

HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS: WHAT ARE THEY? WHERE ARE THEY?

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Hispanic-serving educational institutions are receiving greater public attention as they continue to expand in number. Increasingly, more and more Latinos and other racial and ethnic students are enrolling in these institutions. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities with Latino enrollments of 25% or more full-time equivalent students. At least 68% of HSIs are community colleges which educate almost half of all Latinos enrolled in higher education. This article provides an overview of the history of HSIs, the educational conditions of Latinos, and the increasing importance of HSIs for this population. The focus is on community college HSIs because of their role in providing entry into higher education for most Latinos and a growing number of other racial and ethnic students. A critical multicultural perspective frames the discussion.

Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are playing an increasingly larger role in providing college access and degree attainment for Hispanics, particularly at the community college level. These colleges and universities represent approximately 6% of all postsecondary institutions and 42%(1.3 million) of all Hispanic students enrolled in 1999. Hispanic-serving institutions enroll 21.2% of students from other racial and ethnic groups, students who contribute to the overall greater diversity on these campuses. Moreover, not only do HSIs

The terms Hispanics and Latinos/as and their singular forms will be used interchangeably in this article. The author acknowledges that there is much heterogeneity among persons of this ethnic group in the U.S., thus, individuals may be of any racial group and prefer to identify themselves by their ethnic heritage, political, regional, or national origins for example Chicano/a, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican, Mexican-American, Guatemalan, and so forth.

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provide greater college access to Latinos and other racial and ethnic students, they also grant more associate and bachelor degrees to these students than all other American colleges and universities (Harvey, 2001; Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002; White House Initiative, 2001).

Hispanic-serving institutions and their role in educating Latinos bear consideration for these additional reasons. According to the 2000 Census, Latinos, a heterogeneous population, are the largest U.S. minority group. Latinos represent 35 million or 12.5% of the U.S. population. Given their youth and even gender distribution, they are expected to grow to 61 million and represent 18% of the nation's population by 2025. More specifically, it is anticipated that U.S.-born Latinos will increase to 13%, while the Latino immigration population is expected to remain at about 5% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000).

Latinos are among the least educated of the American population, but given their numbers they are making a significant impact in classrooms at all levels. Overall, they comprise 15% of the K-8 school population (ages 5–13), 13% of the secondary school student population (grades 9–12, ages 14–17), and 15% of the traditional college-age population (ages 18–24). By 2025, Hispanics are expected to constitute approximately one-fourth of all students at each educational level (White House Initiative, 2001). Given these data, the educational attainment among Latinos is worrisome. According to a recent study that examined 1996 data, only 57% of Latinos have finished high school and about 10% have earned a college degree. But, a closer examination of these data shows that 73% of U.S.-born Latino adults have finished high school, 40% obtained some college education, and about 14% have earned a four-year degree (The Pew Hispanic Center, 2002).

Latinos, like all other population groups in the U.S., are facing the reality that a high school diploma no longer offers secure, well-paid employment nor ensures career mobility (Carnevale, 1999; Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002). Stearns et al. (2002) note that an increased demand for higher education in the past ten years has led to an increase in Americans enrolling in colleges and universities. Among these college goers are Latinos whose enrollment in colleges and universities increased by 68% from 1990 to 1999 (Stearns et al., 2002). On the other hand, Fry (2002) reports that while Latino high school graduates of all ages have a higher college participation rate than most other racial and ethnic groups, they are still graduating at much lower rates. Nonetheless, considering Latinos' dramatic enrollment increase within a mere decade, the role of two- and four-year Hispanic-servicing institutions in providing increasingly greater

access to higher education for this population cannot be underestimated.

In light of the above data, several questions arise about HSIs: What are Hispanic-serving institutions? Are the role and functions of HSIs unique within higher education? If so, why, and how? Using a critical multicultural approach, this article seeks to answer these questions by deconstructing what HSIs are and who attends HSIs. First, critical multicultural theory as a perspective to view HSIs is discussed. Next, I define the term "Hispanic-serving institutions." Third, a discussion of the historical background of HSIs, and factors that have led to their development and growth within higher education, follows. Fourth, I discuss the college enrollment and retention of Latinos in order to understand the increasing importance of HSIs for this population. Finally, I conclude with some observations about the future prospects of HSIs.

A CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Multiculturalism continues to revolve around issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and power. Bensimon and Tierney (1993) see multicultural organizations as struggling to "understand commonalities and differences among underrepresented groups, and to develop an appreciation of how an understanding of these characteristics might create alliances for change" (p. 68). As such, multiculturalism is based on a democratic acceptance of both the commonalities and differences of all groups within the organization.

Critical multicultural theory, according to Kincheloe (1996), "contends that representations of race, class, and gender are inseparable from larger social struggles" (p. viii). Outcomes of these struggles are power plays through which multiculturalists attempt to transform the social, cultural, and institutional structures that produce these inequitable representations. Kincheloe adds that power influences the production of knowledge, which in turn shapes our understanding of the world. For example, faculty-student power dynamics may lead low-income college students and students of color to think they are perceived as "unworthy" (Kincheloe, 1996, p. viii) of being there; of taking up classroom spaces that would better benefit higher achieving students; of not meriting faculty attention; of feeling marginalized or even invisible in the classroom. Such power-related responses ignore the American historical commitment to democracy and education and ignore, on average, at least 14% of those college and university students, who are from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Latinos.

A critical multicultural perspective within higher education strives to empower its students by “cultivating their capacity for self-direction” (Kincheloe, 1996, p. ix) by taking into account the cultural and social differences of students and restructuring the organization to reduce alienation. Rhoads and Valadez (1996) expand on critical multicultural theory by relating it to issue of culture and identity that are vital to understanding both the role of higher education and the racial and ethnic students who attend these institutions. Of particular interest in applying a critical multicultural perspective are community colleges—open-access colleges that continue to enroll increasingly larger numbers of low-income and racial and ethnic students. Among the distinctive student populations, at least 58% are Latino students who enter higher education through the community college (Harvey, 2001). As Latinos—and students from other racial and ethnic groups—continue to enroll in greater numbers in postsecondary institutions in their communities, many of these colleges and universities are becoming identified as Hispanic-serving institutions by virtue of their increasing Latino enrollments.

Also embedded in who goes to college is the larger issue of how higher education institution can move from a more typical monocultural to a multicultural organizational framework. Stage and Manning (1992) argue that a fundamental flaw of today’s higher education institutions is that they continue to operate from a monocultural, mainstream view based on Eurocentric cultural norms. In so doing, two- and four-year colleges and universities ignore the cultural traditions, norms, and perspectives of all other racial and ethnic groups who are increasingly part of these institutions. Critical multiculturalists, on the other hand, encourage the restructuring of educational settings to reflect democratic ideals of equality, justice, and freedom and that also cultivate inclusiveness. The challenge facing two- and four-year institutions is how to address and incorporate the vision of a multicultural organizational culture into their college communities.

Rendón (1999) compares racial and ethnic students’ entrance into college crossing a border zone. Like immigrants entering a new country, Rendón states that students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds “cross national borders [and] enter multicultural higher education institutions reflecting a new democratic order” (p.199). She suggests that these students can “embrace multiple forms of cultural knowledge, organizational complexity, plural organizational identities, and critical thinking” if they are “guided by a philosophy of full access” (p.199) that is humanistic and has faculty, administrators, and staff who represent different cultures themselves. In so doing, college

personnel can welcome the many diverse students who cross academic borders into their institutions by empowering them to take full advantage of a wide range of academic and career opportunities and options that lead to engaging them as fully participating members in the democratic society.

To summarize, the challenge faced by higher education that still remains before us is how to serve a culturally diverse student population and ensure that the different forms of knowledge and experiences brought by these students are acknowledged and incorporated using a critical multicultural approach. In this article, I put forth Hispanic-servicing institutions, particularly community colleges, as examples of higher education institutions that are grappling with this challenge right now. I present an overview of community college HSIs and the Latino students who attend them.

Methodology

Drawing from a critical multicultural theory perspective as noted above, I employed a deconstructionist approach to try to understand the relationship of individuals and group agency to social structures in context, namely, HSIs and Latino college students. Data were gathered from a variety of sources. I drew from the relevant research and empirical literature on Latinos. Also, I did content analyses of Hispanic-servicing institutional data, and data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). I used data from previous studies I have done. Additionally, data from the White House Initiative on the Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans were used to form the basis of a historical and philosophical discussion that follows.

These are certain limitations to my analysis. Little has been researched or written about HSIs in scholarly publications until recently with the exception of my own work (Laden, 2000; 2001) or occasional articles in *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*. In Fall 2002, however, the first national report on HSIs emerged from the National Center for Education Statistics by Stearns, Watanabe, and Snyder that offered comprehensive statistical trends from 1990 to 1999 on HSIs and those who attend them. Moreover, Stearns and associates (2002) offered comparative data of HSIs to all other two- and four-year, public and private institutions in order to highlight the impact of HSIs in educating Latinos and other minority populations. The NCES data analyzed by Stearns et al. (2002), based on the current federal definition of HSIs, are used here because they represent the

most recent, valid, and comprehensive data available on these institutions. Thus, for this study, I drew upon the data available from the various sources noted above and examined meanings attached to them functionally and structurally vis-à-vis those who attend them, Latino students.

WHAT ARE HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS?

Several definitions of HSIs are in current use. In the broadest definition, HSIs are exactly what the name implies; They are colleges and universities that serve large numbers of students who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. A specific, legal definition for HSIs was inserted into the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, when it was reauthorized in 1994. The 1994 HEA, under Title III, defined Hispanic-serving institutions as accredited degree-granting, public or private, nonprofit colleges and universities with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment. This definition allowed student headcount to determine the percentage of enrolled students. Four years later, the 1998 HEA reauthorization placed HSIs under Title V and narrowed the definition to accredited, degree-granting, public or private, nonprofit colleges and universities with 25% or more total undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) Hispanic student enrollment (Laden, 2000). Hispanic-serving institutions also must meet the specific criterion that a minimum of 50% of their Latino students meet the poverty level set by the Bureau of the Census in order to qualify for Title V federal grants (White House Initiative, 2001). These grants are through the jurisdiction of Title V Developing Hispanic-serving Institutions Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) uses a modified definition. An advocacy membership organization founded 1986 to increase Hispanic educational attainment rates, HACU was a major force in getting HSIs recognized by the federal government. Specifically, this association defines HSIs as institutions that have a total of 25% (headcount) enrollment of Hispanic students. Post-secondary institutions may join the association as full members if they meet this criterion and as associate members if they have a minimum of 1,000 Hispanic students enrolled. The organization also welcomes international members (Laden, 2000).

Although there is some public recognition of HSIs, how they are regarded appears to be mixed, even within higher education. For instance, recent articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* referred to HSIs as “so-called Hispanic serving institutions” (Yachnin, 2001, A34). References such as this underscore HSIs’ still tenuous acceptance by

some in the media and, very likely, among many in other spheres of influence. Although there may still be doubt as to the status of HSIs with the public at large, this also may be true among Hispanic-serving colleges and universities themselves. Institutions that meet the definitional criteria may not necessarily publicly identify themselves as such. My own research revealed, for example, that there is a wide variation among HSIs as to whether they identify themselves as HSIs internally as well as in their publication and in other public relations materials and if they do, how this identity is portrayed. For some, it appears that although they may publicly acknowledge their status as HSIs, in the broadest sense they serve the local Latino community. I also found that administrators often were more aware of their institutional identity as an HSI than the faculty were (Laden, 2000).

THE HISTORY OF HSIS

The history of HSIs differs substantially from that of other institutions that serve a high proportion of special populations. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) began to emerge in the mid-1800s to educate newly freed slaves. Today these institutions number just over 100 and are still a major force in educating African American Students (White House Initiative for Excellence in Education for African Americans, 2003). Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) were founded beginning in the 1960s to meet the cultural, economic, and educational needs of American Indians. These institutions, numbering 34 in the most recent count, are located on or near reservations to better serve their target population (White House Initiative for Tribal Colleges and Universities, 2003). Both HBCUs and TCUs serve their respective populations according to their declared charters and mission statements (O'Brien & Zudak, 1998). Also, these special focus institutions received federal assistance early in their founding and still do so today under Title V.

On the other hand, with the exception of several institutions, the vast majority of HSIs have emerged within the last 30 years due to a confluence of social, political, economic, and demographic factors. The exceptions are Hostos Community College, Boricua College, and the National Hispanic University, which were founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s to address distinctive purposes and goals for Latinos (Laden, 1999). The presence of Hispanic-serving institutions today is due much more to changing conditions in the U.S. environmental landscape in the last third of the 20th century.

Certainly, social and political reforms of the 1960s did much to increase the public's awareness of social inequities, including those

existing in higher education. Reforms during this period, such as the congressional legislation of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the creation of federal and state student grants and loans, increased access and opportunity to college for individuals from for instance, low-income and racial and ethnic backgrounds (Justiz, Wilson, & Björk, 1994). Dual factors of continued Latino immigration of the U.S. and internal demographic shifts in the past three decades brought many national and academic border crossers to college for the first time. In search of jobs and improved economic conditions (Carnevale, 1999), Latinos continue to move into large urban cities (Benitez, 1998, Justiz, Wilson, & Björk, 1994) and into less populated, rural or farming areas in the central U.S. where they have not resided before (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Regardless of where they have settled, Latinos have taken advantage of the educational offerings available to them, including enrolling in colleges and universities in their communities. As the Latino presence in some of these postsecondary institutions has risen to at least one-fourth or more of the student enrollment, these colleges and universities have been identified as Hispanic-serving institutions (Laden, 1999, 2000).

In light of the above factors, HSIs have increased fairly rapidly in number since they were first identified as such, first by HACU and then by the U.S. Department of Education. Nonetheless, it is difficult to do a systematic year-by-year comparison of HSIs' growth for several reasons. For one, the change in HSIs' federal definition in 1998 from 25% total headcount enrollment of Hispanic students to 25% total FTE enrollment of Hispanic students makes it difficult to compare available data across years. Second, HACU continues to use the 25% headcount for Hispanic students' enrollment definition of HSIs while the Department of Education through Title V and the Office of Civil Rights uses the 24% FTE Hispanic student enrollment definition. Moreover, the data and the lists of identified HSIs used by these latter agencies do not necessarily align (e.g., by institutional type and control, numbers of students, states) for comparison purposes due to differing ways of presenting the data. Until mid-2002, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans also collected data on HSIs; however, this office has ceased to do so. Third, until recently, HSIs' enrollment data from NCES were available only through the Annual Status Report of Minorities in Higher Education, published by the American Council on Education. These data were presented as tables in the appendix section only. Fourth, the Stearns et al. (2002) report, as mentioned earlier, is the first national effort by NCES to systematically track the changes in HSIs. Yet, great care was taken as to how the HSIs were identified. For this report, Stearns and

associates tracked 335 Title IV-participating degree-granting institutions from 1990 to 1999 that met the minimum 25% FTE enrollment of Hispanic students and were also Title IV-participating institutions. These are accredited, degree-granting, public and private, two- and four-year colleges and universities whose students are eligible to receive Pell Grants and other federal aid (Stearns et al., 2002).

THE HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The role of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), as noted earlier, is important in its continued call of attention of Latinos' educational needs. Its founding dates back to 1986 when Hispanic and non-Hispanic educational and business leaders organized. The new organizations' goal was to draw national attention to the social, economic, and educational needs of Latinos, and their increasing attendance in certain colleges and universities. The specific aims were to improve educational access, raise the quality of college opportunities for Latinos, and draw the attention of national political figures and educational policy makers. In 1992, HACU was a major force in getting Hispanic-serving institutions recognized as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. This recognition also allowed HSIs to apply for federal funds under Title III. In 1998, HACU again successfully lobbied for HSIs' inclusion, this time under Title V with greater funding (Basinger, 2000). In this sense, in keeping with a critical multicultural perspective, HACU sought to assert the identity of and to empower HSIs with public recognition, a unique sense of identity, political clout, and federal support. These institutions could then better address the academic needs of Latinos and other increasingly diverse student populations.

Sixteen years later HACU continues its mission to improve Latinos' postsecondary educational opportunities. It has done so by gaining national recognition and resources and serving as an advocate for federal and state public policies and initiatives that support HSIs (Laden 1999). Examples of HACU's efforts are manifold. Among these are: a series of leadership development workshops; student internships with governmental agencies, business and industry; a scholarship foundation; and a range of collaborative projects with organizations such as the Educational Testing Service, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and other professional associations dedicated to improving educational access for minorities (Flores, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, HACU web site, 2003).

THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

Another recognition of HSIs' increasing presence was the creation of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Commission) in 1994. Established by President Bill Clinton's executive order 12900, and renewed by President George W. Bush, it issues a collective call to each executive agency to "increase Hispanic American participation in Federal education programs where Hispanic Americans currently are under served." The order further highlights the need "to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic Americans participating in Federal education programs . . . to emphasize the facilitation of technical, planning, and development advice to Hispanic-serving school districts and institutions of higher education" (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans [President's Advisory Commission], 1996, p. 85). The 25-member commission, appointed by the president to five-year terms from the higher education and business sectors, reports directly to the secretary of education. Its charge is to offer advice on the progress of Hispanics' educational achievement and accomplishments, develop federal efforts to promote quality education for Hispanics, and explore ways to increase state, private, and community involvement (President's Advisory Commission, 1996). From a critical multicultural perspective, the blending of government, educators, and business leaders to address these needs offers a more democratic approach to seeking ways to involve the community. Nevertheless, the voices of those who are most affected—Latino students themselves—are conspicuously absent from decision-making roles in this commission or within the HACU infrastructure.

WHERE ARE HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS?

Using the recent NCES data (Stearns et al., 2002), as of 1999, there were 276 HSIs (82.4%) located in 14 states and 59 HSIs (17.6%) in Puerto Rico for a total of 335 Hispanic-serving institutions. As Hispanic students constitute the majority of all students in Puerto Rico and present a different picture from the U.S. of who goes to college. Therefore, the focus in this article is on Latino representation in American postsecondary institutions. There are several factors of interest to note from the data. First, most Hispanic-serving institutions are located primarily around the perimeters of the country, from the Pacific Northwest, down the Pacific coast, along the Mexican border, up the Florida coast, along the Atlantic, and up into the tip of

the Great Lakes on the northern border. Also, several HSIs can be found in states in the middle of the country, reflecting an emerging geographic mobility. The states with HSIs are Arizona (19), California (109), Colorado (7), Florida (19), Illinois (11), Massachusetts (2), New Jersey (5), New Mexico (25), New York (21), Oklahoma (1), Oregon (1), Pennsylvania (1), Texas (54), and Washington (1). As might be expected, California, Texas, and New Mexico have the highest number of HSIs reflecting Latinos' deep historical roots in that region of the U.S.

In terms of type and control (Table 1), there are 86 four-year HSIs (31.2%); 33 are public and 53 are private. Among the 190 two-year HSIs (68.8%), 99 are public with an almost equivalent 91 private institutions (Stearns et al., 2002), reminding us that these open access institutions offer the primary gateway into higher education participation for Latinos—and for many other racially and ethnically diverse students. Also, due to the overall racial and ethnic diversity within HSIs, they are sometimes referred to as minority-serving institutions (Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, 2003; Merisotis & O'Brien, 1998). At a minimum, these HSIs are establishing themselves as *de facto* multicultural institutions by virtue of who attends them. As such, they call even more for leadership recognition of and critical pedagogical approaches that are sensitive to diverse cultures and identities within and across these institutions.

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS

Despite the presence of HSIs, overall college participation and completion rates for Hispanics continue to lag behind other student groups. Nevertheless, the good news is that these rates have nearly doubled since 1990 (Wilds, 2000). In 1998, the Hispanic college enrollment rate was 34.1% and graduation rates rose by 3 percentage points to 48% (Harvey, 2001). Since more Hispanics begin at the

TABLE 1 Type and Sector of Hispanic-Serving Institutions in U.S.

Type	Sector	Number of HSIs	Percent of total
Public	4-year	33	12.0
Private	4-year	53	19.2
Public	2-year	99	35.8
Private	2-year	91	33.0
Total		276	100.0

Source: Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002.

community college, however, their transfer rates to four-year institutions are significant in increasing their educational attainment rates. While it is difficult to get a clear picture of national transfer data, *The Condition of Education* (1998) reports that Hispanics represented 22.5% of all students that began in community colleges in 1989–1990 and had transferred to four-year institutions by 1994. No national data are available for two-year HSIs regarding transfer rates. Notwithstanding this, a recent study (Laden, 2000) found that of the 108 California community colleges, those institutions with the highest transfer rates for Hispanics were HSIs. Other research (Solorzano, 1993, 1995) reveals that the origins of Hispanic doctoral recipients occur largely through the pipeline from two- to four-year HSIs into doctoral-granting institutions, among them some HSIs. Not surprisingly, data also show that the biggest Latino associate degree and student transfer producers are urban community college HSIs in California (see Hagedorn & Cepeda; Ornelas & Solorzano this issue), Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, and New York (The Hispanic Outlook, 2000a, 2000b; 2002). Moreover, most of these students are first-generation college students and from low- or lower middle-income families and in need of an inclusive, responsive, comprehensive curriculum, quality transfer programs, and strong articulation agreements within a democratic setting. For instance, Miami Dade Community College and Santa Monica College offer exemplary articulation agreements with a highly selective liberal arts college (see Wolf-Wendal, Twombly, Morphew, & Sopcich this issue).

A review of all degrees conferred to Latinos by all postsecondary institutions in 1999 compared to degrees granted by HSIs presents a strikingly different picture of completion rates (Table 2) and highlights all the more the role of HSIs in educating Latinos. In that year, of all degrees awarded in the U.S., Latinos earned 9.1% of all associate degrees, 6.1% of all bachelor's degrees, 4.2% of all master's degrees, 4.8% of all first-professional degrees, and 2.9% of all doctoral degrees .

TABLE 2 Percent of Degree Completion Rates for Latino Students in 1999

Degrees	All institutions	HSIs
Associate degree	9.1	39.8
Bachelor's degree	6.1	37.0
Master's degree	4.2	24.0
First-professional degree	4.8	21.6
Doctoral degree	2.9	15.2

Source: Stearns, Watabane, & Snyder, 2002.

In stark contrast, Latinos attending HSIs earned 39.8% of all associate degrees, 37% of all bachelor's degrees, 24% of all master's degrees, 21.6% of all first professional degrees, and 15.2% of all doctorates conferred by these institutions. (Stearns, 2002).

Nonetheless, while HSIs clearly produce remarkable outcomes, as evidenced here, one must consider what it is that HSIs actually do for Latino students that lead to these higher outcomes. Or put another way, is it the already high numbers of Latinos enrolled in these institutions that obviously produce a higher number of completers in comparison to their lower numbers in non-HSIs? Certainly, some research (Laden, 1999, 2000) suggests that many HSIs offer a variety of academic and student support programs and holistic approaches that are specifically designed to raise Latino student aspirations and enhance their retention and completion rates (see Bliss & Sandiford; Cejda & Rhodes; Hagedorn & Cepeda; Marwick this issue). Moreover, the recent availability of federal Title V funds and the corporate and business involvement due to advocacy efforts by HACU, for example, continue to increase fiscal and human resources into HSIs to create infrastructures to facilitate these outcomes. Some research, to the contrary, indicates that HSIs are not doing anything more noteworthy for their Latino students than they are for any other student groups within their institutions (see Ornelas & Solorzano this issue).

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Is the role and function of HSIs unique in higher education? Certainly, their rapid rise has been unique, and in some degree mirroring the rapid growth of the junior colleges that occurred following World War II and that occurred again in the 1960s when these institutions began to be known as community colleges. The last third of the 20th century saw the emergence of Hispanic-serving institutions primarily as a result of several factors including an increasing demographic shift of Latinos in the U.S. The rise in Latino college participation rates has led to and has been a result of dedicated efforts by federal agencies, HACU, and a myriad of business, industry, and foundation partners to address the improvement of educational outcomes for Latinos. The enrollment and completion rates for students who attend HSIs tell us that something good is clearly going on. What the statistical data do not give us is a detailed picture of how this is happening within HSIs nor do they tell us how many Latinos are still not doing well or why. What we do see is the emergence of a critical multicultural approach as to how some of these HSIs are approaching the cultural inclusion, empowerment, and education of their students—who come primarily

from low-income and racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and are often the first in their families to attend college. The president of East Los Angeles College, Ernest H. Moreno, in speaking about his Hispanic-serving community college's tremendous growth, the diverse racial and ethnic students who attend, and being first in the state of California with the highest transfer rates for Latinos, noted, "Our motto is 'Your future begins here.'" (*The Hispanic Outlook*, 2002, p. 18). This could well be the motto of all HSIs and the opportunities they offer to Latinos—and other racial and ethnic students—who attend them in large numbers.

Limited resources still continue to be a problem for HSIs even with the possibility of tapping into Title V funds and forming community partnerships with business and industry. In January 2003, President George W. Bush declared that in the following year's U.S. budget he would seek a 5% increase in funding for Hispanic-serving institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2003). The proposed increase would be for projects such as construction, student services, scholarships, and faculty development. The announcement demonstrated the president's political and economic support for these institutions and the potential for much needed increase in federal funding.

The growth of HSIs is clearly one of continued expectation, especially if one looks at their rapid rise so far and if one accepts the demographic projections for Latinos into the first quarter of this century. In light of these factors, more culturally sensitive faculty and administrators, more K-12 teachers who practice engaged pedagogy, better equipped elementary and secondary schools, and more multi-culturally diverse two- and four-year colleges will be needed to educate Latinos through the entire educational pipeline. Clearly, as more Latinos enroll in college, more postsecondary institutions will approach or exceed 25% or more of the total FTE population and become HSI. These institutions are here to stay, thus we must recognize them and respond to their critical needs and of those who attend them—Latinos and many other racial and diverse students.

Greater rather than less attention and sensitivity will have to be paid to the curricular, social, economic, and cultural expectations and needs of Latinos and those from other racial and ethnic groups who also attend HSIs. This rather large, diverse population influx is expected to continue into the foreseeable future in light of the immigrant and minority demographic projections for the twenty-first century (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). It cannot be forgotten that non-Hispanic White students also attend HSIs; thus the dynamics of cultural and social diversity will continue to be played out in a variety

of dimensions within Hispanic-serving institutions. Latino and other ethnic administrators and faculty will be in greater demand. These individuals' personal sensitivity, cultural awareness and orientation, and recognizing of who their diverse students are and their valuability to the cultural and experiential knowledge they bring to the classroom and the campus will continue to make a difference in improving Latinos' overall undergraduate and graduate college enrollment, retention, and completion rates.

A shadow side to HSIs also exists. A real concern exists that instead of looking at HSIs for what can be learned from them to increase Hispanic educational attainment rates, predominantly White institutions may assume they are no longer responsible for attending to the needs of these students and others like them with similar needs. This is highly possible as state resources and other funding streams continue to be constrained, college admissions criteria rise, and national economic conditions change. Another real concern is that HSIs themselves need to consider creating more partnerships, such as with selective and more elite public and private non-HSIs, to increase Latinos' and other diverse students' presence in these institutions. It is not enough to let HSIs do the majority of educating of this population; other higher education institutions must assume their share and play significant roles, too, in this process or Hispanics will be stratified within higher education to only HSIs and the like.

In closing, it is important to remember the large and small steps taken to improve the educational attainment of Hispanics across America. Anti-affirmative action critics continue to oppose any post-secondary institution that favors race-sensitive admissions policies and special programs dedicated to the academic needs of diverse racial and ethnic students. The twenty first century brings a new era of multicultural diversity and equity for all. Hispanic-serving institutions, along with HBCUs and TCUs, will continue to offer greater educational access and opportunities for Latinos and others who attend these institutions, but these institutions cannot do the job alone—nor should they. The social and economic well-being of these individuals, and hence of the nation, depends on the educational benefits accrued by them. The interplay of a college education coupled with career and occupational preparation, and expected economic benefits can only lead to improved lifestyles for Latinos, to a healthier economy for the nation, and to greater social and cultural integration of the U.S. as a whole. Thus, the vital role of the HSI in contributing to these individual and national outcomes cannot be ignored, but rather should be highlighted as exemplars, unique within higher education for taking a critical multicultural approach to empower their students.

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