

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

Monday, November 2, 2026

2:00 - 3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Workshops

Equitable Career Readiness by Design: A Fresno State College Corps Model

This session explores how California State University, Fresno integrates career readiness into a statewide #CaliforniansForAll College Corps initiative. It is a paid community service fellowship program that provides eligible undergraduate students the opportunity to serve their communities, gain professional experience, and support their education simultaneously. With 30% of participants identifying as AB540 (California Nonresident Tuition Exemption) students, presenters examine how embedding structured career development and social capital development frameworks into paid service opportunities strengthens long-term outcomes, builds equitable professional networks, and advances institutional capacity-building efforts.

Empowering Hispanic Students Through Leadership Development and Early College Access

The workshop examines strategies to support first-generation Hispanic students in achieving academic success through leadership development and early college pathways. It highlights the Aspiring Student Leadership Conference and Early College Program as models for fostering college readiness, empowering student leadership, and enabling participants to earn a high school diploma and associate degree simultaneously.

Adapting Campus Support Systems to Ensure Students' Well-being and Success

This session explores how colleges and universities can strengthen campus support systems to promote student well-being, persistence, and success. Presenters will discuss how institutions identify student mental health needs and build collaborative, community-centered approaches that make support services more accessible. A partner institution will share first-hand examples of strategies implemented on campus to strengthen community support and improve student outcomes.

Developing Sustained STEM Partnerships with Regional Secondary Schools

This session presents an HSI-led STEM outreach model connecting a small private university with over 80 middle and high schools and more than 10,000 K12 students. Grounded in AVID methodologies, NGSS-aligned (Next Generation Science Standards) instruction and evidence-based active learning, the initiative strengthens STEM engagement and college exposure among historically underrepresented students. Participants will examine a scalable partnership framework, adaptable across institutional contexts and academic disciplines.

Assembling for Servingness: Leading HSIs in Times of Uncertainty

We all know stories (or Disney movies) describing voyagers who braved uncharted waters to reach new destinations. These journeys were not random sailings that just happened to work out; they succeeded by applying cultural knowledge and sophisticated navigational skills. We can use similar approaches to advance servingness in today's uncertain times. Join this discussion to find your institution's north star and learn how studying regulatory tides and political weather can guide you to safe harbor.

Higher Education Legal Update for HSIs

A roundup of the latest developments in higher education law, with an emphasis on issues of particular importance to HSIs.

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Integrating Language, Business, Mobility, and Social Impact for Global Success

This session presents the internationalization model of the Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, which integrates cohort-based international business programs with Spanish for foreigners pathways through its Observatory of the Spanish Language. The model combines academic immersion, language acquisition, experiential learning, social engagement, and institutional partnerships to improve student success, employability, and contribution to the common good. Participants will explore how scalable, evidence-based strategies and cross-border collaboration create sustainable international pipelines and socially responsible post-graduate opportunities.

High-Impact STEM Pathways: Experiential Learning, Assessment, and Workforce Readiness

This session examines how \$4.75 million USDA-NIFA grants transformed STEM pathways at a Hispanic-serving community college. Through scaffolded High-Impact Practices, including course-based undergraduate research, paid internships on the campus farm and signature assignments, we strengthen student identity, workforce readiness, and transfer preparation. Participants will explore longitudinal program data on enrollment, retention, and transfer to four-year partners, offering a scalable model for leveraging federal funding to bridge community college pathways with the STEM workforce.