

HACU

HISPANIC
ASSOCIATION
OF COLLEGES &
UNIVERSITIES



Platform Issues and Recommendations for Presidential Candidates in 2024

Official responses requested by June 28, 2024

HACU'S PLATFORM ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN 2024

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) submits for consideration a summary of critical issues and related recommendations for 2024 presidential candidates, reflecting the vision of HACU and the 600 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) throughout the country. HSIs educate more than 5.2 million students, including two of every three of the 3.6 million Hispanic students in college today.

These recommendations are intended to guide presidential candidates on critical concerns related to the education of over 64 million Hispanics across the nation. Hispanics are the largest and fastest-growing ethnic population in the United States and an estimated 35 million Hispanic voters will play a decisive role in electing the next president.

In 1992, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act recognized HSIs for the first time in federal legislation and defined them as non-profit colleges and universities with full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollments of at least 25% Hispanic. In 1990, there were 782,400 Hispanic students enrolled in U.S. higher education, or 5.7% of the total. In 2022, Hispanic enrollment was 3.8 million students, or 21.5% of the total. Two thirds of Hispanic students are enrolled at HSIs, whose number has grown from 189 in 1994 to 600 in 2022. As the number of emerging HSIs reached 412 in 2022, recognizing their impending HSI status would do much to anticipate future needs for these schools as they grapple with rising enrollment of Hispanic students and persistent federal underfunding.

Significant barriers to Hispanic educational success persist, resulting in underachievement by Hispanics students in PK-12 through higher education. U.S. Census data indicates that for every 10 Hispanic students entering kindergarten, only two are likely to earn a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, projections indicate the Hispanic share of the labor force is growing faster than that of any other racial or ethnic group, increasing from 17.5% in 2018 to 21.2% in 2023. Hispanics will account for 78% of net new workers joining the American workforce between 2020 and 2030. This rapid growth underscores the urgent need to invest in Hispanic pathways for educational success and college degree attainment. According to the U.S. Census, 66,000 Hispanics turn 18 years of age every month and projections through 2060 show continued Hispanic demographic growth in the U.S. In the last three decades, the Hispanic labor force nearly tripled from 9 million in 1988 to 29.0 million in 2020. The economic well-being of the nation will be shaped by the burgeoning Hispanic population.

HSIs are a key driver of prosperity in America as engines of economic mobility. In 2022, CollegeNET published data ranking institutions of higher education on the economic mobility of their graduates. Nine of the ten leading institutions are HSIs, including the top ranked one.

HACU would appreciate an official response from presidential candidates before June 28, 2024, on the issues and recommendations below and urges their vigorous public discourse.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasing Higher Education funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions

1. The persistent federal underfunding of HSIs and Hispanic higher education remains a major impediment to Hispanic educational success. U.S. Department of Education data, as of FY 2021, show that HSIs on average received \$6,721.61 per student from all federal revenue sources, compared to \$9,136.86 per student for all degree granting institutions, or just 74 cents on the dollar received by all other institutions, to educate a disproportionately low-income and first-generation student population. In addition, a 2024 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) shows that HSIs have severe facility infrastructure needs, including backlogs of delayed repairs to buildings. According to the GAO's report, 43% of HSIs' building space need repairs or replacement. HSIs, on average, have deferred maintenance backlog of almost \$100 million and about 77% of HSIs have at least one deferred maintenance project that affects a health or safety issue. The report also shows that HSIs have unmet digital infrastructure needs related to internet access and connectivity, cybersecurity, and hybrid learning methods. For example, 90% of HSIs that offer hybrid programs face at least one technological or financial hardship to continue to deliver them. To address these digital and facility infrastructure needs, HSIs reported common and recurrent challenges securing funding. These challenges include the dearth of endowment funds, insufficient state funding, and declining tuition and fees revenue towards addressing capital project needs. It is recommended that:
 - a. A comprehensive study should be requested by the President through the Office of Management and Budget in collaboration with a HACU advisory board to analyze strategies for closing the HSI federal funding gaps.
 - b. Within six months of taking office, the President should issue an executive order directing federal agencies to assess their allocation of funds to Minority-Serving Institutions and programs for equitable HSI and Hispanic participation with appropriate objectives and timelines, and annual progress reports published by the White House.
 - c. The President's annual budget request should include targeted programs for HSIs, especially in science and research-intensive agencies to boost the pool of Hispanics in STEM fields.
 - d. The President should recommend to Congress an HSIs capital financing program of \$20 billion in guaranteed loans of 0.5-1.5 percent interest rates under the Higher Education Act authority.

Develop Capacity Building

2. HSIs and Hispanics are excluded from participation in numerous federal capacity-building grant opportunities because federal statutes and regulations fail to mention them explicitly or because their relative lack of resources puts them at a competitive disadvantage with better resourced institutions, or both. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should appoint a Presidential Board of Advisors on HSIs to advise the White House and federal agencies about appropriate approaches and resources to remedy such exclusions of HSIs and Hispanics.
 - b. The Presidential Board of Advisors on HSIs should be comprised of presidents of HSIs and emerging HSIs, including the chair of HACU's governing board, staffed by the Office of the Secretary of Education and report to the Secretary and the director of the Domestic Policy Council.
 - c. The President should direct international education and outreach agencies to target funds and technical assistance to HSIs to work with institutions abroad, especially in Spanish-speaking countries, in promoting international education, including support for academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges.

Expanding the Medical Profession Pipeline

3. The U.S. is facing a significant health care provider shortage that is particularly acute for the Hispanic population. According to 2018 data, only 5.8% of all active physicians nationwide are Hispanic despite exceeding 20% of the U.S. population. The number of Hispanic physicians is exceedingly low and not keeping pace with Hispanic population growth. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should lead with Congressional leaders in the establishment of a consortium (DoctoreX initiative) of fully accredited in the U.S. medical schools from Latin America and the Caribbean offering opportunities to U.S. Hispanic medical students for careers in medicine with the cultural and Spanish language skills to provide better health care to the severely underserved U.S. Hispanic population. The program would include incentives for graduates to provide health care services in historically underserved communities.
 - b. The President should recommend to Congress a \$100 million appropriation to fund the DoctoreX initiative with HSIs and international medical schools accredited and certified in the U.S. to prepare Hispanic medical students to address this enormous health disparity.

Strengthening Education at PK-12 Hispanic-Serving School Districts and HSIs

4. Federal support is inadequate for greater collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education, especially at Hispanic-Serving School Districts (HSSDs) and HSIs. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should work closely with Congress to advance federal legislation and enhance federal funding to increase and strengthen collaboration between PK-12 and higher education, particularly between HSSDs and HSIs and especially in areas of the country with high concentrations of low-income and underserved populations.

Advancing Comprehensive Immigration Reform

5. The U.S. is struggling to create the next generation of scientists and engineers, yet no federal legislation exists to permit undocumented immigrant youth, residing in the U.S. for more than five years and graduating from U.S. high schools, to receive financial aid and other federal assistance to attend college, perpetuating the loss of talented, high-skilled workers demanded by the national economy. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should lead with Congressional leaders to advance comprehensive immigration reform, particularly the DREAM Act, to foster educational opportunity and create a highly educated work force for the needs of the national economy. In the interim, it is critical to continue such executive administration protections as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Increasing Hispanic Representation in Federal Work Force Management

6. The severe under-representation of Hispanics in the federal labor force, especially in management and executive positions, is a major disparity that makes Hispanics the only underrepresented population in the federal ranks. Senior executive positions, where Hispanics account for a mere 4.5%, had a minimal increase of Hispanic new hires from 2.8% in FY 2017 to 3.3% in FY 2018. In 2000, Hispanics were 6.5% of the federal civilian workforce, increasing to only 9.1% by 2018. An increase of 2.6 percentage points in 18 years, compared to an increase of 13 percentage points in the national Hispanic civilian workforce, is unacceptable. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should issue an executive order for all federal agencies to commit to closing Hispanic employment gaps at all levels, especially in management and senior executive service positions.

Increasing The Number of Hispanic Political Appointees

7. There is a corresponding under-representation of Hispanics among top-level political appointees in federal agencies (especially in those with greater resources for higher education institutional capacity-building, academic programs, support and outreach services, and research). This disparity is equally unacceptable. It raises questions about the political will for inclusion and creates the risk of Hispanics and their core issues being overlooked in agency policies and practices. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should implement strategies to assure the inclusion of Hispanics in cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments. The president should aim for a cadre of top appointees that reflects the diversity of our nation. This is especially important in presidential appointees at agencies with jurisdiction over education, health, science, and technology, including the U.S. Department of Education.
8. Executive orders from several administrations, and resources to oversee their implementation, have proven inadequate to achieve full Hispanic inclusion. It is recommended that:
 - a. The President should charge the director of the Domestic Policy Council to review executive orders and recommend appropriate action for equitable HSI and Hispanic participation in federal programs and services.

QUESTIONS

Please provide your responses in 250 words or less to each question below.

The questions provided below are drawn from the issues detailed in the previous sections. For more in-depth information on the issues, refer to the text or visit hacu.net.

Increasing Higher Education funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

1. What would be the first major steps you would take after the election to increase funding for HSIs to close federal funding gaps, which could include budget requests, recommendations for new programs and/or executive orders?

Develop Capacity Building

2. Would you appoint a Presidential Advisory Board on Hispanic-Serving Institutions made up of institutional leaders who would provide guidance on elevating HSIs to a competitive level in obtaining federal capacity-building grant opportunities?

Expanding the Medical Profession Pipeline

3. The nation has been dealing with a health care provider shortage in recent years, which affects underrepresented and underserved communities much more acutely. How would you address this shortage, especially regarding the Hispanic community in the U.S.?

Strengthening Education at PK-12 Hispanic-Serving School Districts and HSIs

4. What steps would you take in strengthening greater collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education, especially at Hispanic-Serving School Districts (HSSDs) and HSIs?

Advancing Comprehensive Immigration Reform

5. How would you propose advancing comprehensive immigration reform, especially in light of the delays and setbacks reform has faced in recent years?

Increasing Hispanic Representation in Federal Work Force Management

6. Would you support issuing an executive order for all federal agencies to commit to closing Hispanic employment gaps at all levels?

Increasing The Number of Hispanic Political Appointees

7. Would you support or have plans (including proposed executive orders) to increase the number of Hispanic political appointees, especially in cabinet and sub-cabinet roles with jurisdiction over education, health, science, and technology?

HACU seeks an official response from presidential candidates before **June 28, 2024, on the issues and recommendations.**



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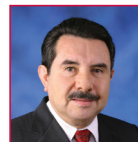
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About HACU

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents more than 500 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, Spain, and school districts throughout the U.S. HACU is the only national association representing existing and emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The association's headquarters are in San Antonio, Texas, with regional offices in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, California.

Additional information is available at www.hacu.net.



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