

31st Annual National Capitol Forum

Agenda

Sessions take place at the JW Marriott Washington, DC. (Agenda Subject to change)
Note: All times are in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

Tuesday, April 21

HSInnovators Student Track

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Registration/Information/Cybercafe
Grand Ballroom Foyer - Ballroom Level

7:00 - 8:00 a.m.

HSInnovators Student Track Breakfast (For Students Only)
Capitol Ballroom Salon D Foyer - Ballroom Level

8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Session 1: Successfully Advocating for HSIs
(For Students Only)

Capitol Ballroom D - Ballroom Level

This interactive two-hour session introduces students to HACU and its pivotal role in advocating for the over five million students served by the 615 Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

Part 1: The first hour is an engaging presentation about HSIs' diverse demographics, HACU's core advocacy initiatives, and strategies for effectively communicating with Congress. Participants will also learn how to develop personalized "briefing sheets" for their Members of Congress and create compelling advocacy pitches.

Part 2: The second hour will feature a hands-on practice session. Students will break into small groups to apply their new skills, using member briefing sheets to craft and refine advocacy pitches.

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Coffee Break
Capitol Ballroom Salon D Foyer - Ballroom Level

10:15 - 11:45 a.m.

Session 2: Pitch Competition (For Students Only)
Capitol Ballroom D - Ballroom Level

A student pitch competition, where selected students will deliver their best pitches for the chance to win Southwest Airlines Vouchers, an iPad, and cash rewards. Judging criteria will focus on clarity, persuasiveness, and relevance to HSI advocacy.

Pre-Conference Sessions

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Registration/Information/Cybercafe
Grand Ballroom Foyer - Ballroom Level

8:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Coffee Break
Capitol Ballroom Salon G & F Foyer - Ballroom Level

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

DACA and Immigration Policy: Implications for Higher Education

Capitol Ballroom F - Ballroom Level

A briefing on the current state of DACA and federal immigration policy, including legal developments, advocacy strategies, and implications for students and institutions.

Susan Collins

Chief of Staff and Government Affairs
TheDream.US

Diego N. Sánchez, J.D.

Vice President of Policy and Strategy
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration

Kimberly Serrano

Director, Center for Inclusion and Belonging
American Immigration Council

Moderator:

Richard Montez

Senior Executive Director of Member Services
HACU

10:00 - 10:15 a.m.

Break



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Pre-Conference Sessions

10:15 - 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Legal Landscape Update for Hispanic-Serving Institutions Capitol Ballroom G - Ballroom Level

A legal overview of current and emerging challenges facing Hispanic-Serving Institutions and higher education, including litigation and other actions from the executive branch.

Francisca D. Fajana, J.D.

Director of Racial Justice Strategy
LatinoJustice

Francisco A. Pardo, J.D.

Director of Legal Resources
National Association of College and University Attorneys

Moderator:

Richard Montez

Senior Executive Director of Member Services
HACU

Building Power Through Partnership Capitol Ballroom F - Ballroom Level

Leaders from key national advocacy organizations will share how coordinated coalition efforts are shaping federal higher education policy. Speakers will outline shared priorities, joint strategies, and concrete opportunities for institutions to engage policymakers, strengthen collective influence, and advance critical funding and legislative protections.

Amalia Chamorro, J.D.

Senior Director, Education Policy Project
UnidosUS

Rowena M. Tomaneng, Ed.D.

President
Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education

Ryan Tyler Spraker, J.D.

Senior Associate
Husch Blackwell

Moderator:

Blanca E. Jara

Interim Executive Director of Government Relations
Northeastern Illinois University

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Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Opening Plenary Luncheon: This Is the Moment HSIs Lead Grand Ballroom Salon II-IV - Ballroom Level

At a defining time for Hispanic-Serving Institutions, national leaders set the tone for bold, strategic action. This plenary centers the critical role HSIs play in driving workforce growth, economic competitiveness, and educational opportunity. Speakers will challenge attendees to lead with clarity, defend progress, and shape the future of higher education and federal policy.

Convener:

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Ph.D.

Chancellor
University of California, Merced

Keynote Address:

Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, D.Min.

Bishop of Washington

Closing Remarks:

Antonio R. Flores, Ph.D.

President and CEO
HACU

1:30 - 1:45 p.m.

Break

1:45 - 3:15 p.m.

Afternoon Plenary: No Quotas, Real Impact - Setting the Record Straight

Grand Ballroom Salon II-IV - Ballroom Level

This plenary confronts misinformation head on and clarifies what HSI programs actually do. Experts and advocates will break down the legal foundation, student-centered mission, and economic impact of Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Attendees will leave equipped with clear facts, strong messaging, and renewed confidence to defend and advance HSI funding and policy priorities.

Convener:

Ted Alejandre

Superintendent of San
Bernardino County Schools

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.

President
Kean University

Lourdes M. Rosado, J.D.

President & General Counsel
LatinoJustice

Moderator:

Daarel Burnett II

Senior Editor
The Chronicle of Higher
Education

Gregory A. Smith

Chancellor
San Diego Community College
District

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Tuesday, April 21

3:15 - 3:30 p.m.

Coffee Break

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

HACU Legislative Agenda Briefing

Grand Ballroom Salon II-IV - Ballroom Level

Gain an overview of HACU's key legislative priorities for Hispanic-Serving Institutions and engage directly with the Government Relations team. This session will equip attendees with the latest updates.

Lena T. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Executive Vice President for Policy and Government Relations
HACU

Xiomara Santos

Executive Director of Government Relations
HACU

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Breakout Session by States

Grand Ballroom Salon I - Ballroom Level

**Capitol Ballroom Salon D, Salon E, Salon F
& Salon G - Ballroom Level**

Commerce & Dirksen - Meeting Room Level

Participants attending Capitol Hill meetings, grouped by state, will receive important information from HACU's Government Relations team about their meetings and information about HACU's Legislative Priorities.

Wednesday, April 22

8:00 a.m. - Noon

Registration / Information / Cybercafe
Grand Ballroom Foyer - Ballroom Level

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:30 - 9:45 a.m.

Breakfast Plenary: Advocating for HSIs

Grand Ballroom Salon II-IV - Ballroom Level

Kick off the morning with powerful insights on the role of advocacy in elevating Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Attendees will hear directly from Members of Congress about the importance of HSIs in the federal policy landscape and learn how to effectively champion legislative priorities on behalf of their institutions and students.

10:00 a.m.

Boxed Lunch

Grand Ballroom Foyer - Ballroom Level

(Boxed Lunch will be provided before departing to the Capitol)

10:15 a.m.

Attendees depart hotel to Capitol Hill for Congressional Meetings

 **11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Congressional Meetings scheduled by HACU's government relations offices

U.S. Capitol

(OFF SITE. Meeting times vary according to state delegations. Schedule will be provided.)

 **3:30 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.**

**Optional Pickup back to JW Marriott Washington, DC.
Pickup location: Capitol Hill Peace Circle**

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Capitol Forum Reception

Penn Avenue Terrace

Lobby Level

A reception will be held at the hotel.

We Need Your Feedback

Scan this code with your mobile device to complete an online Post-Capitol Forum Survey.



Survey participants will be entered in a drawing for a Free Registration to the 32nd National Capitol Forum on Higher Education, April 6-7, 2027, in Washington, D.C.

Survey Deadline: May 4, 2026

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