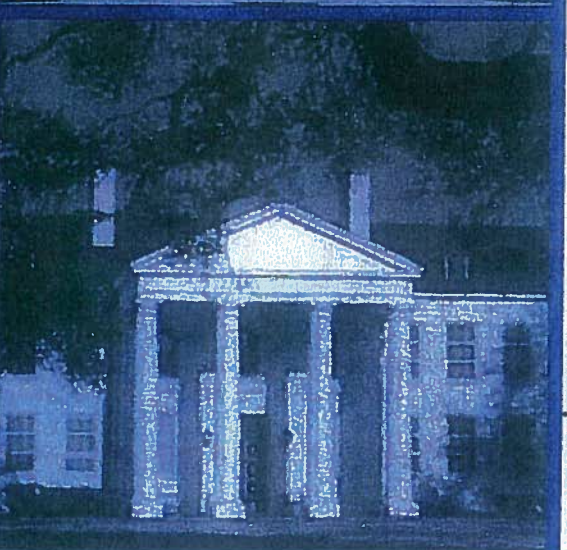
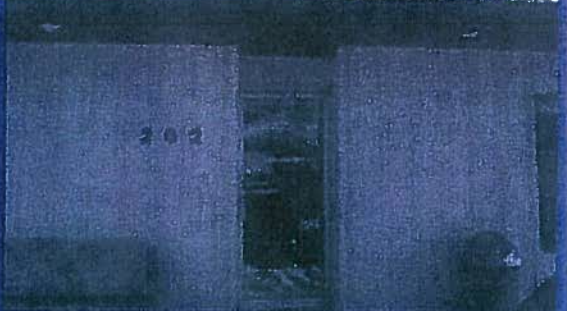
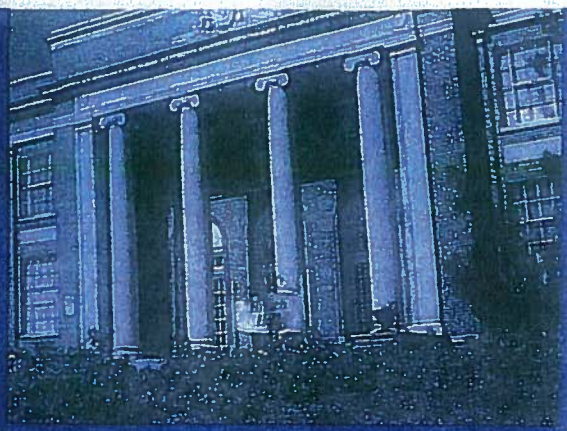




UNDERSTANDING MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS

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CHAPTER 6

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Closeted Identity and the Production of

Equitable Outcomes for Latina Students

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As the demographic shifts for the Latino community continue to outpace other racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) represent a growing segment of higher education institutions in the United States. Given the newness of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions identity, this chapter addresses two interrelated questions. One question applies to institutional identity and the second question relates to educational outcomes for Latinos/as. In regards to identity, we were curious about the ways in which institutions reveal and acknowledge their status as Hispanic-Serving. How would an outsider or a newcomer to the institution know that it is Hispanic-Serving? More importantly, how would a newly appointed president or faculty member know what the expectations of leadership or teaching are in the context of an HSI? With respect to educational outcomes, we wanted to explore the additional value of attending Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Since the identity “Hispanic-Serving” implies a special mission, and given that the college outcomes of Latinos/as are unequal compared to Whites nationally, we asked, “Do Hispanic-Serving Institutions produce equitable educational outcomes for Latino/a students?” “Do Latino/a and White students attending HSIs achieve comparable outcomes?” In developing these questions, we were influenced by the knowledge that women’s colleges and HBCUs produce a very large share of high-achieving individuals who rise to positions of leadership

Authors Note: Jennifer L. Hoffman, a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Washington, assisted with the IPEDS data collection.

Table 6.1 provides the number and geographic distribution of two- and four-year HSIs. The data on table 6.1 underscore well-known trends on the college participation of Latinos/as, namely, their high concentration in community colleges and their growing presence in California and the southwest.

First, the majority of HSIs, 53 percent, are community colleges, which is not surprising. In view of the overrepresentation of Latinos/as in the community college sector of higher education, it makes sense that these institutions would be the most likely to meet the criteria to acquire the HSI designation and become eligible for Title V funding. Second, the majority of the four-year colleges that have earned the designation, 40 percent, are located in Puerto Rico. These institutions are not comparable to Hispanic-Serving Institutions on the U.S. mainland. The identity of Puerto Rico's colleges is Puerto Rican, the language of instruction is Spanish, their leadership and faculty is Puerto Rican as are their students. Third, HSIs are spread over 13 states but more than half (54 percent) are in California, Texas, and New Mexico. Not shown in the table is that two-thirds of the HSIs are public institutions.

Curiously, in addition to these 242 formally designated HSIs, there is a much larger group of institutions that have assumed the designation according to a different definition used by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), or that have assumed it voluntarily by becoming members of HACU. The OCR keeps its own list of HSIs, which includes the 242 that are certified by

Table 6.1 Number of 2-year and 4-year Title V Eligible Institutions by State

State or Commonwealth	Number of 2-year HSIs	Number of 4-year HSIs	Total number of HSIs
Arizona	10	2	12
California	54	19	73
Colorado	4	2	6
Florida	3	9	12
Illinois	7	3	10
Massachusetts	1	—	1
New Jersey	3	2	5
New Mexico	14	6	20
New York	4	8	12
Oklahoma	—	1	1
Oregon	—	1	1
Puerto Rico	6	43	49
Texas	22	16	38
Washington	1	1	2
Total	129	113	242

and prominence and that their positive impact is attributed to these institutions' special mission, sense of purpose, and strong identity as colleges for women and for African American students (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Kim & Alvarez, 1995; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002).

We conducted an exploratory study of ten two- and four-year HSIs in five states. All of the 10 institutions examined are among the 242 institutions eligible to apply for federal funding under the U.S. Department of Education Title V grant program. Specifically, we examined the incorporation of the HSI identity in their mission statement and their websites; we assessed the status of equity among Latinos/as using data on enrollment and degrees granted, and undergraduate major data. The study of these 10 institutions, it needs to be pointed out, is only intended to demonstrate alternative ways of examining the role and outcomes of HSIs for Latino/a students and to encourage more empirical research on this institutional sector. We start the chapter with an overview of HSIs in terms of types of institutions, various categories of HSI status, and their geographic distribution.

ASSUMING A HISPANIC IDENTITY

While the label "Hispanic-Serving" makes these institutions appear as the Hispanic equivalent of HBCUs or women's colleges, they are not a vestige of de jure segregation nor of that period when a women's place was thought to be at home rather than in college. To become an HSI and qualify for Title V funding an institution has to meet three criteria: (1) they must be accredited and nonprofit; (2) have at least 25 percent Latinos/as undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment; and (3) at least 50 percent of the Latino/a students are low-income. Federal funding earmarked for HSIs has increased substantially since the first appropriation of \$12 million in FY1995 (HACU, n.d.). In FY2005, over \$95 million has been appropriated for distribution under Title V (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Title V funds are distributed through an annual grant competition. The grant competition consists of two application processes: first, institutions must be designated as an HSI in accordance with Title V criteria. After an institution is determined to be eligible, it may submit a grant proposal to be considered for funding. Institutions apply for Title V funds for a variety of initiatives, including technology, improving retention, and so forth, all intended to better serve the needs of their students.

Although institutional-aid appropriations under Title V have increased over the past decade, HSIs remain underfunded compared to other degree-granting institutions (HACU, n.d.). This is due in part to the fact that so many of HSIs are two-year institutions, an already underfunded segment of postsecondary education.

Title V and 118 more that have at least 25 percent enrollment of Latinos/as. OCR's list includes for-profit proprietary institutions. HACU, which is a dues-paying supported association, has a list that includes institutions with at least 25 percent Latino/a student enrollments that elect to become full members, and other institutions with 10–24 percent of Latino/a undergraduates, or at least 1,000 Latino/a undergraduates (head count) that elect to become associate members. For the purpose of this study, we utilize the “official” definition of Hispanic-Serving, which classifies any higher educational institution with at least 25 percent Latino/a enrollment as an HSI.

The multiple ways of becoming an HSI makes it possible for some institutions to appear as an HSI in one list but not in another; moreover, since most people are not aware of the differences among the many ways of becoming an HSI, it is commonly assumed that any institution with an enrollment of at least 25 percent Latino/a must be Hispanic-Serving. Another complication related to the criteria for becoming an HSI is that it is possible for an institution to cease being Hispanic-Serving if, for example, the percentage of Latinos/as drops below 25 percent or there is a change in the proportion of Hispanics who are low-income.

In sum, Hispanic-Serving is a manufactured identity that is highly variable. In the same way that an institution can gain the status of Hispanic-Serving from one year to the next if there is an increase in the percentage of Latino/a students, it can also lose its HSI designation if it experiences a decline of Latino/a enrollment. The unplanned and unstable nature of the HSI identity made us wonder about its importance and influence in the character of the institution. We wondered, “In what ways do the mission statements incorporate the HSI identity?” and “How do institutions demonstrate their HSI identity inside and outside of the campus?” We explore these two questions in the next section.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MISSION STATEMENTS

There is some disagreement about the significance of institutional mission statements. Some organizational theorists believe that ambiguity, a characteristic that is common to most institutional mission statements, makes it possible for colleges and universities to pursue competing goals without risking conflict among different factions (Cohen & March, 1986; Birnbaum, 1988). In contrast, scholars of organizational cultures view mission statements as the embodiment of an institution's values, commitment, and purpose (Caruthers & Loti, 1981; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Peeke, 1994). The perceived benefits of an ambiguous mission statement may have greater applicability to large and structurally complex research universities. In contrast,

a special purpose institution would not be well served by an ambiguous mission statement that hides its distinctiveness and commitment to specific student populations or educational purposes. For example, Howard University refers to itself as a “historically Black, private university . . . with particular emphasis upon the provision of educational opportunities to promising Black students”; Wellesley College aims “to provide an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world”; and Tohono O’odham Community College is dedicated to enhancing the unique Tohono O’odham Himdag. Himdag is an all-encompassing word for the culture, way of life, and values of the Tohono O’odham people.

Mission statements serve many functions in postsecondary institutions. From a cultural perspective, the mission statement is the place where one can learn “what [the institution] is, and what it is not” (Caruthers & Loti, 1981, p. 26). In addition, if constructed meaningfully, the mission statement can be a guide for change, a consensus-builder and an assessment tool. Because the mission statement declares an institution's intent and direction (Dominick, 1990), mission statements are the starting place in strategic planning efforts (Gioia & Thomas, 1996), and an organization's participants typically spend a great deal of time deliberating on the content. The mission statement can guide long-term change efforts, reminding decision makers of institutional values and goals. If an institution's statement of mission prioritizes educating low-income students, for example, the mission statement serves as a tangible cue to university leadership to enact policies and practices, allocate resources, and take other necessary steps to meet this priority. When institutions experience major changes in their institutional identity (e.g., a single sex institution becomes coeducational; a religiously affiliated institution becomes secular) their mission statements are likely to change to signal new values and beliefs (Peeke, 1994) and provide stakeholders with a collective understanding of the institution (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988).

Given the cultural importance of mission statements we chose 10 two- and four-year HSIs in California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and New York and examined how their HSI designation was incorporated into their mission. The 10 institutions were selected purposefully to reflect variability in institutional type, size, urban, and rural location. The sample included small institutions with enrollments of fewer than 5,000 students as well as institutions with more than 15,000 students. Among the four-year campuses, three granted only BAs and MAs and two were doctoral granting institutions. We also selected institutions based on high, low, or moderate Latino/a enrollment and created an institutional sample with varying levels of “latinization.”

Institutional mission statements for the 10 colleges and universities were retrieved from institutional websites. For the purposes of consistency, only

statements labeled "mission statement" were included in the analysis. We conducted the mission statement analysis on multiple levels. First, we searched for keywords related to HSI status (e.g., Hispanic-Serving Institution, Hispanic, diversity, equity, underrepresented minorities). Following this first-order analysis, we examined the mission statements in greater detail noting how these keywords were used and in what context. We then categorized each institution's mission statement by the salience of the HSI status and the manner in which the status was discussed.

THE SALIENCE OF HSI IDENTITY IN INSTITUTIONAL MISSION STATEMENTS

The most surprising and unexpected finding was that none of the 10 institutions explicitly mentioned their designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution in their mission statement. Instead, three keywords emerged from our analysis: "diversity/diverse," "culture/multicultural," and "access." The mission statements of all 10 institutions examined include at least one of the aforementioned keywords. In some cases, however, it is not apparent that the keywords are used in a context related to racial or ethnic characteristics of their student body, and in some cases it was not clear if these words were used in relation to students. For example, CA-4 states that the university aims to prepare students for a "changing, multicultural world," but does not specifically make reference to the importance of a diverse student body to accomplish this goal. CO-4's mission states that the institution "offers programs, when feasible that preserve and promote the unique history and culture of the region," but there is no indication of what that culture is, nor any mention of the composition of the student body. And the mission statement of NM-4 refers to faculty, staff, and students' advancement of "understanding of the world, its peoples, and cultures," but does not make reference to, or identify the culture or diversity of faculty, staff, or students.

Six institutions use the keywords "diverse/diversity," and/or "culture" in relation to students or the entire campus population. The mission statements of CA-2, NY-4, NY-2, TX-4, TX-2 and NM-2 include statements about the importance of a "culturally diverse environment," "diverse population," or "diverse student body." In all but one case, these institutions referred to responding to the needs of a diverse student body or providing services and support to a diverse student body. Excerpts from each institutional mission statement are shown in table 6.2.

The final keyword identified in our analysis was "access." The missions of two institutions included this keyword; the mission statement of CO-2 refers to the institution's role to provide access to "underserved students,"

Table 6.2 Analysis of Institutional Literature and Website

Institution	Explicit mention of HSI Status in related keywords (e.g. diversity, culture, access)	Inclusion of	Excerpt from Institutional Mission Statement
CA-4	No	Yes	"[Our college's] mission is to . . . prepare students for lifelong learning, leadership, and careers in a changing, multicultural world."
CA-2	No	Yes	"We are responsive to the learning needs of our community and dedicated to a diverse educational and cultural campus environment . . ."
CO-4	No	Yes	" . . . [Our college] offers programs, when feasible, that preserve and promote the unique history and culture of the region."
CO-2	No	Yes	"Programs and strategies that promote access and success for underserved students are the foundation of [our college] operations."
NM-4	No	Yes	"Faculty, staff, and students . . . advance our understanding of the world, its peoples, and cultures."
NM-2	No	Yes	"THE offers a wide range of educational programs and services to meet the needs of . . . a diverse population."
NY-4	No	Yes	" . . . the College provides a diverse student body with exceptional opportunities to participate in creative intellectual pursuits."
NY-2	No	Yes	"Located a transit hub that links . . . the most ethnically diverse borough with the world center of finance . . . the college provides access to higher education and serves New Yorkers of all backgrounds, ages, and means. [Our college] is committed to . . . providing extensive support services and opportunities for a highly diverse student population . . . enhanc[ing] the economic, social, cultural, and educational development of Western Queens and New York City."
TX-4	No	Yes	"The mission of the [college] is to provide a range of educational programs that foster an intellectually and culturally diverse environment . . ."
TX-2	No	Yes	"The mission of [the] Community College District is to provide educational opportunities and support services that prepare individuals . . . to contribute to their economically and culturally diverse community."

and NY-2's mission states that the institution "provides access to higher education and serves New Yorkers of all backgrounds, ages, and means."

Upon finding that none of the institutional mission statements made reference specifically to being a Hispanic-Serving Institution, we expanded our exploratory analysis beyond the mission statement. We used the search feature on each college's website and searched for "Hispanic-Serving Institutions" and "HSI" to identify substantive statements that might make reference to being a Hispanic-Serving Institution. This search resulted in links to the HSI acronym for all but one institution. However, in all but three of the institutions the HSI designation was used descriptively in information about Title V funded projects and in job announcements, which included the institution's HSI status as part of the college's description. The search typically led to a link that read as follows: "With an overall Hispanic enrollment in excess of 25 percent, [Name of Institution] has been an officially designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) since Congress established that designation in 1992." We found substantive statements about being an HSI in just one institution, a comparatively small four-year institution in Colorado. The link took us to a profile of the president, which said, "Dr. . . . also puts a priority on the college's role as a Hispanic-Serving Institution" and quotes the president as saying, "We must respect the cultures that developed this region. Most importantly, if 30 percent of our students are Hispanic, 30 percent of our graduates will be Hispanic." In addition, we also used key identifiers like Latino/a, Hispanic, Mexican-American to assess direct efforts pertaining to this particular group of students, and found that references to Latino/a students were embedded in umbrella diversity literature for each of the respective campuses. Based on the website search we were not able to discern a Latino/a agenda across the Hispanic-serving institutions assessed.

HSIS AND LATINO/A EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

We concluded our exploration of these 10 institutions by examining their value-added to Latino/a students. Specifically, we asked: Do these institutions produce equitable educational outcomes for Hispanic students? We asked this question for two reasons. First, the approaches that have been used to assess the value-added of HSIs have focused on the percentage of total BA and MA degrees earned by Latinos/as that were conferred by HSIs (Stearns, Watanabe & Snyder, 2002); the percentage of Latino/a Ph.D. recipients who earned their BA at an HSI (Solórzano, 1995); and the number of HSIs that rank among the top 25 baccalaureate origins of science and engineering doctorate recipients (National Science Foundation, 2004). Based on these

studies HSIs have been found to play a critical role in the education of Latinos/as in the following ways: (1) providing access to higher education: HSIs represent eight percent of postsecondary institutions but nearly half (48 percent) of all the Latino/a students enrolled in higher education attend an HSI (Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002; Brown & Santiago, 2004); (2) community colleges in California that have the highest concentration of Latinos/as transferring to a four-year college are HSIs (Laden, 2000); (3) eight of the top 25 baccalaureate origins of 1997–2001 science and engineering doctorate recipients were HSIs (National Science Foundation, 2004); (4) seven of the top 10 baccalaureate origin institutions of all Chicana doctorate recipients between 1980 and 1990 were HSIs (Solórzano, 1995); (5) HSIs conferred 25 percent of the master's degrees earned by Latinos/as in 1999–2000 (Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002).

The two empirical studies that we came across examined whether HSIs produce more engaged and satisfied students (Laird, et al., 2004) and faculty attitudes, opinions about students and levels of job satisfaction at HSIs (Stage & Hubbard, 2005). Laird et al. (2004) found that Latino/a students attending predominantly White institutions and Hispanic-Serving Institutions had similar scores in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in terms of engagement, satisfaction with college, and gains in overall development. In contrast, the authors reported that a comparable analyses of African Americans at HBCUs revealed they are more engaged and feel that they gain more from college than their counterparts at predominantly White institutions. Similarly, Stage and Hubbard (2005) found only a few differences between HSIs and predominantly White institutions in terms of faculty attitudes, practices, and satisfaction. Conversely, there were differences in these measures between HBCUs and predominantly White and Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

The second reason that prompted us to examine the outcomes of Latinos/as compared to other racial and ethnic groups who also attend HSIs is that unlike other special mission institutions, HSIs, particularly BA granting institutions also have high concentrations of White and Asian American students. Thus, these institutions are largely multicultural in their student composition. Studies have shown that compared to these groups, Latinos/as generally experience unequal educational outcomes (Bensimon, Hao, & Bustillos, 2006). Thus, we wondered how the outcomes for Latinos/as at HSIs would compare to those of groups that typically experience greater equity. To explore this question we used fall 2004 IPEDS data to construct indicators of access, degree completion, and degrees earned in high demand fields. Below we describe the Equity Index method that was used to determine the value-added context for Latinos/as that attend HSIs.

ASSESSING EQUITY IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR LATINOS/AS IN HSIS

The analysis for assessing equity at the four-year institutions that we conducted is largely exploratory. For this analysis we applied an Equity Index method (Hao, 2005), a measure of proportionality to establish how far or how close a particular group (e.g., Latinos, Latinas, African American males, White women, etc.) is from reaching representation on a particular indicator of attainment that is equal to their representation in a specified population pool. The index does not assess cohorts, but rather proportionality at a single point in time. Hao's equity index method has been used to assess the state of equity in college readiness and participation for Latinos in California and Texas (Hao, 2005); Perna and colleagues (2005) have used a similar index to measure the equity for African American students in admission and BA degree attainment in the southern states; Contreras (2003, 2005) utilized a parity index to assess the level of representation of minority students post 209 in select California UC institutions (as applicants and admits), compared to their composition in California high schools, graduation rates, and percent of those UC eligible for admission; and Bensimon, Hao, and Bustillos (2006) have used it to construct an academic equity scorecard for California's postsecondary education system. The Equity Index formula is depicted in figure 6.1.

$$\frac{\text{Target Group's Equity Index for the educational outcome of interest}}{\text{Target group with the educational outcome + Total students with the educational outcome}} = \frac{\text{Target group in the reference population + Total students in the reference population}}{\text{reference population}}$$

The percentage in the numerator consists of the share of Latino/a students who have achieved a particular educational outcome, such as earning the BA degree. The denominator consists of the share of Latino/a students who make up the reference population for the particular educational outcome, such as the Latinos' share in the freshman cohort four years prior to the year BA degree attainment was examined. Equity is achieved when the value of the numerator equals the value of the denominator, which means the value of the index equals "1.0." A number below 1.0 indicates inequity.

DO HSIS PRODUCE EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR LATINOS/AS?

The enrollment tables provided earlier in the chapter revealed that the 10 HSIs enroll very large percentages of Latinos/as. For our analysis we examined whether the enrollment of Latinos/as was proportional to Latino/a

high school graduates in the state where each institution is located, using the formula in figure 6.2:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Latino (or White, Black, etc.) degree recipients/all degree recipients}}{\text{Target group undergraduate enrollment/Total undergraduate enrollment}}$$

Our analysis revealed that three of the four-year colleges are performing extremely well in terms providing access to Latinos/as in proportion to their representation among high school graduates in their respective states. Notably, Latinos/as do not have equitable levels of access to the two most selective four-year institutions in the sample. The important role these institutions play in serving minorities is evident in the equity scores for Asian Americans and Blacks; both groups are above equity in all institutions except one. On the other hand, Whites are below equity in all but one institution. Detailed results of the equity index for enrollment versus the composition of high school graduates in each of the five states are provided in table 6.3a–g.

Similar to the accessibility that four-year Hispanic-Serving Institutions provided for Latino/a students, the two-year institutions played a greater role in access. Given that the majority of Latinos/as are enrolled in community

Table 6.3 Equity Index—Various Institutions

Table 6.3A Equity Index for Access to 4-year Institutions, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>ACCESS: Undergraduate Enrollment vs. High School Graduates</i>					
CA-4	.557	.521	.775	2.37	NA
NM-4	1.10	1.30	.789	2.53	.591
TX-4	.463	2.0	1.10	2.91	3.0
NY-4	.237	1.93	2.62	2.03	.100
CO-4	.728	1.30	1.89	.344	1.50

Table 6.3B Equity Index for Access to 2-year Institutions, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>ACCESS: Enrollment vs. High School Graduates</i>					
CA-2	.567	.394	1.53	.523	.01
CO-2	.543	3.58	1.96	1.63	.588
NM-2	1.15	.004	.934	1.15	.300
NY-2	.259	1.30	3.09	1.87	.100
TX-2	.173	.176	2.64	.003	.300

Table 6.3C Equity Index for BA Degrees Conferred, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>RETENTION: BA Degrees Conferred vs. Total Enrollment</i>					
CA-4	1.05	.784	.796	.938	.333
NM-4	1.19	.733	.910	.970	.277
TX-4	1.48	.996	.722	.980	.667
NY-4	.905	1.38	.831	1.26	NA
CO-4	1.26	.589	.832	.006	.004

Table 6.3D Equity Index for AA Degrees Conferred, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>RETENTION: AA Degrees Conferred vs. Total Enrollment</i>					
CA-2	1.01	1.82	.994	1.23	1.40
CO-2	1.24	.824	.718	1.13	.882
NM-2	.913	NA	1.11	.004	1.30
NY-2	.930	.857	.896	1.02	1.0
TX-2	1.41	1.22	.967	.8	.667

Table 6.3E Equity Index for Degrees Conferred in Math at 4-Year Institutions, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>RETENTION: Degrees Conferred in Math vs. Total Enrollment in Math Major</i>					
CA-4	1.09	0	.677	2.22	2.57
NM-4	1.15	0	1.198	0	.593
TX-4	2.57	.737	.606	1.03	NA
NY-4	1.21	1.21	1.94	.725	NA
CO-4	1.31	0	0	0	NA

Note: The data for Math was comprised of very small ns, essentially illustrating a large drop off of students in the Math major across all racial/ethnic categories.

Table 6.3F Equity Index for Degrees Conferred in Engineering at 4-Year Institutions, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>RETENTION: Degrees Conferred in Engineering vs. Total Enrollment in Engineering Major</i>					
CA-4	1.02	1.07	.616	1.06	1.33
NM-4	1.11	.002	.889	1.48	.632
NY-4	.787	1.53	.885	.844	NA

Note: The Texas and Colorado institutions did not have engineering degrees.

Table 6.3G Equity Index for Degrees Conferred in Biology/Life Sciences at 4-Year Institutions, 2004

	White	Black	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian
<i>RETENTION: Degrees Conferred in Biology/Life Sciences vs. Total Enrollment in Biology/Life Sciences Major</i>					
CA-4	1.19	1.89	.841	.686	NA
NM-4	1.30	.500	.795	2.0	.467
TX-4	1.07	1.53	.397	.580	NA
NY-4	.813	.737	.698	1.42	NA
CO-4	1.23	NA	.312	NA	1.45

colleges nationally (close to half), and the fact that two-year institutions are essentially open enrollment campuses, the equity index for access to two-year colleges can be interpreted as positive or negative news. The good news is that community colleges in four states are providing more than equitable access to Latinos/as. However, this is central to the mission of community colleges in general and not unique to HSIs. The bad news is that the significant concentration of Latinos/as in two-year HSIs can also be interpreted as a sign of segregation and diminished opportunity for educational advancement, depending on these institutions' track record in preparing and facilitating transfer to four-year colleges. Given that they are the primary point of entry into higher education for Latinos/as and students of color, the key issues for two-year institutions include persistence, transfer, and preparation for academic success (degree completion).

DO HSIS PRODUCE EQUITABLE ATTAINMENT OF DEGREES FOR LATINOS/AS?

The previous section conveyed that HSIs add value to Latinos/as by providing them with access to higher education. In this analysis we consider the value of access by examining whether HSIs produce equitable results in baccalaureate and associates degrees earned by Latinos/as. To compute the equity index for degrees earned we applied the following formula to the ten institutions (Detailed results of our calculations appear in table 6.3a-e):

Number of Latino (or white, black, etc.) degree recipients/all degree recipients

Target group undergraduate enrollment/Total undergraduate enrollment

Surprisingly, the BA equity index for Latinos/as revealed them to be below equity at all five four-year HSIs included in our analysis. In contrast, Whites exceed equity in all but one institution. In addition, while White

students were found to be below equity in terms of access at four of the five institutions, they are earning a disproportionately higher share of BA degrees earned. These results suggest that Latinos/as may be experiencing unequal outcomes compared to Whites even at Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Admittedly, this analysis has limitations in that we are comparing two different populations, and it is possible that the same analysis applied to a cohort of students to assess BA attainment four and six years after first enrolling may have produced different results. Although IPEDS does not permit a cohort analysis of equity in BA attainment, HSIs have access to their own institutional data and could easily assess themselves on this indicator.

Even more surprising, the equity index results for AA attainment for Latinos/as in two-year HSIs were not much different from the findings for BA attainment. We found that Latinos/as achieved equity in AA degree attainment at only one community college. In contrast, Whites achieved equity at three of the two-year HSIs. The outcomes for the AA equity index suggest that starting postsecondary education in two-year colleges may not yield optimal returns for Latino/a community college students and concurs with the research on Latinos/as in the community colleges, which suggests high attrition rates (Contreras & Gandara, 2005; Saenz, 2002).

DO HSIS PRODUCE EQUITABLE ATTAINMENT OF DEGREES IN FIELDS IN WHICH THERE IS AN UNDERREPRESENTATION OF LATINOS/AS?

The Hispanic-Serving Institutions reviewed also had higher levels of access to science, technology, engineering, and math majors in which students of color are severely underrepresented. What appeared unclear is whether access to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors translates into equitable results in degrees earned by Latinos/as. We therefore examined equity in BA degrees granted in mathematics, engineering and biology/life sciences by comparing them to the number of students who declared themselves as mathematics, engineering, or biology/life science majors. The equity index results for mathematics degree attainment revealed Whites as achieving equity in all five HSIs, whereas Latinos/as achieved equity in only two of the HSI institutions examined. Even though Latinos/as comprised over 20 percent of the math majors at three of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions, they were still below equity in earned degrees, and White students constituted the majority of mathematics degree recipients. In addition, Latinos/as were found to be below equity among engineering degree recipients in three institutions for which data were available.

Finally, of the Latinos/as enrolled in STEM majors, our analysis of IPEDS data revealed that the majority are likely to be enrolled in the biological/life sciences. In our review of the percentage of students enrolled in the biology/life science major at the five HSI institutions, we found that four of the five institutions had at least 25 percent of Latinos/as. However, our analysis revealed that at all five HSIs, Latino/a students fell below this proportion in terms of degree attainment in biological and life sciences. Conversely, White students experienced inequity in this major in only one of the HSI institutions.

In sum, the exploratory study showed that the websites of HSIs contain almost no symbolic representations that call attention to their Hispanic-Serving identity and make it immediately recognizable to the outside world. The search of the 10 institutions' websites revealed that the HSI identity was typically acknowledged in descriptions of programs and special initiatives supported by Title V. The assessment of access and success through the analytical lenses of the Equity Index revealed that four- and two-year HSIs produce equitable access for Latinos/as but unequal attainment of degrees generally, particularly in high-income fields from which Latinos/as are locked out (Davis, 2001). These findings underscore the fact that access is hardly sufficient to close the educational opportunity gaps in higher education.

Even though these findings are exploratory and applicable to 10 representative institutions, they bring to light questions about the purpose, role, and outcomes of Hispanic-Serving Institutions that merit further in-depth study and analysis. In the next section, we consider some of these questions and the implications of the findings in relation to the educational condition of Latino/a students.

CONCLUSION

Why is the Hispanic identity of HSIs invisible? There are several plausible answers to this question. First, institutions are transformed into Hispanic-Serving purely on the basis of changing demographics. Their conversion seems to be accidental and evolutionary rather than strategically planned, which may explain the silence about being Hispanic-Serving. It is possible that the Hispanic identity is so new that for most institutions there has not been enough time to reconsider their mission in light of their newly acquired identity. We have no way of knowing whether the institutions have had strategic planning processes since becoming HSIs and what role, if any, the HSI status played in deliberations about future direction and mission implementation. Another possibility is that the absence of symbols signifying the Latinization of institutional identity is symptomatic of internalized

racism. The mention of Hispanic may conjure stereotypical images in which Latinos/as appear, even if subconsciously, as the "negative other"—the "illegal immigrant," impoverished, uneducated, day laborer who speaks little or no English. Or, possibly, institutional leaders may be apprehensive about embracing the Hispanic-Serving identity too enthusiastically for fear of alienating students from other racial or ethnic groups and discouraging them from applying to the institution. In a post-*Critter* context, institutions that target, or are perceived to be targeting, specific underrepresented racial groups increasingly face a backlash from those who oppose affirmative action and the diversity movement in general.

Institutions may be hesitant to publicize their HSI designation, despite its legitimacy as a federally recognized institutional type, because of possible negative reactions from anti-diversity forces. Alternatively, HSIs may be fearful that in being openly Hispanic-Serving there will be repercussions such as the loss of prestige, or that they will be stigmatized as different from "normal" or mainstream institutions. Unfortunately, this fear is likely warranted given the larger social context of this country, which deems "Hispanic-Serving" as a negative characteristic. In the current climate of American higher education, prestige is everything. Colleges and universities are attempting to become more selective, engaging in marketing campaigns, and working to maximize their prestige. Thus, it is not surprising that leaders of HSIs feel that the costs of publicizing the Hispanic-Serving status outweigh the benefits, particularly when these benefits (i.e., Title V funds) do not require public proclamations of the designation. It is possible that the lack of acknowledgement of the HSI designation may be simply an oversight. The Hispanic identity might be taken for granted and the fact that it is essentially missing from institutional documents may not be noticeable to institutional members.

What might be the implications of not acknowledging the Hispanic-Serving identity? We recognize that mission statements are not the most widely read documents of an institution nor are they likely to be scrutinized regularly for relevance. We also recognize that the apparent non-acknowledgement of the Hispanic-Serving identity in the website may not be as important if, for example, the institutional leaders repeatedly and consistently articulate its importance and interpret its meaning to the campus community and external constituencies. It is also possible that an institution's website is not an accurate reflection of an institution's values and commitments or actual practices. However, we contend that this venue presents an opportunity for HSIs to market themselves and disclose the niche they fulfill.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the web search method used to determine the salience of Hispanic-Serving identity, our findings introduce

the divergence between meeting a demographic requirement to qualify for Title V funds and producing equitable results for the very students who are the basis for the HSI designation. The examination of the status of Latinos/as on measures of access and success showed that these 10 HSIs do extremely well in attracting and enrolling Latino/a students. However, on success measures, the patterns of unequal outcomes that are typical of Latinos/as in predominantly White institutions are reproduced in the HSIs. On just about every measure of success, including overall attainment of AA and BA degrees, and degree completion in high demand fields, Latinos/as were below equity and Whites were above equity. It is possible that the non-transparency of the Hispanic-Serving identity in the mission statements of the 10 institutions is an indication that not enough attention is being given to student outcomes. Another plausible interpretation for our findings with respect to the institutions' closeted identity is that being an HSI has yet to create a sense of collective responsibility and accountability among institutional leaders and faculty members for producing equitable educational outcomes for Latino/a students.

To conclude, we offer four sets of recommendations for HSIs, the U.S. Department of Education, accrediting associations, and researchers. The purpose of these recommendations is to start framing an agenda for institutional self-assessment, policy development, and knowledge creation designed for HSIs.

For institutional self-assessment we recommend that the meaning of Hispanic-Serving be considered in relation to: (1) mission and values that guide academic decision making and resource allocation; (2) roles and responsibilities of faculty members, administrators, staff, and trustees; (3) knowledge and competencies that are expected of academic leaders, faculty members, staff, and trustees; (4) criteria for appointing and evaluating the performance of institutional leaders, faculty members, and staff; (5) assessment of institutional performance and effectiveness and student outcomes; and (6) the needs of the regional economy with respect to contributing to the development of sustainable communities.

Currently institutions that apply to be designated a Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution and to be eligible to receive a grant under the Strengthening Institutions Program (Title V) are required only to provide data on Hispanic student enrollment and on the proportion that are classified as needy. The U.S. Department of Education could do two things to influence HSIs. First, it could require them to report student outcomes disaggregated by gender within racial-ethnic categories on specific measures of success such as year-to-year persistence, six-year BA degree attainment and three-year AA attainment, transfer rates from community colleges to four-year

colleges, majors and degree recipients in STEM fields, GPA for graduating students, postbaccalaureate enrollment in professional and graduate programs. Second, HSIIs could be required to provide benchmarks to monitor institutional effectiveness in producing equitable educational outcomes for Latinos/as such as the methods and processes of the Equity Scorecard pioneered by the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California (Bensimon, 2004; Bensimon et al., 2004; Dowd, 2005). Related to the above recommendations regarding institutions that accept Title V funding, accrediting associations can ensure that these HSIIs fulfill their obligation to serve Latino/a students by requiring Title V recipients to include the HSI designation in the institutional mission statement and evaluating these institutions along the metric of equity in educational outcomes for Latinos/as during the accreditation process.* The evaluation approach should also include an examination of the academic support that exists within the infrastructure of the institution.

Lastly, it has been observed that while there is a considerable body of research on the collegiate experience of Latino/a students, actual empirical work that is specific to HSIIs is practically nonexistent (Laird, et al., 2004, p. 4). Indeed, as we mentioned earlier, the only two studies we located were a paper by Laird and several of his colleagues which compared student engagement at predominantly White and HSIIs and HBCUs (Laird, et al., 2004) and a paper by Stage and Hubbard that explored attitudes and practices of faculty at HSIIs (Stage & Hubbard, 2005). In light of the very large concentration of Latino/a students at HSIIs (48 percent of all undergraduates, including Puerto Rico), particularly in the two-year college sector, there is an urgent need to develop an agenda for qualitative and quantitative studies to address topics such as: the academic culture of HSIIs; the attitudes, values, and commitments of HSI faculty members; faculty members' awareness of the HSI status and the meanings they ascribe to it; the academic outcomes HSIIs produce for Latino/a students (cohort analyses); and the role of HSIIs in increasing college enrollment and degree attainment for Latinos/as.

We are cognizant that leaders of Hispanic-Serving Institutions may view our analysis as a critique coming from outsiders who have limited experience with these institutions. In anticipation of this criticism, we conclude that it is precisely because we value the critical role that HSIIs play in increasing the numbers of college educated Latinos/as that we chose to test the meaning of Hispanic-Serving in relation to identity and equity in student outcomes. We have attempted to make unexamined aspects of these institutions visible, and hope to contribute to the discussion of the increasingly

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important purpose Hispanic-Serving institutions might play within the Latino community, specifically the potential for maximizing their impact on raising the levels of Latino/a postsecondary attainment.

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UNDERSTANDING MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS

Marybeth Gasman, Benjamin Baez, and Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, editors
Foreword by Walter R. Allen

Understanding Minority-Serving Institutions explores these important institutions while also highlighting their interconnectedness, with the hope of sparking collaboration among the various types. Minority-serving institutions (MSIs) enroll and graduate the majority of students of color in the United States and traditionally include historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges, and more recently Asian American- and Pacific Islander-serving institutions. The book's contributors focus on several issues, including institutional mission, faculty governance, student engagement, social justice, federal policy, and accreditation. They critically analyze the scholarship on MSIs, not only describing the existing research and stressing what is missing, but also providing new lines of thought for additional research.

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