

HACU 40th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

40 Years of Championing Higher Education Success: One Graduate at a Time

October 31 - November 2, 2026

Gaylord Pacific Resort & Convention Center • Chula Vista, California



Sunday, November 1, 2026

2:30 - 3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Workshops

From Access to Economic Mobility: A Rural HSI Model for Workforce-Aligned Student Success

The California State University, the nation's largest system of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, is advancing an access-centered AI strategy across 22 universities serving more than 460,000 students. This session presents a replicable capacity-building roadmap grounded in governance, cross-campus coordination, and public-private partnerships. Presenters will demonstrate how the CSU moved from vision to system-wide scale while centering access, collaboration, and student success outcomes relevant to universities nationwide.

En Comunidad: A Framework for Engaging Latinx Alumni Across the UCs

How do we move from one-off events to long-term, culturally nuanced relationships with Latinx alumni? This workshop will explore the University of California as a case study, developing an evolving, system-wide framework informed by Tara Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth model to recognize and uplift the assets Latinx graduates bring to the alumni experience. Through stories of intergenerational connections, multi-dimensional pride, and institutional trust-building across diverse communities, we will share what it takes to create meaningful engagement that lasts well beyond graduation. Come away with ideas, insights, and inspiration to reimagine alumni relationships with authenticity at the core.

Two Paradigms, Contested Classrooms: The Roots of Higher Education's Pedagogical Divides

American colleges and universities harbor radically incompatible assumptions about teaching, producing a pedagogical landscape that is pluralistic, tension-ridden, and resistant to a coherent institutional culture. This peculiar character is structural, rooted in two durable paradigms: one oriented toward knowledge transmission and skill development, the other toward critique and emancipation. Understanding this divide is essential for faculty and administrators at Hispanic-Serving Institutions navigating competing demands on behalf of first-generation, working-class Latino students.

VICKS it. Validate, Identify, Connect, Knowledge, and Support Latinx/Hispanic Students' Mental Health to Prevent Suicide

Hispanic/Latinx students experience disproportionate behavioral health challenges, including mental health concerns, suicidal behaviors, and substance use, yet are less likely to access services. This workshop addresses holistic, culturally responsive support through the SAMHSA 8 dimensions of wellness. Participants will learn to recognize warning signs, apply the VICKS de-escalation model, and strengthen culturally grounded protective factors such as familism, cuentos, cultural pride, and mentoring. The session highlights culturally affirming wellness practices, trauma-informed approaches, grounding techniques, and suicide prevention resources to support students, faculty and staff.

Liberal Arts Degrees Driving Workforce Success Through Intentional Internships

This session presents a bachelor's degree model integrating liberal arts, critical thinking, and structured real-world internships. Through intentional partnerships with industry mentors and instructor-led applied learning, students frequently secure full-time employment before graduation. The model also highlights pathways for undocumented students, emphasizing business ownership and entrepreneurship within complex regulatory systems. Corporate partners co-invest through scholarships, creating a sustainable ecosystem linking education, workforce readiness, and economic mobility.

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Beyond Deficit Thinking: Leveraging Cultural Wealth to Transform Institutional Practice

This interactive session invites participants to examine the tension between deficit thinking and the cultural wealth model in higher education. Through guided discussion and structured self-reflection, attendees will explore how institutional narratives influence perceptions of Latino and first-generation students. Participants will identify moments where deficit assumptions emerge and consider strategies for aligning institutional practice with asset-based approaches that strengthen student belonging, persistence, and success.

From Service to Strategy in Procurement Leadership

Finance and administration functions such as procurement and supply chain management are critical to the sustainability of colleges and universities, yet they are often excluded from institutional strategy discussions. This presentation examines how Latina leaders in these areas can move beyond transactional service roles to become strategic partners and system designers. Drawing from operational leadership experience, the presenters share practical approaches to elevating visibility, influence, and long-term institutional impact.

Building Social Capital for Social Mobility: From Classroom-to-Career at Alamo Colleges and City University of New York

Higher education increasingly promises that graduates will secure well-paying careers, yet bridging the gap between college and a competitive job market requires more than classroom learning. This workshop examines collaborative efforts among administrators, faculty, and first-generation students at Alamo Colleges in Texas, The City University of New York, and private-sector partner AccountAbility to build social capital. The workshop highlights replicable strategies such as career-infused degree maps, classroom-to-career curricula and paid work experiences, demonstrating sustainable pathways for social mobility one graduate at a time.