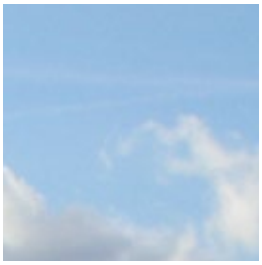
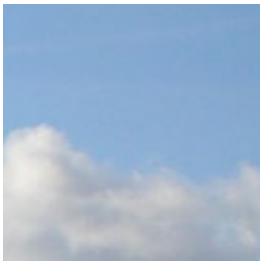
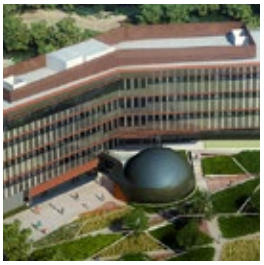
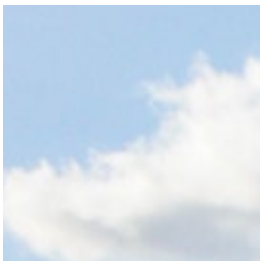
# BEYOND AN HSI DESIGNATION:

## EXPLORING STRATEGIC PRACTICES FOR HSI GRANT PARTICIPATION









Excelencia IN EDUCATION

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# BEYOND AN HSI DESIGNATION:
## EXPLORING STRATEGIC PRACTICES FOR HSI GRANT PARTICIPATION

March 2023


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*The authors are solely responsible for the content, opinions, and any errors in this publication.*

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### *EXCELENCIA* IN EDUCATION

*Excelencia* in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, conducting analysis to inform educational policy, and advancing institutional practices while collaborating with those committed and ready to meet our mission. Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership. For more information, visit: www.EdExcelencia.org.

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# FOREWORD

Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are a political construct. While there is an implicit assumption that HSIs are doing something well or different to enroll and serve Latinos, we know there are institutions that become HSIs because of demography and geography, and not because of intentionality or impact for serving Latino students.

*Excelencia* in Education has worked with practitioners, administrators, and other leaders for the last 20 years to bring awareness, provide analysis, and compel action to increase institutional responsibility for addressing how institutions intentionally "serve" Latino students, rather than just "enrolling" Latinos. And the profile, number, and attention on HSIs has continued to evolve.

As more institutions have hit the enrollment threshold to become HSIs, we have also seen the increasing competitiveness among HSIs for receiving Title V funds. In 1995, when HSIs were first funded under the Developing HSIs program (and it was still under Title III, Part A of the Higher Education Act), there were less than 190 institutions that met the HSI enrollment definition. In 2022, there were more than 550 institutions that met the criteria and could apply for the Developing HSIs program for federal capacity building support.

HSIs disproportionately enroll Latino students. After 28 years of funding HSIs through the Developing HSIs program, there remains significant need and opportunity to improve the access to a quality education for Hispanic and other low-income students. What are institutions doing to prepare for a Title V application to be competitive? How explicit are their efforts to address the opportunities to more intentionally serve Latinos with their institutional capacity building funds? These are some of the questions we address in this latest brief on HSIs.

The opportunity to target limited federal resources to enhance the quality of education at these institutions is imperative. As a community, we must continue to engage in the discussions and analysis that informs the field and creates the opportunities for Latino, and all, student success.

**Deborah A. Santiago**
*CEO*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1995, the federal government has allocated funds to Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to "to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students*" through the Title V, Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions program. However, this program has become increasingly competitive such that less than half (40 percent) of all eligible HSIs received Title V funds in 2020.[1] The competitive nature of HSI federal funding has increased the importance for HSIs to plan effectively for grant competitions and utilize funds in a sustainable manner that supplements existing institutional efforts. The increasingly limited reach of federal funding has raised questions regarding how institutions participate in HSI federal grant programs and the impact these programs have on sustaining institutional practices that facilitate Latino student success.

**1.** *What structures do institutions have in place to be able to submit a competitive grant application?*

**2.** *How are institutions sustaining grant-funded efforts after their funding ends?*

**3.** *In what ways does an HSI designation inform the ways institutions conceptualize what it means to be an HSI and serve Latino students?*

*Excelencia* in Education interviewed six HSIs — California State University-Long Beach, California State University-Sacramento, The University of New Mexico-Taos, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Dominican University, and Hartnell College — to understand how these institutions have participated in HSI federal grant competitions, specifically the Title V and HSI STEM grant programs. Institutions shared their current strategies for preparing federal grant applications, how they have leveraged federal funding to advance and sustain institutional efforts, and what it means to them to be an HSI. From the interviews, the HSIs demonstrated strategies that can refine the way policymakers and HSI advocates approach the way they support HSIs:

**1.** *Establish strategic processes to better prepare to apply for federal funding*

**2.** *Utilize program grants to prioritize investment in institutional needs*

**3.** *Plan for long-term institutional investment in grant-funded efforts*

**4.** *Advance data-driven practices in grant participation and self-assessment*

**5.** *Identify organizational opportunities for growth in grant participation, capacity building, and student centered approaches*

These summaries are not intended to be representative of the practices of all HSIs but rather indicative of how these selected institutions apply for and utilize HSI funding to advance their ability to better serve their campus and local community. The implications of the institutional practices shared in this brief may inform how other HSIs strategize their own federal grant participation strategies and inform the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in how their grant application and evaluation processes look in practice.

* U.S. Department of Education, Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program-Title V https://www2.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/index.html

# INTRODUCTION

HSIs represent a critical group of institutions enrolling and graduating Latino students. However, federal funding at the U.S. Department of Education (ED)* to build the capacity at these institutions has not increased at a high enough rate to match the growth in new HSIs, contributing to an increasingly competitive award program. In order to become competitive for Title V and other HSI funding, institutions must plan ahead and build their institutional capacity to submit a comprehensive grant application.[2] HSI grant applications require institutions to effectively gather and present institutional data, utilize campus-wide staffing networks, and have a clear understanding of their institution's needs and priorities to submit a competitive application. As more institutions become HSIs and eligible for federal funding, these institutions will need to increase their capacity to apply for HSI grants by maximizing their resources and creating streamlined processes. HSI funding also represents a finite funding mechanism, lasting five years in length. HSIs that participate in federal grant programs need to be strategic in the ways they utilize grant funding to supplement rather than supplant existing institutional efforts to support their Latino students. The following section will provide brief context on the federal grant programs available to HSIs, including their eligibility requirements and role in supporting institutional capacity building.

## A SNAPSHOT ON ED'S HSI GRANT PROGRAMS

HSI grants are designed to "assist with strengthening institutional programs, facilities, and services to expand the educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans and other underrepresented populations."[3] As such, the primary purpose of these grants is to *build the capacity* of institutions that educate a large number of Latino students to better serve them. This means that HSI grant funding is designed to supplement current institutional efforts such that grant-funded programs are sustained (or *institutionalized*†) at the end of the funding period.

In order to be eligible for HSI federal funding, institutions must:

1. **Enroll a high concentration of Latino undergraduate students.** To be eligible, HSIs must be accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment.
2. **Enroll a high concentration of low-income students.** To be eligible, HSIs must enroll a high concentration of students who receive federal financial aid to pay for college. The U.S. Department of Education determines the eligibility threshold.
3. **Have low educational and general expenditures (core expenses).** To be eligible, HSIs must have a low level of total expenses for the essential education activities of the institution. The U.S. Department of Education determines the eligibility threshold.
4. **Offer a postbaccalaureate certificate or degree program (PPOHA Award Only).** To be eligible, institutions must meet the aforementioned criteria and offer degree or certificate options following students' completion of their degree program.

Although HSI grants are designed with the general purpose to support institutions in expanding opportunities for Latino students, each grant program offers additional objectives, which are outlined in Table 1.

* In 1995, the U.S. Department of Education created the Title V program, which provides grant funding to assist HSIs in building their capacity to "expand the education opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students."

† The terms institutionalization or institutionalized in this brief refers to the act of replacing grant funding with institutional funding to sustain programs, positions, or services that were funded by an HSI grant.

*Note: we use the term Hispanic when referencing federal definitions, otherwise we use the term Latino.*

| Table 1. U.S. Department of Education HSI Grant Program Descriptions | |
|---|---|
| **Title V, Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions** | The purpose of this program is to enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability by investing in scientific or laboratory equipment for teaching, infrastructure, faculty or curricular development, academic counseling programs, student support services, amongst others. Funds may be used toward faculty and curriculum development, academic support services, teacher education, among others. |
| **HSI STEM (Title III, Part F)** | The purpose of this program is to increase the number of Hispanic and other low-income students attaining degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics; and to develop model transfer and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year institutions in such fields. Funds may be used toward STEM programmatic development, creating learning communities, improving STEM equipment, among others. |
| **Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA)** | The purpose of this program is to expand postbaccalaureate educational opportunities for, and improve the academic attainment of, Hispanic students by investing in institutions of higher education that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic and low-income students complete postsecondary degrees. Funds may be used toward outreach efforts to students who have completed their undergraduate degree, enhance existing post baccalaureate programs, or create new programs, among others. |

***Source:*** *U.S. Department of Education, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Division https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idues/hsidivision.html*

Moreover, ED may choose to announce absolute, competitive preference, or invitational priorities in their call for new grant applicants.[4] Generally, these priorities signal areas of particular interest to ED and align with national postsecondary objectives. Absolute priorities refer to objectives that an applicant *must* include in their application to be considered for federal funding. Competitive preference priorities award additional points to an application for each priority it includes, depending on how well the application meets each of these priorities. Invitational priorities refer to objectives ED is particularly interested in; however, applicants who meet an invitational priority do not earn extra points and are not given a preference over other applicants. Over the past six years (2017-2022), ED has announced either competitive or absolute priorities in *all* of their new competitions for all three grant programs (see Table A1). This means that for all HSI new grant competitions since 2017, institutions submitting applications needed to tailor their comprehensive development plans* to priorities established by the federal government. As a result, grant priorities influence the institutional strategies of HSIs and how they conceptualize their role as an HSI for serving their Latino population.

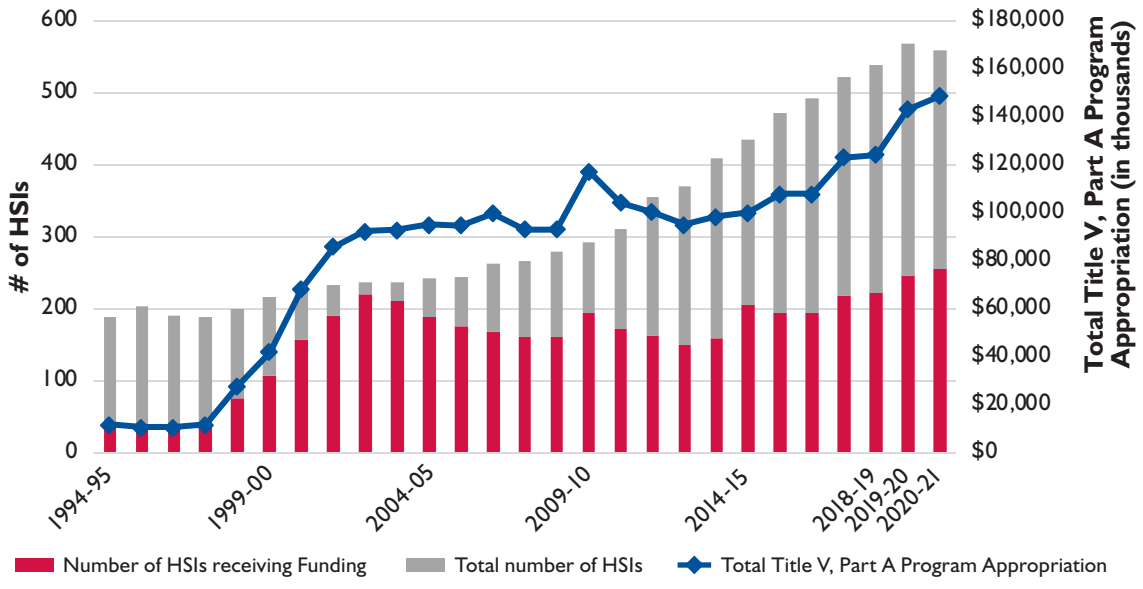
The HSI designation was created by ED for the purposes of determining funding eligibility. However, throughout our conversations with institutional representatives, they all discussed what it means for them as an organization to move beyond an HSI designation to intentionally serve their Latino and low-income students. As HSIs continue to participate in HSI grant programs, it is important to understand how institutions are engaging in culturally relevant ways to being an HSI and the reasons why some choose to participate in these federal grant programs.

* Grant applications include comprehensive development plans that outline institutional needs, how the institution proposes to use the grant funding, timeframe of the proposed objectives, among other topics.

# BACKGROUND

HSIs enroll and graduate a large proportion of Latino students (66 percent[5] and 55 percent,[6] respectively), while representing less than 20 percent of all postsecondary institutions. In this way, HSIs represent a critical facilitator for enrolling,[7] graduating,[8] and preparing Latino students for post-completion success.[9] In the 2020-21 academic year, there were 559 institutions that met the federal definition of an HSI, a decrease from 569 in 2019-20.[10] Since 1995, the federal government has allocated funds to increase capacity building for HSIs through the Title V program and established additional HSI grant programs in 2008 (Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans [PPOHA]) and 2010 (Title III, Part F [HSI STEM]).[11] HSI grant programs have become a significant mechanism for institutions to increase their capacity to better serve their Latino students despite these programs becoming increasingly competitive. This created an opportunity for *Excelencia* to better understand the ways HSIs participate in federal grant programs and the role the federal government has in investing in HSIs as agents of change in the trajectory of Latino students nationwide.

## Figure 1. Title V Developing HSIs Program Funding




**Note:** The Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) Program under Title V, Part A of the Higher Education Act, provides grants to assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students.

**Source:** *Excelencia* in Education analysis using U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 1994-2020 Fall Enrollment and Institutional Characteristics Surveys; and, U.S. Department of Education, Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program - Title V Funding Status, https://www2.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/funding.html.

| Table 2. Title V Developing HSIs Program Funding | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Total Title V Funding (in million $)** | **# of HSIs Receiving Funding** | **Total # of HSIs** |
| FY1995 | 12 | 37 | 189 |
| FY2000 | 42 | 108 | 216 |
| FY2005 | 95 | 189 | 242 |
| FY2010 | 117 | 195 | 293 |
| FY2015 | 100 | 205 | 435 |
| FY2021 | 149 | 255 | 559 |

**Note:** There may be some overlap in the number of institutions that received funding, as Title V funds are five-year grants, and these totals may capture new grant awards and continuation awards from prior years.

In 2016, *Excelencia* reviewed 20 years of Title V grant abstracts to examine how institutions used Title V grant funding. Findings demonstrated that the majority of HSIs receiving Title V funds invested in capacity building efforts consistent with the intent of the federal program—the expansion and enhancement of academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability. Further, analysis using a broader set of data showed college access and completion has increased for Latinos as HSIs have grown.

In 2021, *Excelencia* published a series of Medium posts exploring the opportunity for an HSI guarantee program to support institutions' capacity for applying for Title V funding. In our first post, we laid the foundation for how a non-competitive grant program could support under-resourced institutions in preparing competitive applications to apply to Title V. In our second post, we proposed three ways an HSI guarantee could be implemented and which institutions would qualify for funds. In our most recent post, we analyzed Title V eligible institutions by institution type and control to understand the potential impact of an HSI guarantee program across different institutions.

Building upon past research, *Excelencia* interviewed six institutions — California State University-Long Beach, California State University-Sacramento, University of New Mexico-Taos, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Dominican University, and Hartnell College — to examine how their participation in ED's HSI federal programs advances their institutional efforts as an HSI. This brief offers findings to inform institutions of effective practices for (1) preparing a competitive grant application, (2) utilizing funds to create sustainable efforts, and (3) creating an organizational identity for serving Latino students. Together, these six HSIs recognize that intentionally serving Latino students is an institution-wide responsibility and that HSI grants represent a critical, although temporary, mechanism for institutional transformation.

# FINDINGS

In this section, we summarize the challenges and strategic efforts of six HSIs that have participated in the Title V or HSI STEM programs in the last six years (2017-2022) to advance institutional transformation at their campus. Following this summary, we provide the key takeaways from the interviews with institutional representatives, highlighting the approaches each institution has taken to be proactive in their efforts to participate in federal grant programs and how this supplements existing practices that support Latino students.

It is important to note that although the HSIs may apply for the PPOHA grant to support their Latino graduate students and programs, conversations with institutional representatives at each of the six campuses focused on grant funding related to undergraduate students. For this reason, the institutional summaries below will focus on HSI STEM and Title V grant participation. However, a list of all HSI grants (including PPOHA) received by each institution in the past six years can be found in the Appendix for reference.

All six of these institutions have received at least one Title V or HSI STEM grant in the past six years, yet many institutions shared challenges their institution has faced in the grant application, implementation, and institutionalization process. *Excelencia* identified three common challenges institutions described in our conversations and what types of strategies they have implemented to overcome these challenges.

### What types of challenges do HSIs encounter when participating in competitive federal grant programs?

**CHALLENGE #1: DECENTRALIZED STRUCTURES AND/OR PERSONNEL FOR APPLYING FOR FEDERAL GRANTS.** Across our interviews, institutions described having a decentralized process for preparing, writing, implementing, and assessing the impact of HSI grants. Several institutions detailed how their campus does not have structures or personnel focused on advancing HSI initiatives or overseeing HSI grants, which contributes to HSI efforts working in silos. Even at the two institutions

**Table 3. Challenges and Strategies in Title V Participation**

| Challenges | Strategies |
|---|---|
| **Decentralized structures and/or personnel for applying for federal grants** | Integrating campus offices and staff into the grant process (formation to implementation) |
| **Difficulty acquiring institutional "buy-in" to sustain initiatives long-term** | Incorporating institutionalization plans at the start of the grant writing process and creating institutional alignment |
| **Developing an "institution-wide HSI identity"** | Engaging with external HSI organizations, federal HSI Grant funding, and enhancing HSI conversations at the leadership level |

that had active HSI grant personnel working on applying for and implementing these grants, the resources and support to engage in this work is sparse. For example, while one institution had a dedicated HSI initiative office, it was largely understaffed in which most responsibility fell on one individual. The other institution has a Title V Director position whose sole responsibility is engaging with and overseeing HSI grants, however, their role is contingent upon grant procurement, creating a fragile structure for sustaining grant-funded efforts.

**CHALLENGE #2: DIFFICULTY ACQUIRING INSTITUTIONAL "BUY-IN" TO SUSTAIN INITIATIVES LONG-TERM.** Many institutions described the complexity of institutionalizing grant-funded projects. Institutions found that not all departments or offices in which an HSI grant was implemented were prepared to or supportive of funding these efforts. One institution also described how decentralized grant efforts often can lead to siloed work and a lack of collaboration. All institutions expressed that obtaining institutional "buy-in" was an important factor for all the campuses for sustaining grant-funded programs or positions.

**CHALLENGE #3: DEVELOPING AN "INSTITUTION-WIDE HSI IDENTITY."** Many institutions discussed how they conceptualized their role as an HSI and identified areas for growth. For these institutions, a lack of centrality in HSI efforts often led to a limited understanding of what it means to be an HSI throughout their campus. While all of the institutions tailored their grant funding to intentionally serve their campus community, the work often operated within specific offices, departments, or programs. Many institutions attribute the insularity of HSI-related initiatives or efforts as a barrier for creating what they describe as an "institution-wide HSI identity": a shared responsibility across and extending beyond their campus to intentionally serve Latino students.

**What types of strategic efforts do HSIs engage in to overcome challenges in competitive federal grant participation?**

**STRATEGIC EFFORT #1: INTEGRATING CAMPUS OFFICES AND STAFF INTO THE GRANT PROCESS (FORMATION TO IMPLEMENTATION).** Many institutions addressed an absence in centralized HSI grant personnel by implementing internal processes for grant participation and oversight. One institution holds an internal grant competition across campus for interested faculty, staff, or offices to submit a proposal to the Provost for consideration. At other institutions, leadership reaches out to personnel based on prior grant participation or their alignment with the absolute or competitive priorities set by ED. All institutions extended grant efforts across several offices to successfully apply for and oversee HSI grants. By doing so, institutions described the grant process as being a collaborative effort in which different offices had a distinct role in advancing the grant proposal.

**STRATEGIC EFFORT #2: INCORPORATING INSTITUTIONALIZATION PLANS AT THE START OF THE GRANT WRITING PROCESS AND CREATING INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT.** Across institutions, those leading grant efforts work diligently to align grant funding with institutional priorities to demonstrate need and push for sustainability at their institution. At some institutions, those leading grant efforts will overlap grants by creating enough flexibility in their grant proposals to be able to supplement a previous grants' funding with a later grant to help sustain their programs. Most importantly, institutions emphasized the importance of assessing "buy-in" at the start of the grant planning process. These institutions often lead conversations with departments or offices involved in the grant by setting the expectation that they will need to commit to funding these programs or positions once the grant ends. Those leading grant efforts will also work closely with offices to gradually integrate grant projects into their budget throughout the grant's tenure to help with institutionalization.

**STRATEGIC EFFORT #3: ENGAGING WITH EXTERNAL HSI ORGANIZATIONS, FEDERAL HSI GRANT FUNDING, AND ENHANCING HSI CONVERSATIONS AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL.** For some institutions, engaging with HSI grants offered an opportunity for exploration and conversation campus-wide. One institution described how many administrators, faculty, and staff on campus were unaware of their institution's designation as an HSI. For this institution, receiving an HSI grant created an opportunity to construct a shared understanding across campus of what an HSI is and its role in serving Latino students. Other institutions described having a student and community centered model prior to the creation of a federal designation. For some of these institutions, grant funding provided financial support to strengthen the efforts they already had in place, acting as a way to supplement rather than act in lieu of institutional funds. Moreover, several institutions discussed that an ability to define and demonstrate an HSI identity to external national organizations (e.g., HACU, *Excelencia* in Education), prospective students, and their local community was important to them in going beyond an HSI designation.

# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY–LONG BEACH

California State University–Long Beach (CSULB) is a large, public, four-year institution located in Long Beach, California. In 2020-21, CSULB had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 31,000 undergraduate students, 45 percent of which were Latino and 51 percent were Pell-eligible. CSULB's retention rate* for full-time and part-time students is 89 percent and 74 percent, respectively. CSULB has a six-year graduation rate† of 73 percent. During the last six years (2017-2022), CSULB has received one Title V grant in 2017 (see Table A2).

### Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

CSULB does not have a central office or personnel with a primary responsibility for applying to HSI grants or leading HSI initiatives. Rather, the Academic Vice President (AVP) receives the notification of a new grant competition from ED and distributes a call for proposals across select offices on campus based on interest or prior HSI grant involvement. The offices/personnel that respond to the call for proposals will then meet with the AVP to discuss campus needs, create a timeline to successfully submit a grant proposal, and attend ED's technical webinar for the new grant competition. In the grant writing process, CSULB will tie their comprehensive development plan to their institutional mission; however, the majority of the content in their grant application will prioritize the inclusion and explanation of ED's competitive priorities for that year. Given the decentralized nature of CSULB's approach to grant writing, there is currently not a systematic way for gathering all the material to include in the grant proposal. CSULB leadership describe the process as being highly dependent on "who is involved [in the grant process that year] and what their connections are."

### Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

CSULB leadership highlighted two HSI grant funded efforts that have contributed to Latino student success on their campus, including family-centered initiatives and culturally responsive curriculum development:

- HSI STEM grant (2016)‡: enhanced family involvement in students' first-year. CSULB recognized the importance of *familismo*§ in Latino students college experience and created programming that incorporated students' families in welcome activities and in some first year classes. CSULB also fostered *comunidad* (community) by implementing a cohort-model in which Latino students would enroll in special class sections to become better connected with other Latino students pursuing STEM.
- Title V grant (2017): contributed to CSULB's development of a culturally responsive and representative curriculum and programs for the advancement of Latinos in teacher education through the *Caminos*** program. This includes community engagement programming to establish a pipeline for Latinos interested in teacher education, learning communities to facilitate community across undergraduate students, and professional development programming to facilitate the application of course material into practice.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

‡ Although the HSI STEM 2016 grant falls outside the 2017-2022 time frame for this project, CSULB spoke extensively about this grant program and its impact. For this reason, we chose to include this description.

§ *Familismo* involves dedication and loyalty to family, including students' engagement with family for advice in important decisions. Familismo is a central value in Latino culture.

** Caminos Project: https://www.csulb.edu/college-of-education/hsi-caminos-project-caminantes-for-education

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

The process for institutionalization at CSULB is largely dependent on the available networks the Principal Investigator (PI) on the grant has across campus. In order for the proposed initiatives and programs within a grant application to become institutionalized, they need to gain buy-in from other departments, offices, and campus leadership. Given that "PI's tend to work in a very siloed type of way," throughout the grant process, the ability of a PI to gain support across campus increases the likelihood of the grant's initiatives to become institutionally funded. HSI grants provide many institutions like CSULB the opportunity to hire new personnel to implement grant-funded programs, however, it is difficult to financially support these positions without departmental or institutional funding post-grant cycle. CSULB explains how hiring freezes or maintaining costly summer bridge programs after a grant ends is challenging for their institution, especially without a centralized HSI office to provide the capacity to repeatedly apply for HSI grants. Despite these challenges, CSULB is currently strategizing to expand aspects of their Title V funded teacher education initiatives across various departments by using departmental funds to advance faculty instructional training and maintain the student learning community.

### Assessing Impact

CSULB supplements institutional data with programmatic evaluations and scholarly research to assess the impact of HSI grants on campus. Through a self-study process, CSULB is gathering research studies conducted by faculty and students on campus related to CSULB's student experiences to help inform their efforts. CSULB also recognizes the importance of disaggregating data in order to gain a better understanding of how institutional and programmatic efforts are impacting students differently so that they can create more targeted efforts to better serve their students.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

Given CSULB's location in a predominantly Latino area, leadership describe the HSI identity as being a natural component of the campus in terms of Latino enrollment. However, CSULB acknowledges that an HSI identity that centers serving Latino students needs to go beyond enrollment. HSI grant participation is described as an integral part of CSULB's exploration of their role as an HSI and acts as a motivator for institutional level change. Currently, many administrators remain largely unaware of their federal designation as an HSI or that their campus has an HSI grant. Yet, CSULB leadership is actively learning from external examples of how to effectively serve Latino students such as the Seal of *Excelencia*[†††] to further develop and advance their institution's efforts as an HSI.

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

CSULB acknowledges that there is still much work to be done on their campus as an HSI to create impact. As such, CSULB is reexamining their strategic goals to (1) more intentionally serve their Latino students through a more robust campus-wide HSI identity and (2) create greater capacity for HSI grant participation and implementation through a more centralized network structure.

*"[HSI grants] helps our campus understand that we can't serve students the same way."*

[†††]The Seal of *Excelencia* is a national certification that recognizes institutions that strive to go beyond enrollment to intentionally serve Latino students. https://www.edexcelencia.org/seal-excelencia

# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY–SACRAMENTO

California State University–Sacramento (Sac State) is a large, public, four-year institution located in Sacramento, California. Sac State is a Seal of *Excelencia* certified institution. In 2020-21, Sac State had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 28,000 undergraduate students, 34 percent of which were Latino and 52 percent were Pell-eligible. Sac State's retention rate* for full-time and part-time students is 84 percent and 69 percent, respectively. Sac State has a six-year graduation rate† of 54 percent. During the last six years (2017-2022), Sac State has received two Title V Grants (in 2017 and 2020) and one HSI STEM grant in 2021 (see Table A3).

### Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

Sac State does not have a dedicated office or personnel to apply for HSI grants or lead any HSI initiatives. Instead, when a new competition is announced, Sac State holds an internal competition for departments or offices across campus to submit a proposal. Within each proposal, faculty or staff will present their concept and research findings to demonstrate their rationale for the proposed initiative. In writing the internal proposal, applicants are expected to demonstrate how their concept aligns with Sac State's strategic initiatives, how their efforts center student needs, and what the expected impact is for the campus. The Provost and cabinet read all proposals and choose which initiative will be submitted that year.

### Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

Over the past six years, Sac State has utilized HSI funds to implement student-centered services across campus.

- Title V grant (2017): offered cultural competency development for local high school teachers and school districts and integrated bilingual teaching curriculum in their teaching credential programs. Although not a component of this grant, during its tenure, Sac State launched an inclusive excellence office which leads the institution's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Staff assert that the receipt of this Title V grant and its subsequent efforts planted a "seed" for institutional change at Sac State contributing to a dedicated office on campus for advancing equitable practices.
- Title V grant (2020): expanded the career development and financial wellness opportunities on campus by implementing various wrap-around services across departmental programs. These services include career-readiness partnerships with local employers, expanded counseling options, and the availability of supplemental instruction for students who need additional support in their courses.
- HSI STEM grant (2021): provided student support through curriculum development, workforce development, and a Peer Assisted Learning program.‡ The Peer Assisted Learning program is a one unit course students can enroll in that provides extensive support in gateway science and math courses. Through this program students work in small groups answering practical questions with the guidance of Peer Facilitators.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

‡ Peer Assisted Learning Program https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/peer-assisted-learning-program-pal/

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

At Sac State, institutionalization is often considered within the grant writing process. In the construction of the Title V 2020 proposal, staff wrote a couple positions into the grant proposal as being created with the intention of institutionalization. They argue that by doing so, these positions are more likely to be institutionalized and "weaved into campus culture" once the grant expires. In their 2017 Title V grant, Sac State successfully incorporated a data analyst position into the institution's payroll, contributing to the creation of a data dashboard at the institution. This position advanced Sac State's data-driven culture by making data more accessible and increasing institutional transparency and accountability. These types of campus-wide positions with all-around impact are more likely to garner support from the President's office and receive institutional financial support.

### Assessing Impact

The institutional dashboard created through a previous Title V grant has enabled Sac State to better streamline their data for the purpose of self-assessment and the HSI grant application process. Within this dashboard, Sac State disaggregates various measures (e.g., graduation, retention, career-readiness) by first generation status, gender, and race/ethnicity, among others. The data dashboard provides the institution with the necessary information for the HSI grant annual reports for ED and acts as a tool for efficiently compiling the necessary data to apply for additional HSI funding in the future. Prior to the implementation of this dashboard, preparing an HSI grant application was a very "circuitous process" in which the necessary information was not readily available.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

Sac State describes their participation with HSI grants as a way for their institution to fund a variety of necessary wraparound services (e.g., mentorship programs, career counseling) that center student success and foster a familial campus culture. Sac State is a Seal-certified institution and closely uses the framework of the Seal of *Excelencia* to inform their evidence-based practices and demonstrate institutional commitment. It is through this guidance and their commitment to Latino student success that Sac State identifies areas of growth and development in their role as an HSI.

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

In recent years, Sac State has adjusted its mini-grant internal competition model to enable the process for applying to HSI grants to become more streamlined. Some of these efforts include standardizing the inclusion of logic models across campus HSI grant proposals to increase efficiency of preparing the actual application for submission. Sac State is also working towards further enhancing their cross-campus collaboration in future HSI grants to reach more students and make these programmatic efforts part of the campus culture.

*"We built community among the various projects, and it really built a culture on the campus of working together to enhance and promote the success of our students."*

# THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO–TAOS

The University of New Mexico-Taos (UNM-Taos) is a rural, public, two-year institution located in Rancho de Taos, New Mexico. In 2020-21, UNM-Taos had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 435 undergraduate students, 54 percent of which were Latino and 24 percent were Pell-eligible. UNM-Taos' retention rate* for full-time and part-time students is 48 percent and 30 percent, respectively. UNM-Taos has a three-year graduation rate† of 28 percent. Over the past six years (2017-2022), UNM-Taos has received two Title V grants (in 2017 and 2019) and one HSI STEM grant in 2021 (see Table A4).

### Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

In prior years, UNM-Taos had an office of grants initiatives, a designated grants director, and a special program coordinator for HSI grants. However, the central director that oversaw the HSI grant programs and initiatives resigned, contributing to the dispersion of these efforts across separate offices and personnel. UNM-Taos operated under this decentralized process for several years until 2021 when the institution's Development Director assumed the role to also serve as a director of grants. This shift in responsibility in the past year, allowed for UNM-Taos to establish a more formalized process for applying for HSI grants and implementing them. The Development Director created a standard operating procedure for how UNM-Taos applies for HSI grants and the process for implementing and evaluating them. Currently, the Dean of Instruction will receive ED's call for proposals and confer with the Chancellor to assess the needs of their campus community and whether the call aligns with their institutional strategic plan. To help determine whether their institution will submit a proposal, the Chancellor and Dean of Instruction will elicit the help of the Institutional Research office, Development Director, business manager, and any faculty or staff whose work aligns with the grant's objectives. If UNM-Taos decides to submit a proposal they will contract with an external grant writer to help complete the application for an HSI grant.

### Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

Currently, UNM-Taos has three HSI grants focusing on enhancing student-centered institutional efforts such as curriculum development, improving pedagogical approaches in the classroom, and improving students' transfer and degree outcomes.

- Title V grant (2017): created "Meta-Majors" and offered dual credit courses to provide flexibility in students' choice of major and to help reduce their time to degree. Within this grant, UNM-Taos also established a faculty development program to improve their pedagogical practices and prepare faculty for teaching a diverse class of students.
- Title V grant (2019): improved the college preparation of high school students and completion rates in transfer level English, math, and core gateway courses to decrease time to degree completion. Through this grant, UNM-Taos also expanded course offerings in Biology and Chemistry to improve access, completion and transfer rates of Latino and low-income students in the STEM disciplines.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

- HSI STEM grant (2021): established a new concentration of STEM-focused teacher preparation material within their current teacher preparation. This grant also provided mini-grants to faculty members for the purposes of revising their current curriculum to incorporate an equity focus and trained faculty to be more culturally responsive in their pedagogical approaches. UNM-Taos also enhanced their advising services for STEM students to provide more comprehensive wrap-around services for students to succeed in their fields.

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

UNM-Taos has leveraged HSI grant funds to help create and sustain essential programs and positions on campus. Through various HSI grants, UNM-Taos has institutionalized faculty positions, an institutional researcher position, several student advising centered positions, and a strategic support manager who oversees community partnerships and governmental relations, among other responsibilities. The expansion of these programs and positions through HSI grant funding has increased UNM-Taos' capacity to more comprehensively serve their Latino students.

### Assessing Impact

In the past, the use of data and inclusion of the Institutional Research Office was primarily for completing the Annual Performance Reports (APRs). Now, the Institutional Research Office is incorporated in the HSI grant process from when the institution prepares to apply to help inform and frame what the institution needs to invest in. All of UNM-Taos' decisions are backed by data using metrics such as enrollment, retention, transfer and graduation rate disaggregated by race/ethnicity. The Institutional Research Office has worked towards centralizing the institution's data to help make it readily accessible for use in the grant application and assessment process. This shift in data use has allowed the grant process to be "less reactive" and "more proactive" in addressing equity gaps.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

Over the past 10 years, UNM-Taos has experienced five changes in leadership, which has shifted the HSI identity and priorities of the campus multiple times. The current Chancellor demonstrates a commitment to HSI-centered efforts by having departments and offices think intentionally about how, as an institution, they are supporting access and success for their Latino students. One way they are shifting their focus is through how they market themselves to prospective students and the type of language they use in the application and admissions process. As an institution, UNM-Taos is striving towards ensuring their materials and interactions are more accessible and culturally relevant for underserved students. They emphasize how students should not be expected to "leave their culture and identity at the door" to be able to be successful at their institution. They are also consistently looking for ways to improve their approach to intentionally serving their Latino students through external engagement with organizations with a focus on HSIs such as *Excelencia* in Education, the Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institution Educators (AHSIE), and Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities (HACU).

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

Despite the recent strides UNM-Taos has made to become a more "student-ready" campus, they recognize that they still have a lot to do on campus to be a Hispanic-*Serving* Institution. UNM-Taos is strategizing how they can utilize HSI grants to more intentionally build their capacity to serve their Latino students in more meaningful and sustainable ways. They are looking at what types of high impact practices were successful at other institutions and how they could implement initiatives that reflect these practices across campus for all students to benefit from. UNM-Taos is also cognizant of the racial disparities in faculty hiring practices at their institution such that the racial demographics of their student community are not reflected in the instructors that teach them in the classroom. In addition to reducing the racial hiring gap at their institution, UNM-Taos is working towards revising course syllabi, exam processes, and overall student support services to promote work-life balance by providing wrap-around supports for basic needs. UNM-Taos is committed to transforming their institution to be better equipped to meet their students where they are and engage them in meaningful ways.

*"[HSI grants have] been transformative and fundamental to the work that we do in shifting our focus from expecting our students to be college ready, and rather us taking the responsibility to be a student-ready college."*

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE

Texas A&M University-Kingsville (Texas A&M-Kingsville) is a large, public, four-year institution located in Kingsville, Texas. In 2020-21, Texas A&M-Kingsville had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 4,800 undergraduate students, 71 percent of which were Latino and 46 percent were Pell-eligible. Texas A&M-Kingsville's retention rate* for full-time and part-time students is 72 percent and 56 percent, respectively. Texas A&M-Kingsville has a six-year graduation rate† of 45 percent. Over the past six years (2017-2022), Texas A&M-Kingsville has received two Title V grants (in 2017 and 2020) and one HSI STEM grant in 2021 (see Table A5).

## Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

Texas A&M-Kingsville does not have a centralized office or personnel dedicated to HSI initiatives, however, current Title V grant project directors (funded through the Title V grant received) play an important role in continual grant procurement. For example, current project directors for the Title V 2017 and 2020 grant programs operate under the expectation that if they do not secure grant funding, their position may not be sustainable by the institution. While not ideal, it demonstrates the stark reality that some HSIs face with personnel in positions that are not institutionalized. Project directors often "try to look at programs that will address the needs of each of the colleges to make it more of an infrastructure and well-rounded program." By doing so, the institution is more likely to financially support grant-funded initiatives once the grant period has ended. Moreover, the comprehensive development plans will always address the competitive priorities ED puts forth for a given competition, describing that "if you don't write to include or make [the competitive priorities] a focal point of the grant, you are just not going to get [the grant]." After the grant proposal is written by the grant project director, the Research and Grants Office will review it and determine whether it is approved for submission.

## Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

Texas A&M-Kingsville's student population is over 70 percent Latino. As such, project directors writing HSI grants tend to focus on wrap around services for all students:

- Title V grant (2017): expanded the University's Based Educator Preparation Program (UBEPP) by offering additional course formats (e.g., partially or completely remote) to increase access. This grant also provided training for prospective field work supervisors working with students in the teacher education program to improve collaborative learning environments.
- Title V grant (2020): Provided professors with the funding to restructure their curriculum to embed undergraduate research opportunities within their courses. The courses needed to be structured such that all students enrolled could be involved and included students at any academic level. This embedded research curriculum provided course content that allowed students to learn new methodologies and processes for conducting research, providing them with core material to participate in future research projects. An additional component of this grant provided funding to establish a Research Commons space in the library that faculty can reserve for the semester to teach their courses and foster collaborative classroom learning.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

- HSI STEM grant (2021): The Hispanic Education Advising Remediation Teaching (HEART) project will (a) enhance intrusive advising, tutoring, and mentoring for Hispanic and low-income STEM students, (b) develop and revise STEM articulation agreements with community colleges, (c) provide High Impact Practice faculty professional learning opportunities that will enable them to embed pedagogical strategies in their STEM courses.

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

HSI grant Project Directors at Texas A&M-Kingsville prioritize institutionalization from the grant writing to implementation stage. Before a grant proposal is submitted to the Research and Grants office, the grant project director will collaborate with academic programs, departments, and offices across campus to assess "buy-in" from these entities and whether they will financially support the grant-funded programs after the grant ends. One strategy for institutionalization is slowly integrating grant-funded expenses into the institutional budget over the course of the grant. For example, the Title V 2020 grant funds Design, Explore, and Create Makerspace Studio at the university. Over the next couple of years, the funding for this space will incrementally be allocated to the university's budget. This helps the transition from grant funding to institutional funding to be better streamlined so that at the end of the grant period the university is well-equipped to support the position. Texas A&M-Kingsville has successfully institutionalized several grant-funded programs such as a tutoring facility and collaborative learning tables in their Research Commons space.

### Assessing Impact

Texas A&M-Kingsville considers various assessment measures when collecting data for ED. These measures include the overall retention and graduation rate for all cohorts, post-completion employment outcomes, and course completion rates. Course completion rates are specifically analyzed for programming efforts that were funded by an HSI grant to assess how various course-based interventions benefitted all students enrolled.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

During the time of this report, Texas A&M-Kingsville experienced a change in presidential leadership. This change in leadership has prompted a shift in the institution's vision for intentionally serving their Latino students and their role as an HSI. One of these developments is the institution's interest in the Seal of *Excelencia* and using this framework to help inform the way they participate in HSI grant programs and present themselves as an HSI.

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

In addition to striving to become a Seal-certified institution, Texas A&M-Kingsville's goals for future capacity development include building a more comprehensive grant strategic plan, including HSI and other grant efforts. Texas A&M-Kingsville acknowledges the importance of being intentional when applying for grant programs in order to understand which types of grants are best suited for the goals and mission of the institution and how various grants can supplement one another.

*"Whenever [we] write a program, [we] want to make sure that at least a piece of it is going to stay or be an integral part of the department."*

**INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE**

# DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

Dominican University is a small, private, not-for-profit, four-year institution located in River Forest, Illinois. In 2020-21, Dominican University had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 2,000 undergraduate students, 49 percent of which were Latino and 49 percent were Pell-eligible. Dominican University's retention rate* for full-time students is 83 percent†. Dominican University has a six-year graduation rate‡ of 63 percent. Over the past six years (2017-2022), Dominican University has received three Title V grants (in 2017, 2020, and 2022) and one HSI STEM grant in 2021 (see Table A6).

## Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

Although efforts have been made to centralize and bring more attention to HSI initiatives in the past couple years, the process for applying to and implementing HSI grants remains decentralized at Dominican University. In prior years, if a department or office wanted to apply for an HSI grant, they would do so sporadically and with little oversight. However, in recent years, the university has begun to streamline the process such that the department or office interested in applying must give their proposal to the university's grant manager and a leadership committee for review. The leadership committee is composed of the Provost, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Information Technology Chief Information Officer (IT CIO). This committee assesses (1) whether the grant aligns with the university's mission, (2) whether the university has the capacity to implement the grant's objectives, and (3) which departments, offices, or personnel need to be included in the grant planning or implementation process. Once a grant proposal has been approved, external grant writers write the grant application for submission. However, due to the sporadic nature of the grant process, oftentimes the grant proposals do not account for institutionalization and programs or positions end with the grant funding. As such, Dominican University incorporated an official HSI coordinator position into their Title V 2022 grant proposal who will be responsible for centralizing HSI initiative efforts and strategizing to keep grant-funded programs funded after the grant's tenure.

## Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

Dominican University highlighted two of their grant-funded projects, including one focused on faculty development and creating a cultural center as well as one on career readiness:

- Title V grant (2017): focused on faculty development, teacher education, and the creation of a campus cultural center. Through this grant, Dominican University sought to "strengthen our faculty presence to better understand our HSI identity" through faculty workshops to prepare them to teach a diverse class of students. Faculty were challenged to consider questions such as: *How are you showing up [in your classroom]? How are you creating space for students to be themselves and bring their assets to the work?* This grant also contributed to the creation of a director position for the Center for Cultural Liberation (CCL) within the multicultural affairs office. Students of color were provided a dedicated space in the CCL to connect with students and staff of color.
- Title V Grant (2020): developed a career readiness center to connect students to external internship opportunities and provide students the training to get a job in their field after graduation. Prior to this grant, Dominican University did not have a formal career center on their campus. As such, this funding equipped Dominican University with the resources to fill this need at their campus and help students understand the various pathways available to them.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† Part-time retention was not recorded

‡ For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

- HSI STEM grant (2021): established a STEM Center to develop academic and personal support services with a primarily bilingual staff offering tutoring, counseling, advising, and coaching. It also created a Transfer Academy program with a Transfer Coach to improve transfer pathways for local community college students.
- Title V grant (2022): will create an HSI Initiatives Coordinator position to improve their capacity to effectively implement HSI initiatives and programs across campus and centralize these efforts. This grant also funds community engagement efforts, including a program that introduces local underserved students to the Dominican University campus to increase low-income enrollment. Dominican University will offer "expansive professional development opportunities for faculty and staff that include teaching and relational development strategies from an asset-based mindset."

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

Dominican University has successfully institutionalized one of their recent grant-funded initiatives and is actively working towards institutionalizing another. The CCL director position is now being funded by the university and two additional full-time positions have been added since receiving the Title V grant in 2017. With their more recent Title V grant (2020), Dominican University is gradually transferring the career readiness services to the institution's budget over the three years they have left of the grant period. Being able to continue to fund these programs and services is a core commitment of the institution as they move forward in advancing their efforts to better serve their campus community.

### Assessing Impact

Dominican University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides disaggregated data by race/ethnicity and income on metrics such as retention and graduation rates to assess the impact of HSI initiatives on their campus. For the career-readiness Title V funded initiative, Dominican University is also actively tracking students' post-completion outcomes. To measure post-completion outcomes, the university records whether a student is employed after graduation and whether their occupation is related to their field of study.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

Within the past year, Dominican University experienced a change in leadership, which has propelled the institution to intentionally consider what it means to be an HSI and how that translates into practice. Prior to the change in leadership, most "HSI work" was done in silos rather than institution-wide. These efforts have since shifted to conversations amongst campus leadership on how to embody an HSI identity as a collective. Dominican University has also employed the assistance of an external HSI consultant to help facilitate conversations regarding what it means to serve a diverse community of learners and how various schools and offices can contribute to these efforts.

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

Dominican University is primarily working towards centralizing their HSI efforts in order to increase their capacity for applying for HSI grants and implementing them. In their 2022 Title V proposal, Dominican University requested funding to create an HSI Initiatives Coordinator position at their institution. This position's responsibilities would include providing guidance for and oversight of all HSI grant programs. This role would also serve the university's mission in creating a more central institutional identity by further connecting offices and personnel on campus.

*"We're a small institution. We rely on every dollar to function, and some of these initiatives are very innovative. If we didn't have [HSI funding], we wouldn't be able to do many of these initiatives."*

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

# HARTNELL COLLEGE

HARTNELLCOLLEGE

Hartnell College is a midsize, public, two-year institution located in Salinas, California. In 2020-21, Hartnell College had a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of approximately 5,600 undergraduate students, 73 percent of which were Latino and 21 percent were Pell-eligible. Hartnell College's retention rate* for full-time and part-time students is 68 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Hartnell College has a three-year graduation rate† of 29 percent. Over the past six years (2017-2022), Hartnell College has received three Title V grants (in 2017, 2020, and 2022) (see Table A7).

## Context for Applying to an HSI Grant

Hartnell College has a designated HSI director position and HSI office in charge of applying to HSI grants, grant oversight, and connecting with national HSI organizations (e.g., *Excelencia* in Education, HACU, AHSIE). The HSI director works closely with the executive leadership team, deans, directors, faculty, and staff across campus departments to incorporate them into the grant application process. Doing so allows grant implementation to proceed more seamlessly in that the appropriate departments and personnel are apprised of a grant's objectives early to be able to contribute to its efforts. They provided the example that if an upcoming grant proposal seeks to improve counseling services, the Counseling Department would be included in the process early so that they can lead these efforts once the funding is received. This method also increases the likelihood that the proposed initiatives will become institutionalized once the grant period ends. In the grant writing process, Hartnell College utilizes an external grant writer or multiple grant writers "because jargon, word choice, and skilled writing really plays an important part in the competition for Title V grants". However, the "heavy lifting" is primarily done by the HSI director in conversation with the president to provide a detailed outline and explanation of the grant's objectives. Hartnell College also describes how adding flexibility into a grant proposal allows for their institution to pivot to address emerging needs within the grant period because "within a year or two [of writing the grant proposal] a lot of times many things have changed."

## Use of HSI Funding to Serve Latino Students

Hartnell College used grant funding to address college pathways and retention efforts as well as graduation and post-completion.

- Title V grant (2017): established dual enrollment curriculum, co-requisite courses, and redesigned academic support structures. Approximately $1 million of the grant funding went towards transforming remedial education. Hartnell College recognized the negative impact remedial education has on underrepresented populations in terms of cost, time to degree, and degree completion. As of fall 2022, Hartnell College has officially eliminated remedial course placement at their institution.
- Title V grant (2020): offered career-readiness services, experiential learning in courses, and internship opportunities for students. Through this grant, Hartnell College also established meta-majors and enhanced student support services to help streamline pathways to employment.
- Title V grant (2022): will expand their institution's dual enrollment program to decrease students' time to degree and provide professional development opportunities to faculty members to improve their pedagogical practices. In order to implement evidence-based practices, Hartnell College will develop new research tools designed to support data-driven decision-making on campus.

* Defined as the percent of students that remain enrolled from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

† For the 2015 cohort of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduates

### Institutionalizing Grant Efforts

Hartnell College intentionally incorporates institutionalization of grant initiatives at the start of the grant writing process. By connecting cross-campus offices, departments, and personnel in the grant process from the start, Hartnell College ensures that there is enough support and knowledge of the funded-programs to be able to continue their efforts at the end of the grant period. The departments and offices leading grant initiatives are responsible for budgeting to be able to fund the initiative in its entirety once the grant ends, slowly phasing it into the institution. Hartnell College also successfully overlaps grant efforts to help facilitate institutionalization by aligning each grant closely to their strategic plan and the California Community College Guided Pathways Model.* In their 2017 Title V grant, Hartnell College sought to address pathways to college and issues of retention, which was supplemented by their 2020 Title V grant that advanced graduation and post-completion efforts. Across these two grants, Hartnell College incorporated various student-centered services to overlap and align both grants to the Guided Pathways Model. Finally, Hartnell College always tries to avoid using grant funds to hire new positions given the cost to sustain these positions afterwards. Instead, the institution incorporates staffing responsibilities into already existing positions at the institution.

### Assessing Impact

Through the campus research office, Hartnell College uses an institutional data dashboard to disaggregate student outcomes in order to assess equity gaps on their campus. Measures such as time to completion, units to completion, and overall completion rates are used to understand how well their institution is serving Latino students. Hartnell College closely considers all of these performance indicators in alignment with the Guided Pathways objectives and the Annual Performance Reports (APRs) required by ED.

### Beyond an HSI Designation

Because Hartnell College has had high Latino enrollment since the inception of the HSI designation, being community-serving has always been a part of the college's identity.

However, the institution's ability to procure HSI grants provides the financial capacity to be able to fund necessary initiatives that would otherwise be too costly. In applying for HSI grants, the HSI director ensures strong alignment between the proposed grant initiatives and the institution's strategic plan to create an "institutional driven model rather than a grant or project driven model."

### Future Goals for Institutional Capacity Building

Hartnell College is working towards enhancing their HSI identity throughout their campus and strengthening their HSI networks. The HSI office recognizes the importance of cultivating a collective identity institution-wide rather than having efforts be driven solely by their office. Future goals include sharing evidence-based practices across institutional departments, at conferences, and with other HSIs. Hartnell College is also focused on redesigning their college structures to increase their alignment with the Guided Pathways model and improving faculty hiring practices to increase the proportion of faculty of color on campus.

*"We're doing this [work] because we're an HSI. We're doing this because that's the community [Latinos] we serve."*

* California Community College Guided Pathways: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayTexttml?lawCode=EDC&division=7.&title=3.&part=54.81.&chapter=&article=

# CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This brief compliments *Excelencia*'s previous work on HSI federal funding by providing a deeper understanding of why institutions participate in Title V and HSI STEM grant programs and how they utilize these funds in alignment with their role as HSI. Institutional leadership at these six HSIs contextualized the challenges they have encountered in applying for and implementing HSI grants. These institutions also described the strategic practices they implemented in order to utilize grant funding to increase their capacity to serve their Latino students and the ways their HSI identity has developed since their federal designation. We summarize the strategic pracatices that emerged through these interviews below.

- **Investing in the capacity to apply for HSI grants.** Leadership at these six institutions described their strategies for applying for federal funding despite a limited or nonexistent central office or personnel dedicated to HSI initiatives. Some institutions held internal mini-grant competitions, contracted with external grant writers, or brought in cross-campus support to prepare their grant applications.
- **Implementing and sustaining grant-funded programs.** HSI grants are one of many tools that can be leveraged to develop an institution's capacity to better serve their students. HSI grants are designed to supplement rather than supplant current institutional efforts, which means that institutions must utilize this funding in combination with existing resources. However, transitioning programmatic efforts from being grant funded to being financed by the institution often presented a challenge. To gain "buy-in" from the necessary programs or offices, some institutions integrated these stakeholders into the grant application and implementation process. Institutions also slowly transitioned grant funded costs into the budget of campus programs and offices to ensure that the programs and positions could be sustained at the end of the grant period.
- **Conceptualizing and advancing an institutional commitment to intentionally serve Latino students.** Leadership across all six HSIs described how their institution is conceptualizing what it means to be an HSI, where they currently are with their work, and what they need to do to more intentionally serve their Latino students. Several institutions described how they are utilizing evidence-based practices from external HSI organizations to identify their next steps to advance their institutional capacity to serve. Some institutions are using the Seal of *Excelencia* framework as a way to build intentional practices and leadership efforts and to create a data-driven culture on their campus. Leadership at each institution emphasized the importance of HSI funding in improving their capacity to implement and sustain student-centered efforts and outcomes, however, many institutions express that their HSI work is still often siloed. Leadership emphasizes that in order to further advance their role as an HSI, they need to establish an "institutional-wide" commitment to serving their Latino students.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

HSIs are an important facilitator for advancing postsecondary outcomes for Latino and low-income students. These institutions are also eligible to compete for HSI federal funds to support these efforts. However, applying for HSI grants has become a highly competitive and laborious process. Over the past 27 years, the number of HSIs has nearly tripled (1994–95 to 2020–21) with an increase of 79 percent occurring in the past decade (2010-11 to 2020-21).[12] However, the availability of federal funding for HSIs has not kept pace with the number of new HSIs. This has created a scarcity of federal financial resources for HSIs to access, exacerbating an already underfunded group of institutions. On average, HSIs receive 68 cents for every federal dollar spent on other colleges and universities annually.[13] The institutional summaries included in this brief demonstrate that although Title V and HSI STEM funding is limited and acts as a finite resource, these funding sources represent an important mechanism for institutional capacity building at HSIs. Title V and HSI STEM funding illustrate the federal government's financial investment in Latino students and the institutions that predominantly serve them. For this reason, the federal government has a responsibility to ensure that these grant programs are accessible and provide the necessary accountability structures to ensure that institutions have the capacity to improve the postsecondary outcomes of their Latino and low-income students.

We propose the following policy recommendations to address challenges in (1) building a capacity to apply for HSI grants, (2) ensuring grant funded efforts are being institutionalized, and (3) aligning these efforts with strategic priorities that support Latino students.

1. **Provide guaranteed funding to all Hispanic-Serving Institutions that meet the eligibility requirements for HSI STEM and Title V grants.** In 2021, *Excelencia* proposed that the federal government develop a noncompetitive, guaranteed grant program that allocated a proportion of Title V grant funds to all eligible HSIs. This type of program would function as a planning grant to build the capacity for eligible HSIs to submit a competitive application by providing the necessary financial resources to create or improve existing structures that contribute to the grant application process (e.g., data infrastructure, research, grant writing).

2. **Incorporate long-term accountability structures to improve the likelihood of institutionalization at HSIs that receive federal funding.** Within the grant application, the federal government requires institutions to describe the methods and resources that will be used to institutionalize the practices included in the grant proposal. Institutions are also required to complete annual performance reports that outline their plans and current progress towards institutionalization. However, long-term accountability structures that sufficiently extend past a given grant period do not exist. HSIs are able to repeatedly apply for Title V grants that overlap with or immediately follow a prior grant. To further incentivize institutions to prioritize institutionalization, the federal government can include a section in the comprehensive development plan in which HSIs that were awarded Title V grants in the past must detail the extent to which their previous award activities were sustained long term.

3. **Refocus and limit the allowable activities for HSI STEM and Title V grants to better align with Latino student success and revise annual performance reports to require institutions to disaggregate outcomes.** Currently, institutions can choose from 16 allowable activities ranging from renovating facilities to faculty and curricular development. The federal government should consider which activities align most with advancing Latino student achievement and limit HSI STEM and Title V activities to those that are student centered. The federal government should also consider revising the annual performance reports that institutions are required to complete to reflect the purpose of HSI grants in advancing the educational opportunities for and outcomes of Latino students. Currently, institutions record student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, however they are not required to report these outcomes for Latino students. To further align the utilization of HSI funding and Latino student success, the institutions should be required to separately report these outcomes for Latino, and all, students to track the impact of their efforts for Latino students relative to their counterparts.

### Questions for Future Research

While this study is meant to be indicative, not representative of institutional strategies for applying to, implementing, and institutionalizing HSI funding, there is opportunity to expand on what we have learned through further research.

1. Federal funding is focused on internal capacity building. How do HSIs represent themselves externally to prospective students, local community members, or other institutions?
2. What are effective strategies implemented by HSIs to ensure grant-funded efforts are institutionalized and support Latino student success?
3. How do HSIs leverage technical assistance opportunities that increase their capacity to successfully apply for HSI funding?
4. How do HSIs use federal funding to inform and improve their evidence-based practices to advance student success?
5. How do HSIs leverage funding from other federal agencies to advance their institutional efforts?

# APPENDIX

**Table AI. All New ED HSI Grant Priorities Between Fiscal Years 2017 and 2022**

| HSI Grant | Year | Priorities |
|---|---|---|
| Title V | 2017 | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Establish or enhance a program of teacher education for public K-12 schools.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Develop or enhance articulation agreements and/or student support programs designed to facilitate the transfer from 2- to 4-year institutions.*<br>• **Invitational Priority:** *Promoting the teacher profession for Hispanic students.* |
| | 2019 | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Expand the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented graduate and professional students by expanding courses and institutional resources.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Support instruction in personal financial literacy, knowledge of markets and economics, knowledge of higher education financing and repayment or other skills.* |
| | 2020 | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Improving collaboration between education providers and employers; providing work-based opportunities for students; providing credential programs.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Projects that support instruction in financial literacy, knowledge of markets and economics, knowledge of higher education financing and repayment, or other skills aimed at building personal financial understanding and responsibility.* |
| | 2022 | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Improve students' social, emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on underserved students.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Increase postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and success for underserved students.* |
| HSI STEM | 2021 | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Fostering flexible and affordable paths to obtaining knowledge and skills.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Academic achievement and retention strategies.*<br>• **Invitational Priority:** *Providing student supports for addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students' mental health and academic outcomes.* |

**Source:** U.S. Department of Education, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Awards. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idues/hsidivision.html.

**Note:** None of the six institutions received the PPOHA 2022 grant award. This award is only included in the table to demonstrate that in the past six years, the Department of Education has implemented an absolute or competitive priority in all new grant programs.

| Table AI *Continued*. All New ED HSI Grant Priorities Between Fiscal Years 2017 and 2022 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **HSI Grant** | **Year** | **Priorities** |
| **PPOHA** | **2019** | • **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Propose collaboration with other institutions of higher education to expand postbaccalaureate certificate and degree offerings.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Support instruction in personal financial literacy, knowledge of markets and economics, knowledge of higher education financing and repayment (e.g., college savings and student loans), or other skills.*<br>• **Invitational Priority:** *Establish, improve, or expand degree programs, which combine traditional academic training with specialized knowledge and skills that: (a) closely align with the expectations and needs of business and industry and (b) prepare students for direct entry into a variety of STEM career options in business and industry, federal government, or non-profit organizations.* |
| | **2022** | • **Absolute Priority:** *Expand the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented graduate and professional students that can be served by the institution by expanding courses and institutional resources.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 1:** *Improve students' social, emotional, academic, and career development, with a focus on underserved students.*<br>• **Competitive Preference Priority 2:** *Increase postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and success for underserved students by supporting the development and implementation of high-quality and accessible learning opportunities, including learning opportunities that are accelerated or hybrid online; credit-bearing; work-based; and flexible for working students.*<br>• **Invitational priority:** *Expand the educator pipeline, in an effort to increase the number of Hispanic educators and/or the number of Hispanic students earning postgraduate degrees in preparation for employment as an educator.* |

**Source:** U.S. Department of Education, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Awards. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idues/hsidivision.html.

**Note:** None of the six institutions received the PPOHA 2022 grant award. This award is only included in the table to demonstrate that in the past six years, the Department of Education has implemented an absolute or competitive priority in all new grant programs.

| Table A2. California State University-Long Beach HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **Title V** | **2017** | The Caminos Project will create (a) community engagement programs with high school students and parents that focus on careers in education, (b) curricular measures in undergraduate general education programs that expedite completion of pipeline degrees with Subject Matter Preparation Programs, (c) a teacher preparation learning community for undergraduates with extensive student social, emotional and academic supports for Hispanic and low income students, (d) a Hispanic teacher mentor partnership network for pre-service teachers in initial credential programs, (e) professional development programs and assessments that relate to culturally responsive pedagogy in undergraduate teaching and postgraduate fieldwork and clinical practice. |

| Table A3. California State University-Sacramento HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **HSI STEM** | **2021** | Project STEM4Equity will implement systemic curricular change and customized student support through (a) course and program redesign, (b) a Peer Assisted Learning program serving students in four high enrollment, high fail rate STEM courses, (c) a STEM Transfer Hub to support successful enrollment, seamless advising, and timely degree completion for STEM transfer students, (d) workforce skill development (e.g. paid internships) to develop STEM identity for Hispanic and low income students and prepare students for career STEM employment. |
| **Title V** | **2017** | The proposed project has four strategies: (1) provide professional development to high school teachers, building their capacity to deliver California AB-2016-encouraged Ethnic Studies classes, (2) collaborate with four school districts to create and facilitate Future Teacher Pathways and Future Teacher Clubs that will advance students to higher education and a future career in teaching, (3) engage students from departments across campus into EduCorps, an online and face-to-face community of future teachers and provide advising, peer and faculty mentoring, (4) expand teaching credential programs through curriculum development of a new Bilingual Teaching Methods course and ensuring student teaching placements in bilingual programs or Ethnic Studies classrooms. |
| | **2020** | The Degree with a Purpose project will embed career services and financial wellness into the student experience by developing and institutionalizing three integrated, campus-wide strategies: (a) Early Career Planning and Onboarding, (b) Integration of Career/Financial Wellness Counseling into the College Experience, (c) Integration of Career, Work-Based Learning and Financial Wellness into Courses and Co-Curricular Programs. |

| Table A4. The University of New Mexico-Taos HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **HSI STEM** | **2021** | The STEMx Project will (a) offer summer STEM programs to students in the K-12 system, (b) build an Employer and Faculty Advisory Committee to provide a venue for K-12, employer, and local non-profit input into STEM degrees, (c) provide work-based learning experiences outside of the STEM classroom and project based learning in the STEM classroom, (d) provide wrap-around coaching/advising and academic supports for STEM students, (e) provide professional development to faculty on culturally responsive pedagogy and on STEM-specific practices to STEM faculty, (f) offer mini-grants to faculty to revise their curriculum with an equity-lens, (g) launch a new concentration in STEM teaching within the existing teacher preparation program. |
| **Title V** | **2017** | Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) Project will (a) improve the college readiness of high school students through the Bridge to College Pathway, (b) reduce student time and cost to baccalaureate degree, (c) create Meta-Majors to give students the flexibility to move between majors, (d) improve completion rates in transfer level math and core gateway courses, (f) integrate academic support system to keep students on track to graduation, (g) develop a teacher pipeline to increase the number of Hispanic teachers in the region, (h) establish a faculty professional development program focusing on the learning needs of Hispanic and low-income students, and (i) establish a Transfer Center to facilitate student transfer to four-year institutions. |
| | **2019** | The Cultivamos Project will (a) improve the college readiness of high school students for postsecondary education through the Bridge to College Pathway, (b) develop the Guided Pathway model to reduce student time and cost to baccalaureate degree, (c) create Meta-Majors to give students the flexibility to move between majors, (d) improve completion rates in transfer level English, math, and core gateway courses, (e) integrate academic support system with case management practices to keep students on track to graduation, (f) establish a faculty professional development program focusing on the learning needs of Hispanic and low-income students, (g) create a Transfer-Going Culture that promotes transfer as an institutional priority, (i) increase the capability of students to make informed financial decisions, and (j) expand course offering in Biology and Chemistry to improve access, completion and transfer rates of Hispanic and low- income students in the STEM disciplines. |

| Table A5. Texas A&M University-Kingsville HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **HSI STEM** | **2021** | The Hispanic Education Advising Remediation Teaching (HEART) project will (a) enhance intrusive advising, tutoring, and mentoring for Hispanic and low-income STEM students, (b) develop and revise STEM articulation agreements with community colleges, (c) provide High Impact Practice faculty professional learning opportunities that will enable them to embed pedagogical strategies in their STEM courses. |
| **Title V** | **2017** | Javelina Teacher Preparation Enhancement Project (JTPEP) will implement services and activities that increase the capacity and effectiveness of the University's Based Educator Preparation Program (UBEPP) by (a) increasing graduation rate, (b) increase the number of graduates that become certified teachers, (c) increase production of licensed public teachers from the program. |
| | **2020** | The Fostering Pathways to Success (FP2S) grant project will (a) increase the number of Hispanic and low-income students that will participate in undergraduate research, internships, and financial literacy workshops, (b) provide professional development to faculty interested in redesigning their course to include classroom-based undergraduate research, (c) provide Hispanic and low-income students an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills through a Design, Explore, and Create (DEC) Makerspace Studio. |

| Table A6. Dominican University HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **PPOHA** | **2019** | This grant will fund efforts to increase (a) the percentage change of the number of degree-seeking graduate and professional students enrolled, (b) the percentage change of the number of graduate degrees and post baccalaureate certificates awarded, (c) percentage of Hispanics enrolled in graduate programs, (d) the percentage of degree completers who are Hispanic, and (e) the percentage of student cohorts who complete within three years. |
| **HSI STEM** | **2021** | This project will (a) provide a STEM Center that centralizes services and provides study spaces, community building and a bilingual staff for tutoring, counseling, advising and coaching, (b) create an articulation network of representatives to reduce transfer barriers, (c) create a STEM Bilingual Family Fair to build understanding and support for STEM students, (d) train and pilot course-embedded tutors, (e) offer paid student Internships and pay mentors from regional STEM employers (f) develop new Cybersecurity concentration in Informatics bachelor's degree and a new Health Sciences degree. |
| **Title V** | **2017** | This project will increase (a) Hispanic outcomes by developing "Nudge Advising" to promote proactive academic planning, (b) teacher education outcomes by developing a Hispanic teacher pipeline and increasing use of "Active Learning" in key education courses, (c) culturally-responsive classrooms/offices by improving faculty and staff training in culturally responsive behaviors. |
| | **2020** | This project will improve student outcomes by (a) developing comprehensive early career services and job shadowing, (b) aligning learning objectives with employer needs in syllabi/curricula, and (c) strengthening financial literacy through the development of money management workshops. |
| | **2022** | Project Avanzamos will (a) equip students to make informed decisions about their educational and career pathways from entry through to completion and career launch, (b) improve support to Hispanic and low-income students through improved wrap-around, asset-based supports that foster belonging, (c) catalyze an institutional culture shift to advance its identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution through professional development to increase faculty and staff cultural-competence, community relations, and data-driven decision-making capacity. |

| Table A7. Hartnell College HSI Grant Awards | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grant** | **Year** | **Proposed use of funds** |
| **Title V** | **2017** | Cultivamos Project will (a) expand dual enrollment and other alternative pathways, (b) evaluate all academic programs and student services to increase student retention rates and to close existing achievement gaps, (c) establish formal articulation agreements between Hartnell College and identified four-year institutions, and (d) provide continuous professional development using student success data and the adoption of new learning systems to improve student learning and student services outcomes. |
| | **2020** | The GANAS Project will (a) increase retention rates, graduation rates, and degree attainment by improving gateway courses, technology, infrastructure, and advising, (b) expand career-aligned pathways through the development of meta-majors and collaboration with four-year institutions to support Hispanic and low-income students along the full continuum from high school to career placement, and (c) develop career-aligned pathways to provide greater access to high-demand jobs and help students transition from postsecondary education into careers that support sustainable living and feed regional economic growth. |
| | **2022** | Project Ánimo will (a) increase access, enrollment, and early college success of Hispanic and low-income students through expansion of the dual enrollment program, (b) increase student persistence and completion through an integrated academic support system designed for Hispanic and low-income student success, (c) strengthen the academic infrastructure that supports Hispanic and low-income students and reduce institutional barriers to student success through equity-based systemic reforms, including culturally competent faculty professional development and new research tools to support data-driven decision-making. |

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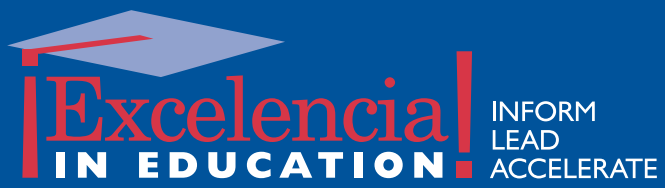


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