



HSI-NOW FRAMEWORK FOR SERVINGNESS

OVERVIEW OF HSI-NOW

The Hispanic-Serving Institution Network of Wisconsin (HSI-NOW) is a coalition of leaders from colleges and universities across the state. Our mission is to collectively develop the ideal conditions to serve, educate and advance Hispanic/Latino¹ students and create equitable opportunities in higher education. Our vision is to become Wisconsin's leading network for the advancement of Hispanics/Latinos in higher education. As such, each of our institutions has made a commitment to seek out or maintain federal eligibility for the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation, which requires that at least 25% of the full-time undergraduate population identify as Hispanic.

DEFINITION OF SERVINGNESS

More than hitting enrollment targets, HSI-NOW member institutions are interested in truly serving their Hispanic/Latino and other underrepresented minority (URM) students well. What, then, does it mean to be a *Hispanic-Serving* Institution? Based on the work of Dr. Gina García, a leading HSI scholar, a campus that embodies the spirit of “servingness” will:

- produce equitable academic and non-academic outcomes for URM students;
- foster positive campus experiences that connect to students’ and employees’ cultural identities and promote a sense of belonging;
- integrate culturally responsive practices, policies, decision-making processes, programs, and curricula into the organizational structure; and
- connect with external entities to advocate for policies and funding that will support historically marginalized students.

Servingness entails creating the conditions necessary for students to thrive on our campuses and serving them with intention and dignity to support their goals and dreams. It is not a destination, but a purposeful, active, and ongoing process, and often requires deep and pervasive transformational change as it touches all aspects of organizational practice.

HOW TO USE THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework was developed to help institutions measure progress toward embodying an ethos of servingness. Due to the great variability in HSIs and the complexity of the realities they face, how servingness is operationalized will differ from campus to campus. Thus, this framework is not intended to be a checklist but rather a starting point to help campus leaders and other stakeholders think critically about their structures and capacity for servingness. This document is designed as a digestible first step toward institutional self-assessment; for fuller consideration and rationale of each component, please see the reference list at the end of this document.

¹ While the term *Hispanic* is widely favored among those of Latin American descent in the U.S., many, and particularly younger populations, prefer the terms *Latino/a/x*. To be as inclusive as possible, HSI-NOW has chosen to utilize “Hispanic/Latino” when referring to those who fall under this panethnic umbrella.

COMPONENTS OF SERVINGNESS

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

HSI Infrastructure

- Executive leaders are actively engaged in supporting and monitoring progress toward servingness goals.
- Campus leadership has appointed HSI positions and/or committees. These stakeholders are provided access to professional development that enhances understanding of servingness and informs the strategic direction of HSI efforts.
- HSI priorities are built into employees' position descriptions across campus to ensure prioritization and sustainability of HSI efforts.
- Achieving and maintaining federally-designated HSI status has been written into institutional guiding documents, such as strategic plans, mission/vision statements, and/or DEI plans, as well as specific measurable outcomes and strategies. The institution engages in regular assessment of progress toward these goals.
- Campus leaders have engaged with stakeholders from across the institution to generate buy-in and support for HSI efforts. This may include educational opportunities and dialogue around what it means to be a *Hispanic-Serving Institution* and coming to shared understandings of the responsibility of all stakeholders to scaffold positive outcomes and experiences for Hispanic/Latino and other URM students.

Affordability

- The institution provides - or is working toward providing - enough financial assistance to cover all admitted students' full demonstrated tuition needs.
- The institution makes an effort to reduce student debt loads.
- The institution provides opportunities to build college financial literacy for prospective students and families in both English and Spanish. [This may be accomplished through community partnerships.]
- The institution participates in dual enrollment programs, provides retroactive credit for Spanish language skills, and/or offers other methods to gain credit for demonstrated skills to graduate students more efficiently and affordably.
- The institution supports articulation agreements with robust and easily accessible pathways from two-year to four-year programs to reduce time to a four-year degree.

Resource Development and Engagement Activities

- The institution directs fundraising and grant writing activities toward programmatic efforts that support Hispanic/Latino and other URM students.
- The institution prioritizes development efforts for scholarships that support Hispanic/Latino and low-income students.
- The campus engages in meaningful collaborations with alumni, not only soliciting their "treasure" but also their "time and talent" in engaging and supporting students.

Faculty and Staff Representation

- Strategic diversity goals include benchmarks for achieving diverse representation at every level of the institution - up to and including executive leadership positions and board membership.
- Hiring offices and department chairs across campus engage in intentional and ongoing outreach to individuals, organizations, and networks of diverse talent.
- There is an institution-wide initiative to promote equity-minded hiring practices that are rooted in research-best practices to counter the impact of implicit bias. Training on this topic is readily available or required for hiring committees.
- Faculty and staff of color who engage in the often-invisible labor of de facto mentoring of students of color are institutionally supported through recognition in promotion and tenure processes, alleviating other forms of labor, and/or additional compensation.
- The institution has retention strategies for faculty/staff of color (e.g., mentorship, employee resource groups or other networks of support, pay equity assessments, support for community-engaged research, etc.), which are regularly evaluated for effectiveness.
- Faculty/staff of diverse backgrounds are represented and provided opportunities to make meaningful contributions on key decision-making bodies, such as strategic planning committees, governance committees, etc.

Professional Development and Support

- Faculty and staff are provided with ample opportunities, time, resources, and incentives to engage in professional learning that supports positive outcomes and experiences for Hispanic/Latino and other URM students, including such topics as: inclusive pedagogy, equitable assessment, counteracting the effects of implicit bias, managing difficult conversations in the classroom, and culturally affirming practices.
- Contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion and other activities that support and engage Hispanic/Latino and other URM students (e.g., student mentorship, advising student organizations, etc.) are incorporated into faculty/staff performance goals, and incentivized in performance reviews and promotion and tenure processes.
- Supervisors and academic unit leaders (e.g., chairs, heads, directors, deans) are held accountable for fostering inclusive excellence within their units by supporting, seeding, and scaffolding faculty/staff engagement in these practices.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Bilingual Support Services

- For campuses with high percentages of students whose first language is not English, the institution provides adequate Spanish-language services to support student success. This might take the form of translation services, Spanish-language classes, ESL classes, and Spanish-speaking staff in all student-facing offices (admissions, financial aid, registrar, bursar, tutoring services, etc.).
- Faculty are provided resources for better supporting English-language learners.

Academic and Career Readiness

- Student needs are regularly assessed and the institution is working toward filling needs that would otherwise inhibit progress toward degree completion and job placement.
- Ample educational support is available and accessible to students via tutoring and, where appropriate, bilingual services.
- The institution takes a holistic approach to student success, supporting students' physical and mental health needs (either on campus or through community referrals).
- The institution provides basic needs support that is easily located by students, such as emergency grants, food pantries, book loan and technology programs, transportation, business attire, and other financial support programs.
- Students are provided with resources to support them on their next steps beyond graduation, which may include assistance transferring from a two-year to a four-year college, applying to graduate school, and career readiness opportunities (e.g., internships, career mentoring, etc.).

Academic Programs

- Hispanic/Latino students see themselves reflected in robust, institutionally supported, culturally relevant curriculum, both within departments (e.g., Latino Studies, Spanish for Native/Heritage Speakers, translation/interpretation programs, etc.), as well as integrated across departments.
- Academic program reviews focus on contributions to servingness, such as inclusive pedagogy, evaluating syllabi for hidden biases, culturally responsive content, etc. Faculty are supported to learn about and implement teaching strategies that are proven to have more equitable outcomes.
- The institution disaggregates DFW rates and retention and graduation data by race/ethnicity across disciplines and departments, and has created and implemented student support strategies aimed at closing opportunity gaps (e.g., high-touch advising, high-impact practices, etc.).
- Academic program data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity to determine the number and percentage of Latinx students who are served in each program. Improvement plans are implemented for departments that enroll and/or graduate disproportionately low numbers of URM students.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Belonging

- Hispanic/Latino-centered and Spanish-language co-curricular programs - both those hosted by campus offices and those that are student-led - proliferate on campus and are well-publicized and financially supported by the institution.
- Cultural and linguistic affirmation exists in all aspects of campus life, including food, physical spaces, honoring Hispanic/Latino traditions, social events, culturally-responsive counseling services, and a Spanish-friendly environment.

- The institution has a well-defined, transparent, and widely utilized bias incident process that responds quickly and effectively in ways that support marginalized students and employees.
- Conduct processes are transparent and employ restorative practices.
- Campus climate, students' sense of belonging and connectedness to faculty/staff are regularly assessed. Disaggregated data are utilized to inform strategic planning efforts for improvement both broadly across the institution as well as within specific units/departments.
- The institution provides ample opportunities for scaffolded cross-racial/ethnic dialogues.
- Students are provided intentional guidance for accessing campus resources.

Dreamer Support

- Dreamers and their families are provided clear and robust communication about how to apply, financial aid resources, and offices of support, from pre-admission throughout their academic journeys.
- Dreamers are given special consideration in the financial aid process and have access to scholarships and other tuition support that offsets their ineligibility for federal aid.
- The institution strives for a campus-wide undocu-friendly climate through faculty/staff and student workshops and awareness-building around Dreamers' experiences, challenges, and the resources (both on and off campus) available to support them.
- The institution provides paid fellowship opportunities at all levels (undergraduate, graduate) for undocumented students without work authorization to obtain practical, hands-on experience and mentorship that supports their professional development.

Student Empowerment

- Students have ample leadership opportunities that support their development and are financially accessible.
- Students' voices are invited into strategic conversations and their experiences are considered when making decisions that will impact them. The institution regularly solicits student feedback and adapts efforts in response to students' insights.
- Upon graduating, students have greater critical consciousness, civic engagement, social agency, and positive academic and racial/ethnic self-concept.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Community Engagement

- The institution has robust mutually beneficial, bidirectional partnerships with Hispanic/Latino-serving community organizations and leaders, drawing upon community cultural wealth and wisdom and augmenting both financial and social capital available to students.
- The institution recognizes the role of families in supporting student connection and success and has created intentional programs that develop and sustain relationships with families (e.g., family university/academy, family weekends, family open houses, etc.).

Bilingual Outreach

- Prospective students and families can easily locate information via professionally translated Spanish web sources and bilingual staff in the areas of admissions, financial aid, new student/family programming, and marketing/communication.

Recruitment Practices

- The admissions office has clearly defined strategies for outreach to Hispanic/Latino and other URM students as well as to URM-rich high schools and pre-college programs, to share information and help them understand pathways to college.
- Hispanic/Latino families are included in outreach efforts in ways that help them feel connected, welcomed, and empowered with information to support their student's transition to college.
- Hispanic/Latino student recruitment is not only focused on undergraduates but also Hispanic/Latino graduate students and adult learners (depending on institution type).
- Recruiting practices include transparent communication about what services and supports are - and are not - available at the institution.

WORKS CONSULTED

This framework is based in not only the extensive experience of practitioners at HSIs, emerging HSIs, and “striving” HSI campuses in the network, but HSI-NOW would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of scholars and practitioners whose research and insights have informed its creation:

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Mitchneck, B. (2022). Operationalizing the Servingness Framework: Metrics for Institutional Transformation at Hispanic-Serving Institutions. *The University of Arizona College of Social & Behavioral Sciences' School of Geography, Development & Environment*, in collaboration with the *University of Arizona's Hispanic-Serving Institution Initiatives* and the *National Science Foundation*. Retrieved from:

https://issuu.com/sbstech/docs/nsf_hsi_report_v3_updated

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