to list a degree as their goal, but a degree may not be their true goal. So, we do the best we can to collect data on student goals when they begin, given limitations. When comparing Latinos with other students, I think their skills are probably different (ex. more ESL) and that we have more Mexican nationals (not just Mexican-Americans) because of our proximity to the border.
- I would define success as the distribution of student grades in courses. Success also includes retention—the number of students staying in courses—as well as success, persistence, and retention by course. We think it is important to disaggregate graduation rates as well. We don’t look at students’ goals and see if they have achieved what they expected. However, we do always see that a majority of students of color have less educational aspirations than others.
- Success is defined by our graduation rate, transfer rate, participation in honors program, enrollment growth, number of students in specialized programs (ex. math lab), and a whole series of other data. Our image in the community is important for recruitment and standing in community, so that’s a measure of success. Many politicians see East LA in movies and the media, and imagine that we’re gang-infested or dangerous, but in reality

our campus is the safest in California. But this perception means that even if student is not going to a 4-year institution, they may want to go elsewhere. Our image is based on community vision and growth and we are working to be seen as a superior academic program. We are also always looking for public support for our bonds so that we can grow. Enrollment is a measure of success too. Enrollment has grown greatly in the last 10 years.

- We look at the pace of a student's completion of credits, and one year retention rate. We look to see if we have responded to the reasons (educational goals) that students had when they came to our campus, we look to see how they perform on exit exams, and look to see whether their grades changed. We also look at students' earned GPA, and completion rates. We also look to see what percentage of students passed the CUNY proficiency exam.
- We compare with other CUNY campuses the percentage of students who pass the CPE in order to get a degree from the community college and have the opportunity to go on to 4-year. We also use graduation and transfer rates.

What is Latino student success?

- For Latino students to be successful, we have to afford them the same opportunity to faculty, research, and early access as offered to other students. 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 definition of success is not different for Latinos, generally, but we see some Latinos who don't plan or think it's right to aim so high for their education (especially immigrants). Our goal is for students to take education and themselves seriously and understand that they don't have to give up family and community to be successful in higher education.
- Hispanic/minority student success must be a continuum reflective of undergraduate through graduate and professional education and employment.
- Our institution is majority-minority, so any student success we attain reflects the success of our minority students.
- To ensure student success, presidential leadership and commitment is critical. Institutional changes that serve students from diverse backgrounds require leadership from the top and reinforcement all the way down the institution. Further, we have to embrace our geography and demographics throughout the institution so that we can create a pathway that, in turn, creates capacity for higher education (graduate school). Graduate education has to be an institutional emphasis that we can help students aspire to so that we can faculty to serve Hispanic students.
- At our campus, Latino students often need more remediation than other students, but they still graduate and transfer at the same rates as others. We are able to use remediation to their benefit and make up their differences.

What is your institution doing that is having a positive effect on Latino student success?

- We believe that institutional activities that help Latino students succeed also benefit all students, because many of them have common needs. For example, by attempting to address the learning needs of Latino students we have created supportive and competitive learning environments that benefit all of our students.
- A successful institution guarantees as many students as possible will graduate, increases the number who graduate with high achievement, and directs students to explore disciplines where they are underrepresented. These institutions also change the country's landscape of leadership through their success.
- To support students, we have bilingual and bicultural staff in our student services and academic support staff, which are a valuable resource for students and help strengthen our campus climate.
- We take Latino retention issues seriously. We look at our data on transfers/articulation, as well as gate keeping courses, to inform our activities. We have set up mentor groups such as "La Junta" (Latinas relate to young women on campus to be role models), we have a program to improve writing across the curriculum (funded with Title V), and have activities specifically geared to Latino students.
- We believe students have an educational advantage and perspective if they are engaged in research, learn to write, and are able to make presentations early on in their educational career. Students who complete their bachelor's degree here can compete with other students from "top tier" institutions as equals.
- We have good faculty who value teaching, we have instituted a learning communities program, we provide supplemental instruction, we have learning assistance programs through the Tomas Rivera Center, we have academic advising centers for students, we have many student organizations, a diverse student body, and friendly staff and institutional policies.
- We actively work to increase graduation and retention rates. We try to understand why students drop out or stop out and contact students who are in good standing but do not return. We know that many of our students need to work in order to support their efforts. We try to tell students that getting minimal skills is not enough for the long run; we try to do what is in our control, to prevent students from dropping out.
- We encourage students to prioritize education in the short run, for long-term benefits. If going to college is something they are doing "on the side", it is less likely they will complete. Families worry about the lost income, separation from family, and the possibility that the students will leave when a student goes to college. To encourage making college the priority we invite parents and family members to our school orientations so that they can understand what is required for getting a university education.
- We also have a university seminar for freshman that helps to build peer groups (cohort) for students. Since many of our students are commuters, these peer

groups allows students to get “the religion” of higher education from peers as well as the university.

- It is good to serve the community, but the institution tells students that they shouldn’t stop at community college; they should keep going on with education. For example, we have an “Exploring Transfer” program with Vassar with 30 students that go from our college to Vassar for six weeks and take courses on their campus. We also highlight student success through Latino faculty, and have speakers and community representatives that can identify with those we serve. I think club systems are good and bad; students feel like there is a community of interest, which is good, but students may become too insular and not partake in activities outside of their group.
- We collaborate with other entities so the pathway to college is much easier in our community (K-12, public/private organizations, and the university work together). For example, the community sees us working with the university nearby to ease the pathway of students to college. We have a joint articulation committee, joint advertising, joint admissions, and a joint financial aid application.
- Outreach through collaboration has the most potential for change and positive impact because it creates greater awareness with the community. For example, the financial aid offices from our campus and the university are doing workshops together in the community, offering dual credit on high school courses, and providing multiple locations (especially close to where people live) to take the college assessment test so students can prepare earlier and know where they need to improve their skill sets.
- The institution’s first year experience and learning communities programs are working well for Latino students. In addition, supplemental instruction programs are working well for Latinos. The institution has student organizations of Latinos as well as the PUENTE project. They also have an honors program (in partnership with the University of Berkeley), and these students will go to the university if they get aid.
- The institution has a unique character based on its students. For example, students come to campus and don’t want to leave; many of them ask if we offer 4-year degrees too because the campus and staff become family to them and they don’t want to leave. We enroll very family-oriented Mexican and Chinese students and we accept everyone quietly and with dignity. Many graduates have attained success; for example, the mayor, sheriff and other elected officials are alumni and this makes the college very prominent in the community.
- We have groups and organizations (esp. Latino honor society) that support students’ academic and social goals and create an atmosphere for success. These groups help students support each other and focus on their culture. We also are members of HETS (network for students to be mentored by other Latinos in industry), celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, offer courses within our community, offer 24 hour credit program for those with GED, and offer work on campus for those on need. All this feeds success. Our leadership and faculty are also active role models for students. For example, our Vice President for Human Resources, Dean of Continuing Education, and President are all Latino and others in cabinet are African American. However, we know we can do better.

- We don't look at student success solely for Latino students, but take our understanding of needs of all students and the remaining barriers that impede student success. This has caused us to re-evaluate policies and procedures. We've been doing lots of research and focus groups, and have noticed that students are running a maze, and when they hit a barrier, they tend to dropout. If students have people to help, they can get past their barriers; so our institution is committed to helping students get past their barriers.
- Students must make a commitment, but we believe our pre-freshman immersion program is critical. Students don't have to use their limited financial aid funds for this program and since Latino students generally need more remediation, our program helps them catch up academically without any cost to them.

What role does faculty play in Latino student success?

- Our most important asset for student success is the commitment and buy-in of our faculty to our educational enterprise. Our faculty shows that they are committed to student success. If faculty don't have high expectations and are willing to work to ensure success, then Latino student success won't take place as needed.
- 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.
- Because the role of faculty is so critical to student success, we have strengthened our expectations of quality. Whereas ten years ago our focus may have been on instructional performance, today we focus much more on educational performance.
- 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.
- Our institution has a great deal of faculty interaction. We are spending more time with new faculty each year in orientation session and in other activities so that we can share with them our student profile and set the vision and tone of the institution because they are the ones that interact with the students.
- Our faculty has to believe in each student's ability and be comfortable in their role to set high expectations for students, and getting them to achieve. They do this by being supportive and nurturing (not permissive) and 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 as part of community college and not giving up their own community.
- I wanted to assess the academic organization structure, so I asked about 20 faculty, a few deans, and classified staff for discussions. They had recommendations on developmental education that we could quickly implement to integrate separated faculty by discipline. This had been a group of very decentralized campuses previously (ex. math faculty previously in development department rather than in math department). We also have a college-wide student success director who brings in faculty in gate-keeping courses and regular courses to ensure curriculum is aligned.

- Faculty is profoundly important for setting the stage for student success on our campus. Their demanding of excellence in the subject matter they teach is critical and they set the culture in the classroom. We know that students who strive do so because standards are set high and faculty ensure that. It took faculty here 2-3 years to understand that the demographics of the college were changing dramatically. We discuss such things at “Flex Day” which is an all campus day for all and volunteer programs for professional improvement. For example, we’ve offered a “Pronunciation of names” course for faculty so they can pronounce students’ names correctly (Spanish, Chinese, etc) and call on them. We think this will have the impact of getting and keeping students engaged. Faculty knows that anything in the classroom helps student success, and faculty with supplemental instruction see that success directly.
- We have the most diverse faculty and staff in California. We work to nurture the idea that our faculty is the best and have the best students. We highlight their diversity and the thus that our faculty can relate to the challenges of our students. We also have the largest child care faculty in California (240 students up to kindergarten offered services). We know this helps because faculty have family nearby and can concentrate on their commitment to education.
- Administrators should ensure the institutional vision permeates the institution. That means we must be repetitive—state and restate the vision—and define how to reinforce the vision at faculty meetings and in our development. They must also be hands-on and participate in the work being done at the institution. We have to reemphasize that students are our priority, use examples to reinforce such as highlighting individuals and programs, and celebrate successes. In essence, we are continually restarting our commitment to student success (ex. celebrating CCSSE shows faculty and administration that EPCC is on right path). We have to continue to reinforce that our institution is doing a good job, and that they are part of that work.
- Administrators have to be sensitive and flexible to the needs of students without compromising or limiting the quality of faculty. We have to encourage students to be successful (for example, I let students respond in Spanish when I teach). Administrators have to be supportive of quality and creativity of faculty.

Measures of Accountability

There has been increased pressure to measure institutional accountability of student success in higher education. Given the diverse admissions, tuition and fees, and student populations served identifying universal measures of institutional success that are useful and valid are a challenge.

What measures of accountability are appropriate for assessing institutional effectiveness in educating Latino students?

- While retention and graduation rates are important, so is high achievement; and, we must find ways to close the achievement gap at all education levels.
- We need to develop internal institutional guidelines to talk about what students have accomplished while they are at our campuses and be able to prove through value-added and on-going measures that students have done well. An internal assessment will also

strengthen institutional practices. We need to find a way to measure value-added by looking at the starting and ending points of a student's education.

- Using multiple measures, and including ways to look at value-added is much fairer than other general measures currently used. We are exploring variables NSSE is using because it is a start to defining value-added of an institution to predict achievement by measuring what an institution is and can be doing with student engagement. However, while the value-added to a student's education is a good idea, the issue is how to operationalize value-added as a viable measure.
- Some students have to take longer to complete their education because of other responsibilities. We have to be careful not to discriminate against those who cannot complete on time or label them as "failures" and thus their institutions as "failures" as well. Therefore, I don't think that time-to-degree is an appropriate measure for institutions serving Latinos and low-income students. However, we must acknowledge that the longer it takes, the higher chance students won't complete.
- Institutions have to ask if students who come in for one year and leave but become successful in what they do are a success for the institution, even if that student never gets a degree. And every institution is different, as are students' experiences. Even from the same family, children are different. It would be so easy if all students were the same, but that is not the case.
- Much of the information for assessments is anecdotal. This information tells you what went on after the fact, but does not really help improve the quality of the education at the moment. Tests are not going away, but we have to look at more than tests because students start out at so many different points and come with so many different experiences.
- It is important that measures are appropriate to an institution. Graduation and retention rates are the standard measures of accountability. However, if we only use a number, we don't recognize that this number is influenced by other factors: the students' background and their real world experience and environment. Therefore, we should use these rates, but with caution. Another potential measure is considering the next steps of students who complete (get job, keep job, and stay in field studied). However, if we only look at outcomes, we miss the richness of the contribution higher education had on the student and other potential impacts not measured by employment. Another measure might be a test used for outcomes. However, we do not know that a test can define success and are not sure that it tells you whether the institution has been successful or not. Yet another measure might be looking at the number of students who go to graduate or professional school. However, since it is not in the mission of most institutions to prepare students for graduate education, this measure may be hard to use and not always be appropriate.
- We do need some of the indicators being used today because they are a way to evaluate student learning and validate skills. However, we have to look at the value-added of the institution rather than limiting our view of success to graduation. For example, civic participation rates can be a measure of success because the institution actively encourages our students to be active participants in their community. Another potential measure might be mobility in the workplace. The idea behind this measure is that a student's experience at an HSI facilitates their access to other opportunities, whether or not they complete a degree.

- The ratio of Latino students applying with the number that were admitted and enrolled; the ratio of opportunity to persistence to the percentage of Latino students returning each semester; an increase in academic skills; student improvement in GPA; overall GPA; retention and graduation rates in comparison to other UTSA students and Latino students at other universities; data from NSSE and other assessment instruments re feelings of belonging, attitudes about services, etc. that show a comfort level with the institution to get needs met that facilitate academic success.
- Our rates of success for Latinos are not different from students as a whole because they represent so much of the student body. However we do see differences when compare white and Asian to Hispanic students or look at Hispanic subgroups, so it's important to disaggregate data. We know that prior education levels explain a lot of success. For example, students with lots of preparation when they came in may help to explain the success differences between groups. It could also be the programs they're engaged in. It is interesting to note that more Latinos are interested in human services than technology.
- We use CCSSE (survey of student engagement) to unpack what's happening with our students. We also have to better understand the relationship between part-time and full-time status (IPEDS only includes first-time full-time, which limits the snapshot of students. We know that going to summer school greatly improves how students perform as they continue their education. We are using a lot of Cliff Adelman's work to inform our measures, such as looking at the number of credits taken each semester as a way to gauge the student's likelihood to persist. We know that life planning and education planning are needed for students to persist.
- To me, the transfer rate is about the movement of students; our rate is good and getting better. Every 12-18 months, we have a retreat of administrative staff with our nearby university. One main question put at the retreat is "How do we define transfer students?" By some transfer definitions, we don't look good (ex. if simultaneously/concurrently enrolled). We started discussions between our institutional research departments to see how many students are concurrently enrolled or how many took a couple courses at our campus and then going to a nearby university. As to students, I know from hearsay, that students may start at the university and realize they are not ready for the transition and then come to our community college.
- Indicators of institutional effectiveness include graduation rates and transfer rates. As the culture of going to college continues to grow, so too will success by this community. Other measures are volunteering to do things on campus like clubs or service learning on campus, like tutoring, or PUENTE mentors, and student leadership.
- Access 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 started small with certificates (one-year programs) and then expanded them to two-year programs. 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 don't all agree on the definition of student success but looking at it over 10 years, I would define success in a class, in a program, then graduation as three measures of overall success. Now we see increases in access, retention in classes, improvement in course completion and retention rates, and our graduation rate is continuing to improve.

We are doing lots of intervention every step of the way. For example, we no longer allow late registration, we made advising mandatory and require that they meet at least 3 times a semester, we created a \$150 fee for students to take a course for the third time, and added a fee (\$35) for students who were not done with paperwork one month in advance in order to get behavior change. We knew we had to “bite the bullet.” We had to take a year to “modify student behavior” in order to increase retention.

- Calculating a transfer rate is difficult. But we do know that our students outperform those who started at a 4-year institution when they transfer to the university. We also know that 95% of our students who graduate go on to 4-year or become employed. The state does follow-up (with social security numbers) on whether students are employed and collect this data. We collect data on learning outcomes for selected classes, conduct analysis, then explore why working or not and try new things—this is a measure of success. The community is looking to us to prepare their workforce, so we are an overriding benchmark for our community. Our board is also very involved and approves performance indicators and we then share data with them on our performance.
- We know that our three-year graduation rate is 10% for all students. We also know that 74% of our students and 79% of Latino students need remediation when they enroll. However, our five year grad rate is 53% for an associate degree (Latinos are 51%). Other measures include employment and satisfaction rates of graduates from the alumni office, and freshman surveys to see aspirations of students (many only come for one course, that can enhance what they are doing although they already have a degree; one class can get them a promotion). As you know, community college plays multiple roles for students and community. For example, we have a CUNY program – pre-freshman immersion program – where students who take the placement exam, at no cost, can come in the summer prior to enrollment and can take this program to reduce the amount of remediation they need to take. However, they can’t miss one class or they’re out. Each institution has to find resources to support this program.
- One idea I have is to create a national model for a student entrance survey so that we can compare students at 2- and 4-year institutions.
- Measures include statewide student outcomes. In addition, I would add measures that gauge whether students return from the first day of class to the end of semester. Rather than looking at persistence from one year to another, look at persistence from one semester to the next. Other measures include the number of graduates, completion of core courses, developmental education, and performance in their first college course. We should consider our licensure pass rate (ex. 94% nurse rate passing) as a measure. We also need to take a step back and look at K-12 and what we need to do with them as useful indicators of student success. For example, if our goal is that as few students as possible having to take developmental courses, how do we create useful measures to intervene early? We’re not sure the Accuplacer is the best test to measure that, but right now, that’s what we have.

What it Means to be an HSI

Each of the institutions that participated in the Latino Student Success Project has received support through the Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions program, authorized under Title V of the Higher Education Act (as well as other federal programs supporting HSIs).

As an educational leader what does it mean to you be a “Hispanic-serving” institution?

- 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 trend-setters where we have not historically been seen as an institution.
- Being a leader of a Hispanic Serving Institution brings a great deal of pride, but also commitment and accountability to make a difference in the lives of Hispanic students, families, and communities by helping Hispanics participate in higher education and complete degrees. We have increased the diversity of our faculty and courses we offer; added academic support programs such as our Title V-funded 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.
- The term HSI was foreign to most of the 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.
- 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 better understand how to serve better.
- Since almost half of the student body is Latino, institutional success is tied to Latino student’s 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.
- On our campus we continue to struggle with definition [of an HSI] beyond enrollment. However, the [LSS] project has brought more attention to the fact that HSIs are something more than just getting money. We are also more intentional about language issues now; for example, this means that, as President, I should learn Spanish (and I’m trying). As an HSI, we should try to understand what’s going on in the community. As an HSI, by definition, this means that we acknowledge having a Hispanic community and have to understand this community in order to serve them well.
- It’s our community; hard to say much more than that. We serve our community, and our service area is Hispanic, so we serve Hispanics. However, being an HSI opens up some doors or contracts and gives them a greater national presence than what we had seen before because of demographic changes 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.
- Being an HSI means have opportunities for grants. We have to know who our students are, and what that might mean to the institution (ex. students balancing work and

school). At our institution, we have to ask how we can help students to be more successful, given this reality. For example, we have to consider whether to do things in the community or offer special courses. We do know that if we can convince the family, then we can be successful in getting student into college and staying. That's Hispanic enrolling and serving.

- If ever there were an HSI, it would be our campus. We are an HSI in the truest sense because the vast majority of the community in our service area is Hispanic. We have the largest concentration of Mexican American in the U.S. in our service area. We aim to be 'serving' because we are a focal point of the community. We have a unique charge because of the community. We also have one of the largest Chicano studies program in the country. 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.
- There is this general perception that if we align too closely to being a Hispanic institution, that we will be perceived as second-rate; but I'm changing that because I'm making sure that our graduates are competitive. Community college is open to everyone; but I don't want to walk away from creating a positive image for our campus.
- I know the federal terminology of an HSI and appreciate what went into creating the term. However, I don't necessarily agree with the term. Community college should be focused on the success of all students and committed to it. I don't necessarily think that an institution should be designated for a specific group. But I do understand the value of the classification for funding opportunities. I would like to see the day where serving Hispanic students is main-stream, not limited to a specifically designated institution.
- Almost 30 percent of our students are Latino, so being an HSI means having an opportunity to get grants to improve the institution. Being an HSI also allows me to explore new avenues of thought and work and can create a change in the basic understanding of the students we serve. For example, we have to distinguish from Caribbean blacks and African Americans in our student body when examining who we serve. There is also a growing shift from Puerto Rican to Dominican students as majority Latino representation, and a small but growing Mexican population. Despite these differences in origin, Latinos share representation and language issues which facilitate more cohesion between Latinos.

How does your Title V-Developing HSIs grant impact Latino student success?

- After choosing to identify as an HSI, our staff began to see what resources were available for the institution and saw it as an opportunity to improve the institution and the services it provided its students. Today, every faculty member understands the importance of being a HSI for what they do. Programs, such as the HSI program, 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 if most students are Latino, then we want them to succeed, and if have to go after earmarked and specific fund to provide quality services, we will do so. 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, though those are not the only or most critical measures.

- The Title V program provides federal funds, which, in turn, institutions can use as leverage to gain access to additional resources to leverage the services they are interested in providing. However, institutions must balance this with serving all students on campus.
- My institution decided to apply for the HSI program because a large number of our students are minorities and most "hurdles" these students face are the same. We felt that getting funds to do a project that helps our Hispanic students as a pilot could help all students and have broader implementation.
- While HSIs are defined by Latino enrollment, the Title V grant is not solely about Latino students. While there is sensitivity that the institution is "non-majority," the Title V funds and designation as an HSI allows 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.
- This HSI grant has been transformational. Because of this support, we were able to develop our e-portfolio. The e-portfolio allows faculty and the institution to explore how one can deeply engage students in the classroom. Faculty engages more directly with students, and it requires that we ask questions of the classroom.
- We know the faster they get through developmental education, the greater likelihood they'll complete. Our grant has allowed us to shorten the timeframe for students being successful because we can use institutional tools to work better with K-12 partners and internally with alignment of curriculum so students can get through developmental work faster and increase persistence odds towards completion.
- English is the focus of our Title V proposal. We have multi-lingual learners, but have a concern that our "1.5" students don't speak either language (Spanish or English) well. We should hear this summer if we are successful.
- Our grant is focused on improving developmental program. We are very data-driven and have set up data to monitor success for our program. We focused on this area because we know that 87% of students first enrolling on our campus are not college ready. Our students have to be continuously enrolled when in developmental education, if they are to complete. We also incorporated developmental grades into a student's GPA so that they could not blow off these classes. We also created retention specialists to follow-up with students and monitor their progress. We are doing an extensive study on many institutional programs so students can recognize some of the progress they are making.
- Our Title V grant is used to improve retention and graduation rates. We see little difference between Latinos and all students, but know that there is residual impact: 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 between our students because the majority is minority; we use data to try to discern differences.