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STUDENT SUCCESS AT ONE BORDERLANDS HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

A Dissertation

by

NEDA GOERLITZ RAMÍREZ

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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Major Subject: Educational Leadership

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

December 2022

STUDENT SUCCESS AT ONE BORDERLANDS HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

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NEDA GOERLITZ RAMÍREZ

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Israel Aguilar
Co-Chair of Committee

Dr. Federico Guerra, Jr.
Co-Chair of Committee

Dr. Melissa E. Abeyta
Committee Member

Dr. Rosa M. Banda
Committee Member

December 2022

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the perceptions of student success of campus leaders at one Borderlands Hispanic-Serving Institution. The study incorporated 4 interviews, 9 observations, analysis of 23 documents as well as additional research to answer the research questions. The three themes emerged from the study were: (1) encouraging and empowering students to succeed, (2) removing barriers to student success, and (3) serving by default. Recommendations for educational leaders included serving by design, setting high expectations, getting to know students, encouraging and empowering students, and removing barriers to student success. Additionally, the findings of this study suggest that studying student success, investigating what is working at effective institutions, learning from effective educators and programs, and finding out more about barriers to student success will enable higher education and other leaders to better serve Latin* students.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my ancestors, descendants, and Lord. I would especially like this dedication to acknowledge my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who set excellent examples for me to follow. My current descendants are Cecilia Miley Califa and Elías Raphael Califa. Additionally, I dedicate this dissertation to the one and only Lord of all- may we all learn to love and serve Him.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Student success in higher education has implications for students, the institutions that educate them, and society (Franco, Lozano & Subbian, 2020; Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020; Vargas & Ward, 2020). For students, success in higher education often links to social mobility, increased financial earnings and rewards, and an otherwise more stable life (Postsecondary Value Commission, 2021). For institutions that strive to educate Latin*s and other students, student success impacts their national rankings, enrollment numbers, graduation rates, alum involvement, and reputations (Drenzer & Villarreal, 2015; Hurtado, Gonzalez & Galdeano, 2015). For society, student success impacts how taxpayers and politicians view federal and state appropriations for higher education (McKeown-Moak & Mullin, 2014). Additionally, society expects these institutions of higher education to produce leaders in various fields of scholastic endeavor and achievement (Reguerin, Poblete, Cooper, Ordaz & Moreno, 2020).

Moreover, there are many definitions of student success (Cuellar, 2015; Martinez, 2019). Traditional definitions of student success include retention and graduation rates for colleges and universities (Nunez, 2014; Santiago, 2012). However, in addition to retention and graduation rates, there are other definitions of student success (Garcia, 2018a). For example, some students, parents of students, faculty, staff, and administrators define student success by debt load upon graduation, student self-esteem and perceived worth, and or successful adjustment into new

personal and professional roles (Chen & Bar, 2019; Martinez, 2019). Additionally, student success at a Hispanic-Serving Institution may look different or require more, or various resources than student success at a Predominantly White Institution, PWI, or other institution of higher education may require (Nunez, Hurtado & Galdeano, 2015).

For example, students at HSIs often face multiple challenges simultaneously (Davila & Montelongo, 2020). Many students at HSIs are first-generation college students from low-income families and sometimes face other challenges like language barriers or immigration status issues (Covarrubias, Vazquez, Moreno, Estrada, Valle & Zuniga, 2020; Martinez, 2018). As a result, educational stakeholders must investigate how campus leaders define and help support student success in a borderland HSI setting. This study asked students, staff, faculty, and administrative campus leaders to share their insights about student success and organizational initiatives that other HSIs could replicate. Moreover, this study sought information about how campus leaders could integrate Latin* culture into the university's organizational culture.

Traditional definitions of student success include numerical categories that can be quantified (Nunez & Elizondo, 2015). Categories such as first- and second-year student retention rates, four- and six-year graduation rates, and debt load rates upon graduation are all quantifiable indicators of student success (Baker, 2019). First- and second-year student retention rates are often how universities are evaluated in the effectiveness of enrollment and recruitment (McKeown-Moak & Mullin, 2014). Moreover, four- and six-year graduation rates define the college or university's effectiveness (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). A low debt load upon graduation is the goal of most students enrolled (Johnson, Kuykendall III & Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

Some non-traditional criteria of student success include student self-esteem and transformation (Castellanos & Jones, 2003a; Castellanos & Jones, 2003b; Covarrubias et al.,

2020). Sometimes more difficult to quantify or measure, personal growth and transformation require a relationship with someone who can observe the change over time (Lopez, Maravilla & Mercado-Lopez, 2020). Counselors, career advisors, faculty, and other staff who can see student growth over time may have insight into this kind of student success that others without direct contact with students may miss (Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020). Moreover, constructs such as high self-esteem, belief in one's abilities to be helpful and productive, and a sense of belonging are other constructs more challenging to measure numerically yet equally important (Kato & Marinez, 2020). As a result, it is essential to listen carefully to the voices of university campus leaders and how they define and support student success.

Campus leaders will define student success differently (Rendon, Nora, & Kanagala,2015). College or university presidents and deans may look at a more macro perspective, while faculty may consider constructs related to instruction or achievement in one field or course (Cortez, 2015; Gonzales, 2015; Ledesma & Burciaga, 2019; Walker, 2019). Depending on how much contact staff members have with students, they may define student success differently (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015; Torres, 2015). Students may also have a different idea of success (Gonzalez, 2009; Espino, 2015; Montiel, 2018). As a result, researchers must ask the borderland HSI campus leaders to share their perspectives and inform others of their beliefs.

In addition to general definitions of student success, the context in which campus leaders define, describe and help to foster student success also matters (Boland, 2019; Esmieu, 2019; Martinez, 2019). For example, students attending, stakeholders and staff supporting, faculty teaching, and administrators leading at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and or Tribal Colleges and Universities may need to define and

support student success differently than their peers at Predominantly White Institutions (Crazy Bull, 2019; Martinez & Gonzales, 2015; Preston, Jones & Brown, 2019; Torres, 2015; Walker, 2019). Moreover, the institution may need to accept a different identity from an emerging or fully serving Hispanic Serving Institution (Vargas & Ward, 2020). As a result, education stakeholders must carefully consider the input from campus leaders about defining and fostering student success (Canales & Chahin, 2019; Crazy Bull, 2019; Preston et al., 2019; Walker, 2019). Additionally, Americans and other HSIs can learn from functioning and effective HSIs to replicate practices that prove effective for students (Griffin-Fennell & Lerner, 2020; Ordaz, Reguerin, & Sanchez, 2020; Reguerin et al., 2020).

Latin* Student Success

Fostering Latin* student success at a borderland HSI or any school may require different strategies and supports (Canales & Chahin, 2019). For example, many Latin* first-generation students may need help navigating the college or university system (Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020). In like manner, many Latin* students have significant financial needs (Covarrubias et al., 2020). Some Latin* students may have been income contributors to their families. Moreover, other Latin* students may face challenges with their immigration or citizenship status, affecting their education costs (Montiel, 2018).

Other Latin* students may struggle with language issues or inadequate academic preparation (Bhattacharya, Ordaz, Mosqueda, & Cooper, 2020). As a result, these students need social and academic support to succeed in higher education (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015; Rendon et al., 2015; Torres, 2015). Moreover, other Latin* students may face familial or social pressures related to pursuing higher education (Guerra, 2006). In that case, the college or university must seek to create links between the institution, the student, and the family or social

structure to support the student (Covarrubias et al., 2020; Lopez et al., 2020; Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020). In all cases, colleges and universities have a choice to either attempt and strive to meet the needs of Latin* students or to lose students who do not have sufficient support (Masters, Beltran & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2020).

If colleges and universities seek to serve their Latin* students, they must first understand and listen to the needs of their students (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015). Once colleges and universities better understand the needs of Latin* students, they must make a diligent effort to meet the needs of their students (Torres, 2015). Meeting the needs of the Latin* and other students may include academic tutoring, counseling, fostering a family connection with the institution, mentoring programs, financial assistance, support for international or DACA students, and significant incentives and support to keep the students progressing in school (Covarrubias et al., 2020; Montiel, 2018; Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020). For education stakeholders who understand the importance of creating equity and parity of achievement between cultural US minority groups, strategies to help foster Latin* and other student success at borderland and other HSIs will be a high priority (Canales & Chahin, 2019). Moreover, the education stakeholders will understand the importance of supporting and funding US HSIs.

Borderland HSIs

Educational stakeholders find borderland Hispanic Serving Institutions in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The borderlands are the area of the United States that borders Mexico. Major borderland cities include San Diego, California; Yuma, Arizona; Tucson, Arizona; Las Cruces, New Mexico; El Paso, Texas; Laredo, Texas; and McAllen, Texas. 23 US counties border Mexico. California, San Diego, and Imperial counties border Mexico. In Arizona, Yuma, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise counties border Mexico. In New Mexico,

Hidalgo, Luna, and Doña Ana counties border Mexico. In Texas, 14 counties border Mexico. The Texas borderland counties are El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Brewster, Terrell, Val Verde, Kinney, Maverick, Webb, Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo, and Cameron.

The borderland states with Mexico have more Latin*s than other states in the US. For example, in New Mexico, there are 1,020,817, or 48.79% Latin*s in the population. Texas has 11,116,881, or 39.34%, Latin*s in the population. California has 15,327,688, or 39.02%, Latin*s in the state. Lastly, Arizona has 2,208,663, or 31.33%, Latin*s. Although not all Latin*s in each state will attend an HSI or pursue higher education, HSIs in these states must learn more about how to serve their Latin* students best. According to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, HACU (n.d.), 66% of Latin* undergraduates choose to attend an HSI. Therefore, with HSIs in the borderland areas and states, we must learn what these students need and how best to serve them.

Students who attend borderland and other HSIs sometimes face challenges that others do not (Nunez et al., 2015). For example, many Latin* students are first-generation college students (Covarrubias et al., 2020). Additionally, some Latin* students arrive in a higher education setting with incomplete, inadequate, or weak academic preparation (Fuentes, 2006). Therefore, they need additional academic tutoring and support to be successful (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015). Moreover, some Latin* students attending HSIs face language challenges or issues related to English not being their first language (Contreras & Gandara, 2006; Fuentes, 2006; Quijada & Alvarez, 2006). In that case, the HSIs need to consider providing additional bilingual tutoring and academically prepared instructors who can assist the students with their transition into English academic writing for all subject areas (Bhattacharya et al., 2020).

Financial need is another major issue for many Latin* students (Nora, 2003). Especially for first-generation college students who may have had to work already to help support their families, the decision to pursue higher education can be financially overwhelming and potentially devastating (Orozco, 2003). As a result, borderland HSIs must work with the students and their families to explain the financial aid packages and awards and what options students may have to work or continue helping their families financially while going to school (Ortega, Frye, Nellum, Kamimura, & Vidal-Rodriguez, 2015). Immigration status is another consideration for many Latin*s attending HSIs (Montiel, 2018). For example, students born in other countries arrived in the United States as children and have recently received national attention (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2020). Often, these students have been in the United States most of their lives but may have yet to have the opportunity to become legal citizens. As a result, HSIs must be prepared to assist students struggling with their current immigration status (Cisneros & Lopez, 2020).

A sense of belonging and other family issues can affect all students at any college or university (Kato & Marinez, 2020; Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020). However, these issues tend to affect Latin* students, who may have a cultural shock as first-generation college students trying to navigate higher education (Covarrubias et al., 2020). In this case, additional counseling services, mentoring and family programs, community initiatives, and family campus days can help address some of these concerns (Torres, 2015). Additionally, HSIs will only help their Latin* and other students by adding counselors, events, programs, and initiatives to serve the Latin* and other diverse students on their campuses academically and socially (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015). Moreover, the strategies of involving the family in deciding to pursue higher education, creating spaces on campus for the families to join in and show their support, having

cultural and professional campus and community mentoring programs, and adding additional culturally sensitive counselors to the staff can help Latin* and other students to succeed (Covarrubias et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

In the borderland region, Latin*s comprise approximately 36.78% of the population (US Census Bureau, 2022). As a result, the lack of academic achievement and educational attainment in the borderland states affects more people than in other US states. Research shows that higher education links to more significant economic gains and social mobility (Postsecondary Value Commission, 2021). Therefore, colleges and universities must study and understand how to foster Latin* student achievement. Moreover, in addition to simply enrolling and retaining Latin* students, colleges and universities need to work to also "serve" Latin* students (García, 2019).

US Latin* Academic Achievement

In higher education, Latin*s achieve graduation rates lower than Whites. According to Shack and Nichols (2017), in 2016, 47.1% of White adults attained higher education in the United States. In contrast, only 22.6% of Latin*s in the U.S. achieved higher education. With that 24.5% difference in attaining higher education and the growing Latin* demographics, U.S. institutions need to know more about fostering Latin* student success. Moreover, with 66% of Latin* undergraduate students choosing to attend HSIs, HSIs must know how to enable Latin* student success (HACU, n.d.).

In the borderland regions of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, 36.78% of the population is Latin* (US Census Bureau, 2022). However, only 20.1% of Latin*s in the four states are achieving some higher education (Schack & Nichols, 2017). As a result, HSIs,

borderland HSIs, emerging HSIs, and non-HSIs must learn what they can do to help foster Latin* student success. Research shows that attainment of higher education leads to better work opportunities, higher income, and more economic and other forms of stability. Therefore, researchers must work to help inform practitioners in higher education about what they can do to foster Latin* student success in higher education.

In addition to attaining higher education in the forms of an associate's, bachelor, master, or doctoral degree, students must also consider the retention and graduation rates of the college or university that they attend. For example, according to the institutional website, for the 2019-2020 academic year, the borderland HSI in this study had an 81% retention rate and a 29% 4-year graduation rate. These rates are significant because they indicate that most students persist through their first year of higher education into the second year. However, for some reason, only 29% of students graduate within four years. Several factors can affect these numbers, and borderland and other HSIs will serve themselves well in exploring what factors affect the students.

Moreover, debt load upon graduation is another critical factor that impacts Latin*s and other students (Webber & Burns, 2021). Student debt load is the amount of money a student owes in student and other loans after graduation. Moreover, many Latin* students are first-generation college students whose families may or may not depend on them for financial support, so financial aid packages, information, and explanations are essential (Ortega et al., 2015). Students need to understand what the university or college offers to help them pay for their education (Montiel, 2018). Similarly, the university or college must inform students about the average debt load with which students graduate (Baker, 2019). The college or university is

also obligated to disclose students about scholarships, programs, or opportunities that would help them lower their debt load upon graduation (Lobo & Burke-Smalley, 2018).

Servingness at borderland HSIs

Many issues affect borderland HSIs who strive to serve students (Nunez et al., 2015). For example, language barriers, academic preparation, financial need, immigration status, sense of belonging, community, and family issues can all affect students trying to attain academic achievement at US borderland and other HSIs (Covarrubias et al., 2020; Kato & Marinez, 2020; Montiel, 2018). Therefore, HSIs must become experts in identifying the needs of Latin* students and becoming tireless workers in removing any barriers that may block Latin* students from achieving their personal and academic goals (Canales & Chahin, 2019; Hernandez, 2020). Moreover, borderland and other HSIs must come to identify the strengths and assets of their students and strive to build upon those first (Rendon et al., 2015). As colleges and universities come to realize that the language, culture, background, and lived experiences of the students can be starting points for instruction and integration into content area conversations in the classrooms, the colleges and universities will likely succeed in serving their Latin* and other diverse students (Rendon, 1994).

Gina García (2017) identifies four types of HSIs and describes what each type of HSI does. In García's (2017) model, "Latino Serving" institutions have both an "organizational culture that reflects Latinos" and "organizational outcomes for Latinos." The other three types of HSIs- Latino-Producing, Latino-Enrolling, and Latino-Enhancing are not as effective as HSIs that are true "Latino Serving" (García, 2017). As a result, this study helps inform practitioners and stakeholders of practices that can help HSIs become truly "Latino Serving." Therefore, the potential issues Latin* students may face, such as language barriers, academic preparation,

financial need, immigration status, sense of belonging, community, and family issues, become markers of how effective the HSI is at serving its Latin* and other students. A structural, functional framework helps explain how and why practitioners behave the way they do at truly Latin*-Serving HSIs.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to inform HSI stakeholders about best practices that campus leaders can incorporate into the institutional culture to serve Latin* students better. As García's (2017) model suggests, Latin* Serving institutions have an organizational culture that reflects Latin*s and organizational outcomes for Latin*s. Therefore, it is not enough to produce, enroll, or enhance Latin* students. This study investigated what practitioners could do to truly serve Latin* and other students.

García's (2017) statement that "an organizational culture that reflects Latin*s" must be integrated into a Latin*-Serving HSI can have many meanings. For example, using Spanish to communicate deadlines, events, and organizational priorities is one strategy Latin*-Serving HSIs could use (García, 2019). Another indicator could be Latin* leaders at all levels of the organizational chart (Canales & Chahin, 2019). However, another example of an organizational culture that reflects Latin*s could be culturally responsive pedagogy integrated throughout the college or university curriculum and a strong Latin* studies program or department (Rendon et al., 2015). Finally, having faculty and staff who serve students and understand their circumstances can greatly help serve Latin* and other diverse students (Gonzales, 2015). For example, having Latin* counselors, tutors, faculty, and staff or counselors, tutors, faculty, and staff familiar with Latin* language and culture could greatly help reflect Latin*s in the college or university (Martinez & Gonzalez, 2015; Torres, 2015).

In addition, the most effective HSIs have positive organizational outcomes for students (Garcia, 2017). In this category, the graduation and retention rates and the debt load upon graduation are measurable results for Latin* students that colleges and universities can evaluate (Baker, 2019; Nunez & Elizondo, 2015). Other organizational outcomes include helping students create personal and professional networks to help them succeed post-graduation (Garcia, 2019). Successful job placement is another organizational outcome that a college or institution can evaluate in supporting its Latin* students to succeed (Torres, 2015). By striving to have an organizational culture that reflects Latin*s and a college or university that has successful organizational outcomes for Latin* students, a borderland or other HSI can be genuine "Latin*-Serving."

Research Questions

The research questions for this study explore how university campus leaders at one borderland United States HSI define and support student success. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do campus leaders perceive student success at a US borderlands HSI?
2. How do campus leaders support student success at a US borderlands HSI?
3. What organizational initiatives does this borderlands HSI do to serve Latin* students better?
4. How do the experiences and beliefs of campus leaders, students, and faculty inform practice?

Theoretical Framework

Structural functionalism is a theoretical framework borrowed from business. Originating in the 1950s, structural functionalism teaches that the structure or organization- such as a business, college, or university- will function in whatever way allows the organization to survive

(Charmaz, 2011). Moreover, structural functionalism strives to explain the relationships between institutions and individuals and how well the institutions achieve specific social tasks, such as retaining or graduating students. Additionally, Charmaz (2011) explained: "structural functionalism emphasizes social roles within institutions" and "assumes consensus between individuals and segments of society" (p. 375). Furthermore, structural functionalism investigates social order to make sense of society.

In this study, structural functionalism helps explain how each campus leader chose their actions to form opinions and practices about Latin* student success. For example, one campus leader explained that, in her experience, creating a meaningful and substantive relationship with students helped the students achieve tremendous success. For another campus leader, structural functionalism highlighted the relationship between the class instructor and students. A third campus leader used administrative capacities to seek to include more students in an undergraduate enrichment program to help Latin* students succeed by exposing them to individuals, institutions, offices, and experiences in Washington, D.C. Finally, a fourth campus leader described how the university sought to use familiarity with Latin* language and culture to reach its Latin* and other students.

As a result, structural functionalism is a practical framework to help explain the thoughts and behaviors of the campus leaders in this study. Moreover, structural functionalism can help explain why the university would choose to call upon the language, culture, and personal experiences of the majority of its students to find ways to serve them better. The social roles of the university include instructing the students in and out of class, offering support to the students- academically and otherwise, and creating an environment where the majority of students can succeed (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015). As a result, structural functionalism helps

delineate how the university will choose to act to ensure the university's survival and strive to best meet the needs of Latin* students. Finally, structural functionalism can assist in describing how the university has adapted, changed, and grown in the direction of first understanding the needs of its Latin* students and then tirelessly striving to meet that student needs.

Methodology

The researcher used a structural, functional lens for this case study to conduct interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell, 2007). The researcher used stratified purposeful sampling to recruit participants from campus leadership groups (Creswell, 2012). The four study participants came from student, staff, faculty, and administrative leadership groups on campus. The researcher conducted four interviews, nine observations, and nineteen items of the document collection. A structural, functional lens helped analyze the data.

Significance of the Study

This study investigates what college and university campus leaders can do to address parity of group achievement in higher education. More specifically, this study uses the voices and actions of campus leaders at one borderland US HSI to describe how the campus leaders can foster and support Latin* student success. Additionally, this study helps clarify what practitioners and stakeholders can do to help borderland HSI students to reach their full potential (Covarrubias et al., 2020). Because Latin*s make up almost 40% of the population in the borderland states, this study will help describe what campus leaders can do to foster Latin* student success in their colleges or universities. Stakeholders can augment Latin* and other student success in colleges and universities by exploring the parity of Latin* student success in higher education and equitable and wise ways to use US HSI federal dollars.

For stakeholders interested in social justice and group parity of success in higher education, this study describes practices that campus leaders use to foster student success. For example, we know that Latin*s comprise 48.49% of the population in New Mexico. Therefore, people from New Mexico and other places with large concentrations of Latin*s should take great interest in learning more about what Latin* students need to succeed. In the New Mexico example, Latin*s make up almost 1 in 2 people in the state. As a result, the state cannot afford to underserve or not serve this population. In like manner, Arizona (31.33% Latin*), California (39.02% Latin*), and Texas (39.34% Latin*) also have significant Latin* populations. For these reasons, stakeholders in the borderland states should be interested in learning more about how to serve Latin* students best.

The use of federal funds in higher education should interest all higher education stakeholders (Garcia & Koren, 2020). Moreover, higher education stakeholders should demand accountability and transparency in how HSIs spend their federally designated HSI funds (Ortega et al., 2015). Because the US federal government awards funds to any college or university, enrolling at least 25% Latin* students, each HSI should be prepared to share how those dollars are spent (Garcia, 2019). This study will help inform stakeholders about potential best practices for US borderland and other HSIs. Additionally, for citizens interested in how to use taxpayer money at US borderland HSIs, this study offers suggestions and recommendations for Latin* student success.

Definition of Terms

This section will include a list of terms used throughout this study. The terms: (a) borderlands, (b) Hispanic-Serving Institution, HSI, (c) Hispanic, (d) Latin*, and (d) stakeholders will be used throughout this study.

Borderlands- the area of the US-Mexico border that includes California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas (Anzaldúa, 2012).

Hispanic-Serving Institution, HSI- any postsecondary non-profit public or private institution that enrolls at least 25% Latin* undergraduate students (U.S. Department of Education).

Hispanic- Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race. (US Census Bureau, 2022)

Latin*- refers to any person of Hispanic or Latino origin from a Spanish-speaking country in Central, South, North America, or Spain. This term refers to a person or group's ethnic identity. This term is used instead of "Hispanic" when referring to the people. It also refers to the intersectionality of identities and the opportunity for individuals and groups to describe and name themselves (Salinas, 2020).

Stakeholders- refer to the people and groups within and outside of the university or higher education that have a stake in how the university performs. For example, internal stakeholders include university students, faculty, staff, and administration. External stakeholders include parents of the university students, the state legislature, the university system board, the state coordinating board, and community members (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010; Rivers, Gibson, Contreras, Livingston & Hanson, 2018; Sikes, 2018).

Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations. The main limitation of this study was the response of prospective study participants. The researcher consciously chose to conduct this study during the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, most prospective study participants were likely working from home and may have had other considerations or priorities that required attention. Out of more than 50 invitations, only 4 participants responded.

Nevertheless, the researcher used rigorous research methods and practiced multiple coding cycles for the interviews, observations, and document analyses. As a result, though there were only four participants in this study, the researcher captured a complete picture. The study's limitation did not include cloud or diminish the findings.

Summary

This chapter introduced this study's background and foundational elements (Grant & Onsaloo, 2014). This chapter included the statement of the problem, theoretical framework, methodology, significance of the study, the purpose of the study, scope, and contribution. Additionally, the chapter reviewed the study research questions, the definition of terms, the limitations of the study, and a summary. These elements of the study help provide a background for the reader to understand and situate this study. Moreover, by giving this introductory overview, readers can gain essential insights into the significant pieces of this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will combine study constructs and theories that will inform the study (Imenda, 2014). Campus leaders' beliefs can influence their behavior, policies, and plans (Cortez, 2015). Hispanic-serving institutions are a relatively new phenomenon still exploring their identities (García et al., 2019). In addition, the sociopolitical environment and current policy certainly impact the university and how it functions (Long, 2015). This chapter will help inform the reader of the relevant literature that will help encapsulate and guide the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). This literature review will cover structural-functional theory, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, campus leader beliefs, stakeholder roles, university considerations, and the sociopolitical environment.

This study will contribute to the literature on what works at borderland Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the United States and beyond. Moreover, this study will inform higher education stakeholders who want to know how to define and support student success at borderland HSIs. This study will help fill the gap in the literature about what borderland HSIs can do to serve Latin* students better. Additionally, this study differs from other studies about HSIs because it occurs in the borderlands between Mexico and the United States. As a result, the findings are both unique to the borderlands region and potentially applicable to other U.S. HSIs.

Structural Functional Theory

The theoretical foundations that the researcher chooses can influence the course and some structure of the study (Imenda, 2014). This researcher took an inductive approach to gather data; therefore, structural functionalism as a theory of analysis helped inform the study. The structural, functional theory helped explain university campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and practices in the context of this university as a borderland HSI. Moreover, the practicality of structural, functional theory helped ameliorate the campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and practices. Structural functionalism also helped explain some of the relationships and experiences that formed the definitions of student success of the campus leaders.

The structural functionalist theory is a traditional theory that emerged in the 1950s to help explain the relationships between individuals and institutions (Charmaz, 2011). As Charmaz (2011) explains,

> Structural functionalism was the reigning theory of the 1950s. It invokes a biological metaphor, addresses the structure of social institutions, and evaluates how well they accomplished critical social tasks such as socializing children and controlling crime. Structural functionalism assumes consensus between individuals and segments of society, studies social order, and emphasizes social roles within institutions. (p. 375)

Although structural functionalism is an older theory, some of its tenets helped explain themes within the study. For example, a structural-functionalist perspective helps explain the

relationships between campus leaders—their beliefs and experiences—and their actions that attempt to impact student success on campus.

In her study, Fennell (2008) investigated structural functionalism and other perspectives of female leaders. Fennell (2008) explored the role of leadership with structural, functional theory. To balance out and transcend the limitations of structural functionalism, Fennell (2008) decided to add constructivist, feminist, and critical perspectives. Together, these perspectives helped explain the relationship between structural functionalism and leadership. In her analysis of female leaders, Fennell (2008) concluded that leadership could be an exercise of power and influence.

Chilcott (1998) advocates for structural functionalism "as a method for conducting fieldwork and as a format for analysis of ethnographic data" (p. 103). Although the researcher will use structural functionalism as a theoretical framework to help explain some of the themes in the study, the researcher will also use a critical lens (Ek, Cerecer, Alanís, & Rodríguez, 2010). Chilcott (1998) asserts that structural functionalism "remains a powerful model" despite its age (p. 103). Furthermore, Chilcott (1998) states,

> Because of its mechanical nature, structural functionalism is easily understood by professional educators and helpful in solving their problems. As a heuristic device, functionalist theory can aid in solving a problem that is otherwise incapable of theoretical justification. (p. 103)

Moreover, the structural, functional lens will help explain the university campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and practices.

Another example of how a structural, functional lens can be used to examine the experiences and beliefs of leaders is Hemmer, Aguilar, and Fleming's (2018) study about rural superintendents. Hemmer et al. (2018) explains structural functionalism in a more modern sense as a theory

> that highlights the natural tension between rational aspects (i.e., tasks, structures, and technical side of organizations) and non-rational aspects (people) of organizations and which suggests that in order to achieve an organizations' formal goals (i.e., products such as test scores), the informal goals (i.e., processes such as relationship-building) are equally important because the formal goals of an organization are influenced by the people and pressures both inside and outside of the organization. (p. 743)

Therefore, Hemmer et al. (2018) emphasize "how to facilitate improvement through relationships and connections among social actors rather than an emphasis on his or her behaviors" (p. 743). As a result, structural functionalism helped explain the themes that emerged from university campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and practices.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Hispanic-Serving Institutions are institutions of higher education that are public or private and not for profit (García, 2019). For-profit higher education institutions are not eligible to receive federal funds as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (Núñez, Crisp & Elizondo, 2016). Hispanic-Serving Institutions can be 2-year or 4-year institutions and must enroll at least 25% of "full-time equivalent enrollment" (FTE) Latin* students (García, 2019, p. 1). García (2019) explains that HSIs can be located across the United States and Puerto Rico. Moreover, HSIs

range in their visions, missions, and purposes. HSIs can range from community or junior colleges to doctoral-granting institutions. Additionally, the HSIs must enroll 25% of Latin* students, but not all institutions that could be HSIs are designated as such.

The history of Hispanic-serving institutions, how they began, their purpose, their growth, and part of their organizational identity will follow. García (2019) argues that a group called the Hispanic Higher Educational Coalition (HHEC) formed in 1978 "and began delivering testimonies that stressed the need for increased funding for what they called 'Hispanic Colleges'" (p. 2). These Latin* advocacy groups claimed, "that although postsecondary institutions that enrolled a large percentage of Latinx students were eligible for Title III funding under the developing institution's definition, they had been inconsistently awarded funding through the competitive grant process" (García, 2019, p. 2). Nevertheless, advocates continued testifying during the periods to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1981, 1984, and 1985. Although some could initially count these efforts as fruitless, the advocates persisted. In 1986, a group called the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, HACU was formed in San Antonio, Texas. The term "Hispanic-Serving Institution" was first "coined" by HACU at its very first conference in 1986 (García, 2019, p. 2).

By 1992, the federal government began using the term "Hispanic-Serving Institution," and the 25% enrollment criteria were "solidified" (García, 2019, p. 2). Nevertheless, it was not until 1998 "that the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions program was established under a separate section of the HEA known as Title V" (García, 2019, p. 2). This was significant because the funds awarded today are still from Title V of the HEA (García, 2019). Furthermore, although

"Hispanic-Serving Institutions" have a race factor in their title, they are automatically granted federal funds on that basis (Núñez et al., 2016). Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCUs, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, TCUs, are automatically granted federal funds because of their historic missions to serve historically underrepresented and underserved populations. However, the criteria to be a "Hispanic-Serving Institution" is based upon undergraduate enrollment criteria. Ironically, HSIs serve more Black and Native American students today than HBCUs and TCUs (Núñez et al., 2016).

The purpose of HSIs has been hotly debated since the federal designation came into being in the 1990s (García, 2019). For example, there is a debate and sore spot in the literature about the difference between "Hispanic-serving" and "Hispanic-enrolling" institutions (García, 2016). Some scholars suggest that some institutions that get the name "Hispanic-serving" by federal designation only enroll Latin* students and do not provide them the cultural, institutional, and other support that students need to succeed (García, 2017). As a result, scholars and researchers have undertaken the task of identifying what it means to indeed be "Hispanic-serving," with the implication that there is more to "Hispanic-serving" than what the federal designation requires (García et al., 2019). Different scholars have identified and suggested other strategies, but overall, they all strive to lead in fostering Latin* student, faculty, administrator, and staff success (Cortez, 2015; Cuellar, 2015; Gonzáles, 2015).

Although advocates for HSIs initially sought colleges and universities with a mission for serving Latin* students, they soon had to adapt their vision (Olivas, 2015). Because the federal government uses enrollment numbers and not the vision and mission of the college or university

as identification criteria, the number and identities of HSIs can change year by year (Núñez et al., 2016). Nevertheless, as the Latin* population continues to grow, the number of institutions claiming “Hispanic-Serving Institution” status and “emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution” status also continues to grow (Núñez et al., 2016). “Emerging” HSIs are “those with a Hispanic student population between 15% and 24.9%” (Martínez, 2015). According to HACU (n.d.), in 2018-2019, there were 352 emerging HSIs in 35 states and Puerto Rico. In the same year, 2018-2019, HACU (n.d.) reported 539 total HSIs in 25 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Organizational identity is an integral part of any institution. Organizational identity is critical for HSIs whose historical or practical mission may not have served Latin* students (García, 2016). An organizational identity has to do with the vision and mission of the institution and the image that the institution uses to portray itself (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). As Owens and Valesky (2015) state, “The inner state of organizational participants is an important key to understanding their behavior” (p. 184). Furthermore, as Bolman and Deal (2013) report, “Organizations need people (for their energy, effort, and talent), and people need organizations (for the many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they offer), but their respective needs are not always well aligned” (p. 135). As a result, organizational identity can be fluid and change as programs, initiatives, and policies change (Drori, Delmestri & Oberg, 2016). As a result, campus leaders must focus on best practices for faculty, students, and staff (Castellanos & Jones, 2003a & 2003b; Cortez, 2015).

HSI Community Strengths

There are several strengths that HSIs and their communities offer students. Persistence is a strength and asset many Latin*, and other students at HSIs bring to school (Nora, Barlow & Crisp, 2006). Resilience and overcoming obstacles are different strengths many HSI students and community members have learned from a young age (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003). Love, support, and family closeness are other assets many HIS students bring to school (Cuellar, 2015). Finally, community supports are essential and integral to supporting Latin* and other HSI students through degree attainment (Rodríguez & Galdeano, 2015). Persistence, resilience, family, and community support are all critical factors that many HSI students have integrated into their lives.

Persistence. Although persistence is not automatically ingrained in each Latin* student, many Latin* students have life circumstances that have taught them how to persist (Giraldo, Huerta & Solórzano, 2018). For example, some students have worked with their families in the fields as migrant farm workers, while others have helped support their families financially since they could work (Moll, Amanti, Neff & González, 2005). This kind of responsibility felt from a young age is that many Latin* students have ingrained in them the idea that they must go forward and try to advance no matter what (Kiyama, 2018). These “life lessons” can easily be applied to their academic paths and challenges (Torres, 2006). Although the students may not have learned direct undergraduate academic content in these early life circumstances and through these challenges, they learned how to persist through complex and challenging cases and times (Montiel, 2018).

Resilience. Resilience is another vital lesson many Latin* students at HSIs learn at home with their families (Montiel, 2018). Again, many Latin* students face complex challenges in and out of the classroom during their academic experiences (Fuentes, 2006; Quijada & Alvarez, 2006; Watford, Rivas, Burciaga & Solorzano, 2006). As a result, students learn the invaluable skill of overcoming and enduring challenges (García, 2018). Resilience in academic endeavors often comes from the resilience students have learned in other complex or challenging environments (Orozco, 2003). Again, lessons learned in the fields, helping families, or working in different jobs to earn money for themselves, and their families can help the students overcome setbacks (Moll et al., 2005; Montiel, 2018).

Family. Family is an excellent resource for many Latin* and other HIS students (Cuellar, 2015). Although some family members and structures may be far away in the distance, the love and support that the students feel help propel them forward. Moreover, the family can include mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other extended relatives or mentors (Castellanos & Jones, 2003a; Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo & Castellanos, 2003; Orozco, 2003). In addition to other factors, many Latin* students choose to attend HSIs that will facilitate them staying closer to family support while in school (Cuellar, 2015). Finally, some students create mock family support structures at or near their campuses to substitute or supplement the regular support they would usually feel from families (González, 2009).

Community Supports. Community support for HSI students can take many forms (Contreras & Gándara, 2006). For example, in addition to the family, extended family, and

friends of family, organizations and individuals within the community can help supplement support for students (Cuellar, 2015). For example, counseling centers, local worship centers, mentor programs, and volunteer organizations can help encourage and support HSI students (Cortez, 2015; Howard-Hamilton et al., 2009; Segura-Herrera, 2006). Although the community support may not include direct family members, these individuals and organizations can help mentor, guide, and encourage HSI students (Cortez, 2015). In like manner, many HSI students need these resources and community supports to face some of the challenges they may encounter.

HSI Challenges

In addition to natural supports and strengths that emerge from Latin* and other communities within an HSI setting, there are almost certainly challenges that the HSIs face (Núñez, Hurtado & Galdeano, 2015). For example, first-generation college students often face difficulty navigating college for the first time (Herrera, 2003). In addition, sometimes high school students who have not lived independently or need to manage their finances experience financial challenges (Nora et al., 2006). When the family unit is low-income, sometimes the student is expected to work to help support the family while also studying (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003). Another common challenge for HSI students is immigration status (Fuentes, 2006). Some HSI students are US citizens or have their paperwork ready once they start school; others, however, face difficulties such as paying out-of-state tuition and having to secure paperwork that will enable them to study (MacDonald & García, 2003). Lastly, some HSI students struggle with their first or native language being something other than English

(Castellanos & Jones, 2003a). As a result, these students may require extra academic support, coaching, and instruction to help them achieve success in college (Torres, 2015).

First Generation. All first-generation undergraduate students face challenges that other students with at least one parent who completed undergraduate studies do not face (Fuentes, 2006). Sometimes, first-generation undergraduate students need a role model, someone to ask questions, or someone familiar with how things work in a university (Canales & Chahin, 2019). As a result, the first-generation undergraduate student challenge can affect Latin* and all other students who do not have a parent who completed undergraduate higher education studies (Hurtado & Sinha, 2006). Latin* students, in particular, face the issue of being first-generation undergraduate students at a higher rate than other ethnic groups (Nora et al., 2006). Preston and Assalone (2019) state, "Leaders must be in tune with the demographics of their students, as well as the issues and barriers they often come across on the road to success" (p. 200).

Low-Income. Family income is one of the most significant indicators of how students will score on standardized tests (Contreras & Gándara, 2006). As a result, some Latin* and other students who attend HSIs may not have the same cultural or class experiences as middle- or upper-income White students (Orozco, 2003). In addition, Latin* and other students from low-income families may struggle financially with the additional costs of pursuing an undergraduate higher education degree (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003). Nevertheless, students' strengths, assets, and determination can help them navigate the circumstance and find a way to succeed despite their challenges (Rendón, Nora & Kangala, 2015). Moreover, HSIs and other institutions that

pay special attention to and choose to assist students with significant financial needs financially often see the students thrive academically (Canales & Chahin, 2019).

Immigration. Immigration status is another issue that can affect Latin* and other students at HSIs (Fuentes, 2006). Immigration to the United States at any age can affect the academic and social development of the student (Montiel, 2018). Sometimes, immigration status works with other factors, such as language development and first-generation or low-income status, to affect students (Cuellar, 2015). Moreover, a student working to achieve legal citizenship may face barriers that other students do not experience (MacDonald & García, 2003). Again, although Latin* and other students may face immigration issues while pursuing their undergraduate studies, many students use their resilience, persistence, family support, and different strengths to help them persevere and continue.

Language. A student's first language can significantly affect their learning (Baker, 2011). For example, many Latin* students have Spanish as their first native language they learned at home (Orozco, 2003). Depending on the kind and efficiency of the bilingual education the students receive at school, there can be varying levels of bilingualism among Latin* students (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Moreover, many Latin* students at HSIs continue to struggle with learning and mastering English as an academic content area and the academy's language (Orozco, 2003). Nevertheless, Latin* and other students with a first language other than English continue to persist and strive for social and academic excellence in their studies (Martínez & Gonzáles, 2015).

Campus Leader Beliefs

In addition to theory, the campus leader's beliefs at an HSI will directly impact policies and practices in the campus leader's sphere of influence (Cortez, 2015). For example, if a student believes, "I am capable. I am smart. I can meet my challenges." They will likely be able to face the academic and social challenges of their studies and be successful (Bettencourt, Mwangi, Green, & Morales, 2020). However, if s/he encounters individuals or experiences that seem to challenge the positive beliefs about themselves repeatedly and over time, the student's beliefs can begin to change (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010).

Moreover, if campus administrators believe "Latin* students are as talented as any other ethnic or racial group," that administrator will likely implement policies and have expectations that Latin* students on campus can and will succeed (Castellanos & Jones, 2003a). As a result, this section will explore some potential thought processes and beliefs of the university's campus leaders. More specifically, this section will explore (a) deficit thinking and (b) values and how the beliefs and experiences of the campus leaders can influence their decisions.

Deficit Thinking

There are several lenses, views, and definitions of deficit thinking. Lin (2020) explores deficit thinking in terms of language. Lin (2020) states

> The 'English-deficit' model of students needs to be replaced by a dialogic, intercultural education model. That is, instead of framing the issue as the students' English language problem', this 'student deficit' discourse needs to be re-visited and re-conceptualized as an issue of higher education instructors/ academics/ curriculum policymakers who need

> to have more bottom-up interculturality awareness and academic language support strategies to teach in increasingly multilingual, multicultural, multi-epistemic settings. (p. 204)

Minichiello (2018) explains, "Deficit thinking occurs when negative perceptions of the "ability, aspirations, and work ethic of systematically marginalized peoples," particularly those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and belong to ethnic/racial minorities, are used to account for their disproportionately low academic achievement" (p. 270). Minichiello (2018) continues by describing, "Deficit thinking, therefore, is not only psychologically harmful to diverse students, but also works to limit their academic achievement indirectly through institutional policy and school curricula" (p. 270). As a result, campus leaders should be aware of deficit thinking and strive to combat such thinking with mindfulness, a potentially more positive outlook, and facts upon which to form their beliefs (Albrecht, 2018).

Moreover, Licona (2013) defines deficit thinking as "the idea that students, particularly of low-SES background and color, fail in school because they and their families have internal defects, or deficits, that thwart the learning process" (p. 862). Deficit thinking is an outdated, prejudiced, and racist idea. However, some teachers and school systems continue to espouse the logic. Focused on children in the K12 setting, Skrla and Scheurich (2001) explain that.

> The deficit thinking paradigm, as a whole, posits that students who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficiencies (such as cognitive and motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster- such as familial deficits and dysfunctions…The popular "at-risk" construct, now entrenched in educational circles,

views poor and working-class children and their families (typically of color) as predominantly responsible for school failure. (p. 235-236)

Moreover, Skrla and Scheurich (2001) explain how deficit views of their abilities often impact students of color from low-income homes. Unfortunately, low-income students of color are usually placed in less challenging academic classes, disproportionally entered in special education classes, and otherwise treated with lower expectations than their higher-income White peers. Additionally, low-income students of color often do not receive sufficient time in their bilingual programs to build a solid academic foundation in their native languages. As a result, remedial bilingual and other special instructional programs often include low-income students of color. Sadly, these same low-income students of color also experience more severe disciplinary actions than their higher-income White peers and are under-identified for gifted and talented and other enrichment education programs.

Deficit thinking can strike individual stakeholders or groups. As a result, students, staff, faculty, and administrators must work to monitor their thinking through mindfulness and strive to maintain high expectations for all students. Because individuals or groups who subscribe to or occasionally fall prey to deficit thinking about people or groups will tend to act out their beliefs in their behavior, the individuals must make mighty efforts to monitor themselves and the groups they are a part of. For example, a faculty member may have a bad experience with a student or a class. If the faculty member chooses to conclude the race or ethnicity of the students and their potential to learn or understand, the faculty member could spread this negative belief to other faculty members in the department. Left unchecked, deficit thinking about an individual or group

can negatively impact expectations, performance, and outcomes. Therefore, equipping students, staff, faculty, and administrators with the strategies of mindfulness and commitment to the investigation of facts in a case can help reduce unnecessary or blanket deficit thinking (Burciaga, 2015; Flessa, 2009; James-Wilson & Hancock, 2011; Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Weiner, 2006).

Values

The values of campus leaders will directly impact what they believe and how they behave (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010). For example, when Perrakis and Hagedorn (2010) asked students what would help their campus be more inviting to Latin* students, they had various and numerous answers. Some students referenced language; some students asked for classes in Spanish, while others requested that "having more people on campus who speak Spanish" would help (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 803). Other students mentioned food- "stuff that Hispanics like" (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 803). However, other students focused on "respect and treatment of students" (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 803). The students referenced "classes for the teachers to teach them how to treat Hispanic students" (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 803).

Individual and group beliefs also affect faculty, staff, and administrators (Culver, Young & Barnhardt, 2020). For example, in the Perrakis and Hagedorn (2010) study, one faculty member commented, "I think we need to provide more 'hand-holding' to our Hispanic students. The current culture of letting them navigate the system on their own does not work for our students" (p. 807). Administrators in the Perrakis and Hagedorn (2010) study also had ideas about how they could help the campus be more friendly to Latin* students. For example, when asked what the school could do to help more Latin* students attend, one administrator said, "We

need to emphasize that as long as they fulfill their high school requirements, they can attend college" (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 807). Moreover, another administrator shared, "We need to have a more systematic recruitment effort. Recruitment should begin at an earlier age, involve the parents more, and the efforts should be part of an organized plan that takes place regularly" (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010, p. 807).

Giacalone (2020) studied adult students' sense of belonging at a four-year university and found several essential points. For example, Giacalone's (2020) s findings included the benefits of a sense of belonging, such as a smooth transition to college and student retention in the institution. Moreover, Giacalone (2020) also found that students' self-efficacy and self-actualization were better when they had a greater sense of belonging in their college, university, or another school setting. Additionally, Giacalone (2020). Next, Giacalone (2020) stated, "Adults need to feel like they are important, visible, cared about, and needed" (p. 36). Moreover, Giacalone's (2020) study identified several factors that can affect an adult student's sense of belonging. Giacalone (2020) found

> Some factors that influence belonging are the quality of interactions with faculty members, programs and systems that support one's identities, interactions with staff and administrators, finding groups with whom one can be their authentic self, and student involvement. (p. 35)

As a result, we can conclude that students' beliefs about themselves and their campus experiences can and will affect their behavior.

In addition to students, faculty and staff can also have firmly held beliefs and opinions about their experiences on campus and with students. For example, Culver et al. (2020) studied faculty perceptions of organizational support and had several significant findings. First, Culver et al. (2020) found that "the strongest predictors of Perception of Organizational Support, POS, in our models were structural justice, enacted through administrative structures and communication, and job conditions that support productivity and a balance of work responsibilities" (p. 310). Moreover, Culver et al. (2020) also found that "Opportunities to participate in governance and job conditions were also significant predictors for both subgroups" (p. 310). Therefore, we can deduce that faculty's beliefs about themselves, their workloads, and their institutions can influence their behavior.

He, Hutson, Bloom, and Cuevas (2020) investigated advisor beliefs. He et al. (2020) found, "Advisors' self-evaluation of their beliefs, practices, and well-being is an integral part of the systematic assessment process of academic advising" (p. 23). Moreover, He et al. (2020) continued,

> Regarding advisors' roles and responsibilities, respondents highlighted the importance of assisting students with academic and career decisions, connecting students to resources, empowering them to develop motivation and ownership of their success, and modeling lifelong learning for students. (pp. 27-28)

Advisors' beliefs about their students and themselves impact the student experience and organizational culture on campus. He et al. (2020) also found,

> The potential generative impact of advisors' self-evaluation of their beliefs, practices, and

well-being could lead to more intentional advising interactions with students. Instead of focusing on applying advising theories, advisors may be able to develop personalized advising frameworks that contextually apply multiple theories and approaches to best serve students (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013). (p. 31)

We see, again, that both the advisor's beliefs about their students and their beliefs about themselves can impact the student experience and the effectiveness and success of the advisor. In terms of institutional climate, He et al. (2020) found, "higher education leaders need to alter the institutional climate in a way that empowers the advisor community as professionals by leveraging social and decisional capital based on the group's input" (p. 32). Again, this emphasizes the power and importance of individual and group beliefs. In addition to faculty and staff monitoring their beliefs and expectations about students, faculty and administrators must do the same. In her study, Cortez (2015) found that culturally sensitive leadership, student-centered services, and intensive academic and career advisement could help HSI campus leaders better serve students. Moreover, Castellanos and Jones (2003a) offered recommendations for campus-wide efforts, student retention efforts, and strategies for faculty and administrators to support and empower Latin* students.

Stakeholder Roles

Sixty-six percent of Latin* undergraduate students choose to attend HSIs (HACU, 2017). At the same time, Latin*s can theoretically choose to participate in any college or university they want. Many select HSIs as their choice of school for higher education (Cuellar, 2015). Factors such as cost, proximity to family and home, and Latin* faculty and administration often affect

students' decisions (Núñez et al., 2016). As a result, HSIs play a crucial role in helping to make sure that Latin*s complete higher education (Canales, 2020).

All colleges and universities should be working to ensure Latin* students, faculty, administration, and staff are successful; however, HSIs have an even greater duty to ensure that Latin* students are served (Núñez et al., 2015). Administrative, faculty, and staff leaders at HSIs and non-HSIs sometimes struggle with the amount of work and the expectations placed on them by the university and students (Delgado-Romero et al., 2003). Nevertheless, it is essential to realize the vital link that Latin* administrators, faculty, and staff play in helping Latin* students succeed (Hurtado, González & Galdeano, 2015).

As a result, leaders and policymakers must continue to focus on and support HSIs and Latin*s in their educational goals (Canales, 2020). Leaders must help facilitate conditions on campus that will assist in getting more Latin* students to succeed. Moreover, according to its website, in 2018-2019, the university had a 77% retention rate. In addition, according to its website, in 2019, the university had a 4-year graduation rate of 22% and a 6-year graduation rate of 46%. Therefore, researchers must investigate what strategies are working and what techniques could be improved (Cortez, 2015).

By helping more Latin* and other students succeed in higher education, more individuals will be available to work as presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff (Castellanos & Jones, 2003b). In addition to helping Latin* students achieve their personal and academic goals in higher education, Latin* and other leaders can help other students of color, first-generation, at-risk, and economically disadvantaged students to achieve their goals as well (Rendón, 1994).

HSIs serve more Black and Native American students than HBCUs and Tribal colleges (Núñez et al., 2015). By working interculturally, leaders can help Latin* and other students succeed (Núñez, Crisp & Elizondo, 2015). By striving to have positive outcomes and an organizational culture that reflects Latin*s, the HSIs can genuinely be "Latin*-serving" (García, 2017).

Students

Students have an essential role to play in helping to facilitate their academic success (Spagnola & Yagos, 2020). For example, a disciplined, studious, and focused student will likely manage their time effectively and seek opportunities to advance their career and research interests (Bryant, 2021). Conversely, an unmotivated, at-risk, or less-skilled student may struggle with time management and more difficult academic classes and assignments (Robertson, 2020). As a result, colleges and universities should strive to teach and inform students about best practices that the students can use to improve their study habits, grades, and overall academic experience (Martínez, 2019). Moreover, as colleges and universities invest in programs and services that serve students, such as counseling, tutoring, writing services, and recreation, colleges and universities will likely see an increase in student achievement (Bain, 2012; Bryant, 2021).

Faculty & Staff

Just as students have an essential part to play in facilitating their academic and social success, college and university faculty and staff also play a role in helping facilitate student success (Esmieu, 2019). For example, college and university staff can work as counselors, financial aid, or academic advisors. Moreover, other campus support staff help whole

departments and divisions to foster student success (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010). For example, according to its website, an entire department is dedicated to student success at the university. As a result, faculty and staff must get trained and understand the high priority of helping facilitate student success on their college and university campuses (Gonzáles, 2015).

While college and university staff can play critical roles, such as academic or course advisors to students, faculty also play a vital role (Mendez, Bonner II, Palmer, Méndez-Negrete, 2015). More specifically, faculty interact with students to acquire knowledge and demonstrate their ability to apply it successfully and effectively (Seifert, Pascarella, Goodman, Salisbury & Blaich, 2010). Gonzáles (2015) states, "I argue that HSI faculty members have extraordinary potential to (re)shape the production and legitimization of knowledge inside academia" (p. 121). Moreover, positive or negative, faculty's attitudes, beliefs, values, and expectations can strongly impact students (Canales & Chahin, 2019). As a result, colleges and universities must monitor and help faculty and staff evaluate these things so that students can experience high expectations and positive outcomes from faculty (Pedro & Kumar, 2020).

Administrators

Although students may not regularly interact directly with many college or university administrators, the vision, goals, and tone that the administrators set are critical (Gasman, Jones & Anyu, 2019). More specifically, administrators' expectations regarding faculty and staff behavior and student interaction can be the difference between a positive or negative student experience (Canales & Chahin, 2019; Ledesma & Burciaga, 2015; Martínez & Gonzáles, 2015; Torres, 2015). Therefore, college and university administrators must invest in modeling and

sharing their vision of quality and excellence that they expect faculty and staff to deliver to students (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010). For example, Canales and Chahin state, "Leaders of HSIs have a significant role in developing the institutional capacity to impact and transform the lives, experiences, and learning opportunities of their students because they enroll the majority of Hispanics in the United States" (pp. 113-114). As a result, college and university administrators have an essential role to play in which they may not have very much direct interaction with students. However, they are entirely responsible for communicating the vision and setting the tone in the university for fostering student success (Cortez, 2015).

University Considerations

Some university considerations impact students' experience (Canales & Chahin, 2019). Retention and graduation rates are historical measures of student success (Cuellar, 2015). Student sense of belonging, affirmation of culture and identity, and whole student development are newer considerations in how an HSI serves its students (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003). Therefore, modern and effective HSIs must learn how to merge traditional and newer measures of student success. Therefore, this section covers retention rates, graduation rates, student sense of belonging, affirmation of culture and identity, and whole student development.

Retention Rates

Retention rates refer to the percentage of students who begin at a college or university and then return the next. As McKeown-Moak and Mullin (2014) explain,

> Retention rates are reported annually to the National Center for Education Statistics and have to be posted on the institution web site. This statistic historically measures the full-

time freshman who are-enrolls at the institution the following year…The goal, of course, is to have 100% retention. (p. 192)

The retention rate is essential for all institutions, mainly undergraduate ones. Institutions evaluate themselves, and others evaluate colleges and universities based on their retention rates. As a result, it is essential that colleges and universities carefully monitor their retention rates and investigate why or why not students return the following year.

Graduation Rates

Like the retention rate, the graduation rate is the number of students who begin as freshmen and graduate earning a degree in four or six years (McKeown-Moak & Mullin, 2014). Swail (2014) explains,

> The good news is that student retention, persistence, and graduation are high priorities for institutions and policymakers. The level of dialogue about these issues is high, and people are interested in finding better ways to help students succeed. The bad news is that we are not doing very well, and graduation rates are not improving. (p. 18)

Although the graduation rate is calculated based on the number of students who enroll in the university and then complete a degree within four or six years, it is essential (Martínez & Gonzáles, 2015). Moreover, McKeown-Moak and Mullin (2014) state, "From the White House to state houses to foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, the demand was made for increased graduation rates…" (p. 223). Moreover, the university does need to investigate and understand what is happening with students who can or cannot complete degree programs in four or six years (Cuellar, 2015). Finally, the graduation

rate is also sometimes a reflection of how well the college or university engages and supports its undergraduate students in reaching degree completion (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2006).

Student Sense of Belonging

Student sense of belonging can incorporate many aspects of life on a university campus (Nora, Barlow & Crisp, 2006). For example, one form of a sense of belonging is extracurricular and other activities with which students relate (Orozco, 2003). Another form of a sense of belonging is the likelihood that alums will come back and visit the school and promote their alma mater to others. For example, the possibility that alums encourage their loved ones, friends, and children to attend the school could be a sense of belonging developed during and after the student's time on campus. A final measure of a sense of belonging is the likelihood of alumni participating in and giving to alum activities and the university in general (Drenzer & Villarreal, 2015).

Affirmation of Culture and Identity

Colleges and universities can engage students and support their social and academic achievement by helping to affirm the culture and identity of students (Cuellar, 2015). Moreover, the extent to which the institution integrates the culture, identity, and history of the student and their ethnic or cultural group into the curriculum and culture of the institution can tremendously affect students (Quijada & Álvarez, 2006). Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCUs, and tribal colleges leverage this point to attract and retain students (Fry, 2018). Although there is a difference in how HSIs developed and received their funding in contrast to

HBCUs and tribal colleges, the affirmation of culture and identity is something that HSIs can learn more about (Núñez et al., 2015). Representation of a student's culture and identity integrated throughout the university levels can also impact the extent to which a student feels comfortable approaching administration, faculty, and staff (Canales & Chahin, 2019). In addition, a lack of cultural and identity representatives at different levels of the institution can affect the extent to which a student feels that their culture and identity are genuinely affirmed (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003).

Whole Student Development

Whole student development refers to the awareness that a university integrates into its programs that students are, indeed, whole people who must develop socially and emotionally in addition to academically (Cuellar, 2015). The emphasis colleges and universities place on counseling, social groups, and opportunities for students to express their feelings and identities also incorporate whole student development (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003). Moreover, how a college or university addresses and supports students who face challenges such as a lack of academic preparation, a financial crisis, or some other exceptional circumstance also demonstrates the institutional commitment to the development and function of the whole student (Canales & Chahin, 2019). Extracurricular activities which incorporate student strengths and place a particular emphasis on identity and culture seem to help students develop socially and emotionally, while their academic programs help them develop intellectually (Martínez & Gonzáles, 2015). Also, niche groups such as spiritual and service organizations seem to help

students find an outlet for their interests, enthusiasm, energy, and time (Howard-Hamilton, Hinton & Ingram, 2009).

Sociopolitical Environment

HSIs do not exist in a vacuum. As Jones (2007) reminds us, “organizational theory is the study of how organizations function and how they affect and are affected by the environment in which they operate” (p. 7). This section will describe part of the sociopolitical environment in which the university exists. The university is influenced by the environment in which it functions and affects the environment (Morgan, 2006). This section about the sociopolitical environment will review (a) a Trump Era White House Directive, (b) affirmative action, (c) Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, and (d) current policy.

White House Directive

As Sánchez (2018) stated, “President Trump’s (2016) election has caused many people to recognize how policies impact their daily lives and shed previous understandings as described by Freire (2005) as conscientization” (p. 237). One example of a policy of President Trump was executive order M-20-34. On September 4, 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order, M-20-34, regarding training in the federal government. The order describes some training content as “divisive Anti-American propaganda” (p. 1). In this executive order, the memo states

> all agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts or other agency spending related to any training on "critical race theory,” "white privilege," or any other training or

> propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil (p. 1).

In the same memo, Russell Vought, Director, advises heads of executive departments and agencies that "we cannot accept our employees receiving training that seeks to undercut our core values as Americans and drive division within our workforce" (p. 1). Moreover, the memo concludes,

> The President, and his Administration, are fully committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States. The President has a proven track record of standing for those whose voice has long been ignored and who have failed to benefit from all our country has to offer. He intends to support all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or creed. The divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda of the critical race theory movement is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government. (p. 2)

While it is laudable that the President and the federal government commit themselves to "the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States" (p. 2), it is concerning that critical race theory, and white privilege is getting identified as "propaganda."

Donnor (2020) states:

> Whiteness is a meta-privilege that can define the conceptual terrain on which race is constructed, deployed, and interrogated. Whiteness sets the terms on which racial identity is constructed. Whiteness generates a distinct cultural narrative, controls the racial distribution of opportunities and resources, and frames how that distribution is

> interpreted…Whiteness holds sway over the very terms in which its ascendancy is understood and might be challenged. (p. 288)

Although people can debate the extent to which White privilege impacts the lives of individuals, many people believe that White privilege exists (Denevi & Pastan, 2006). González (2009) explains, “CRT is concerned with understanding the relationships among race, racism, and power” (p. 109). It could be limiting to deny their existence or completely cut out the ideas of “White privilege” and “critical race theory” from a national conversation. Therefore, identifying the terms and concepts of “White privilege” and “critical race theory” as “propaganda” or “Anti-American” can be hotly debated.

Boys, Walsh, and Khaja (2018) help explain the perspective of social work and all educators, “As educators, we are ethically obligated to hold discussions that are open to all viewpoints, ensure that we do not alienate our students, and work to create safe, inclusive learning spaces” (p. 347). If all educators genuinely work towards the goals set by Boys et al. (2020), then those discussions must include space to address and explore the ideas of “White privilege” and “critical race theory.” Moreover, the conscientization of which Sánchez (2018) speaks has many layers. Sánchez (2018) explains,

> Freire (1970) defines conscientization as ‘learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality’ (p. 35). Conscientization represents changes in consciousness that reorient people to view their realities in a more critical light. (p. 238)

Therefore, as more Americans take time and make an effort to engage in the process of conscientization, we must embrace and allow space to explore "White privilege" and "critical race theory" instead of trying to ignore them or deny their existence altogether.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is a hotly debated and legally contested topic in higher education and beyond (Katchanovski, Nevitte & Rotham, 2015). Long (2015) states, "Affirmative action in college admissions has always been controversial, and its legality has been under constant challenge for over 40 years" (p. 162). Moreover, Miller (2019) states,

> Affirmative action, as a concept, is always inextricably linked with the political and social mindset of the time in which it is implemented. The evolution of these policies, from their entry into legislation to the judicial and financial hurdles they have faced in the public arena, follows the arc of America's attitude on race and equity.
>
> Executive Order 11246 presents a fascinating opportunity to study affirmative action in the workplace. The order is part of the story of the changing (and sometimes unchanging) American attitudes about race—and the role of the federal government in striving for standards of equality. (p. 22)

As Miller poignantly states in the above quotation, the American "attitude on race and equity" can be fickle (Miller, 2019, p. 22). It can change. In the 1960's President Johnson passed the sweeping Civil Rights Act at a time when demands were high to make a change. Under President Trump, the climate seemed to be different. No matter the president or current mood of

Americans, affirmative action was created as a temporary solution to help higher education and other arenas to diversify. Nevertheless, affirmative action has changed due to court cases testing its effectiveness and legality in higher education.

When describing affirmative action, Miller (2019) states, "Originally designed to increase diversity among employees, students, politicians, or businesses by advantaging candidates from under-represented social groups; these rules have become a frequent target of criticism" (p. 19). Miller (2019) continues,

> Despite the many frames through which this issue can be viewed, one of its most significant hurdles, even among advocates, is the seemingly well-proven argument that affirmative action policies do not work in the ways we wish they would. Often introduced or supported only as *temporary* remedies for existing social inequalities, these regulations are rarely advocated as the long-term solution to inequity, even by ardent believers in their merits. The hope is that a temporary affirmative action program that enhances diversity and reduces inequality can persistently alter outcomes that unfairly disadvantage under-represented groups (p. 20).

In addition, Miller (2019) emphasizes his perception that civil rights were under attack.

More specifically, Miller (2019) argued that affirmative action in the context of employment was affected. For example, the Justice Department attempted to not protect employees against discrimination based on sexual orientation, saying that was not covered by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Moreover, the Trump administration sought to limit the powers of the Office of Federal

Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). This office aims to ensure that affirmative action in the workplace is protected for any business with federal contractors. As a result of these presidential and other actions regarding affirmative action, Americans must be clear and know what the current rules and mood of the country are regarding affirmative action. Karkouti (2018) offers a contrasting or supplementary view of affirmative action. Karkouti (2018) states, "In today's institutions of higher learning, diversity is considered as a transformative tool that allows universities to attain their mission and contribute to the betterment of the society" (p. 405). This idea links affirmative action to the students' vision, mission, and service. However, not everyone agrees on the best ways to use or apply affirmative action principles.

Nevertheless, affirmative action can play a role in higher education admissions, scholarship, and hiring practices. As Karkouti (2018) asserts, "Therefore, addressing the importance of diversifying the composition of both faculty and student bodies at universities is essential today" (p. 405). Whether or not or how universities go about diversifying their faculty and student bodies is, in part, up to the campus leaders. As a result, it behooves the leaders to inform themselves and be aware of current affirmative action practices.

DACA Students

According to Cisneros and López (2020), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, "is an administrative policy that temporarily defers deportations and provides renewable two-year work permits for eligible undocumented youth" (p. 309). Begun in 2012 by President Obama and rescinded in 2017 by President Trump, DACA "has once again resulted in uncertainty for beneficiaries, with many fearing that trusting the government with their status has

placed them and their families at risk of deportation" (Cisneros & López, 2020, p. 309). Cisneros and López (2020) explain,

> In order to qualify for DACA, beneficiaries must have graduated from high school, passed the GED exam, or be currently enrolled in and attending school. As a result, DACA has been essential for re-enrolling in school and transitioning to higher education. Undocumented students previously experienced higher education as a revolving door, but DACA beneficiaries now report more excellent degree completion rates. (p. 309)

With over 700,000 DACA recipients in the United States, "these challenges were more pronounced since President Trump ordered an end to the DACA program" (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2020, p. 366) moreover, although the U.S. guarantees public K12 education for undocumented immigrants, "what happens to un docu/DACAmented students' educational pathways after high school is much less certain given unique barriers associated with their precarious immigration status" (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2020, p. 367).

Nienhusser and Oshio (2020) assert,

> Within the postsecondary education realm, DACA recipients are not eligible for any higher education benefits at the federal level (i.e., federal financial aid programs). As of 2018, only eight states have passed legislation that allows un docu/DACAmented students to pay In-State Rate Tuition, ISRT, and be eligible for state aid (p. 369).

These issues complicate the potential of higher education for DACA students.

Katsiaficas, Volpe, Raza, and García (2019) investigate the effect of DACA status on the civic engagement of undergraduate students. Katsiaficas et al. (2019) found that "for the young

people in our sample, we observed that emerging adulthood is a time when these responsibilities toward others become quite salient" (p. 802). Moreover, Mwangi, Latafat, Thampikutty, and Van (2019) explored "the tone of the responses, the depiction of students impacted by the DACA rescission, the forms of institutional commitment discussed in the responses, and the connections that leaders make to institutional identity" of higher education leaders to the circumstance of DACA students (p. 249). Mwangi et al. (2019) found that "Some institutions provided contact information for one or two resources that broadly served diverse students (e.g., Multicultural Affairs Office), while a few had resources specifically tailored for DACAmented/ undocumented students such as a Dream Center" (p. 257).

Tapia-Fuselier and Young (2019) explain, "Undocumented students continue to face unique barriers in American higher education" (p. 807). For example, issues such as federal financial aid, in-state tuition rates, and the ability to work upon graduation are all challenges that undocumented students face (Nienhusser & Oshio, 2020). Although the Obama executive order of 2012 afforded DACA students some protections, President Trump's 2017 order put the DACA students in a precarious situation (Cisneros & López, 2020). Macías (2018) explains, "These barriers often include a complicated process for in-state tuition consideration, as well as exclusion from the majority of educational subsidies" (p. 609). Moreover, Macías (2018) recognizes that these challenges have "academic, personal, and emotional implications" for DACA students (p. 625).

In addition to the students and their families deciding how they will respond to the barriers and challenges they face, higher education institutions must also determine how they

will react to the new reality for DACA students (Mwangi et al., 2019). Moreover, Neutuch (2018) identifies steps counselors can take to support DACA students. Neutuch (2018) recommends that counselors,

1. Post signage in support of undocumented and immigrant students in hallways, classrooms, and offices.

2. Talk about college access and financial aid resources for undocumented students during college nights and other significant events.

3. Educate colleagues and teachers about college access resources for undocumented students.

4. Reach out to the middle, and junior high schools so undocumented students know early on that college is possible (p. 42).

Jiménez-Arista and Koro-Ljungberg (2017) said, "The majority of undocumented students face social, financial, and educational struggles impacting their physical and psychological well-being. However, potential struggles and active resistance can also produce opportunities and possibilities for these students" (p. 1).

Therefore, it behooves campus leaders to think carefully about their beliefs and expectations of DACA students (Jiménez-Arista & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). Using the strategy of mindfulness and the reliance on facts to help inform critical decisions, campus leaders, from counselors and academic advisers to the highest administrators, can learn to confront the realities that DACA and other vulnerable students face with patience and understanding. Although DACA students may face temporary setbacks because of the 2017 order of President Trump,

there is still hope that some students will be able to overcome the challenges. Whether the DACA students continue their educational journeys in the US or need to return to their home countries to study, one hopes that determined individuals can assess the situation, make adjustments where needed, and decide to go forward with their academic journeys regardless of the sacrifices required. Moreover, the current policy could change and re-afford DACA recipients' new opportunities. The reality of DACA students is one of the contexts of sociopolitical contexts in which this study took place.

Current Policy

The current policy affects borderland HSIs. For example, early college high schools and college preparatory programs impact the success with which borderland HSI Latin* students move from high school into the higher education setting. More specifically, early college high schools work to expose students to higher education rigor and even create pathways to earn higher education credit while students are still in high school. College preparatory programs such as AVID, GEAR UP, and the TRIO programs also strive to put higher education within reach for Latin* and other students. These two programs work to impact Latin* student success in the borderland region.

Early College High Schools. Early college high schools are another strategy that policymakers have implemented to help students prepare for higher education. Early college high schools offer high school students' opportunities to earn college credit (Duncheon, 2020). Early college high schools have specific salient characteristics that can help students succeed in high school and their undergraduate studies (Thompson & Ongaga, 2011). For example, Ari,

Fisher-Ari, Killacky, and Angel (2017) explain, “Early college (EC) is a novel educational model in the US that combines high school and college to increase underrepresented students access to higher education by providing engaging, hands-on instruction in a supportive learning environment” (p. 1). Moreover, the early college model is being used around the US (Duncheon, 2020; Lauen, Barrett, Fuller & Janda, 2017). However, as Locke & McKenzie (2016) warn, “Equity-oriented, social justice policy interventions, like the ECHS, do little in terms of increasing achievement if they ignore the holistic lives of students” (p. 157).

College Preparatory Programs. College preparatory programs are another tool current high school administrators and college admissions specialists consider to help high school students prepare for higher education. Programs such as AVID, GEAR UP, and the TRIO programs aim to help high school students prepare for college (Morley, Watt, Simonsson & Silva, 2020; Sabay & Wiles, 2020; Sánchez, Lowman & Hill, 2018). As Morley et al. (2020) explain, “Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) was created to help academically underserved students not only succeed in a rigorous high school curriculum but also matriculate to and succeed in college” (p. 5). Moreover, Sánchez et al. (2018) demonstrate how Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP) help close the college knowledge gap that some students may have. More specifically, these programs seek to help students smoothly transition into higher education and then succeed once they are there. These programs help first-generation and low-income students to get assistance in college admissions, tutoring, college preparation information, and mentoring (Sánchez et al., 2018).

As a result, these college preparatory programs help students prepare for postsecondary education (Kolbe, Kinsley, Feldman & Goldrick-Rab, 2018).

High school students from the university region make up a percentage of the undergraduate student body. As a result, it is essential to understand the current policy and educational environment from which the students are coming. In addition to regional students attending the university, international and other students also attend. Therefore, it is essential to understand the students' various academic and social backgrounds to serve them better. Again, according to the university website, in the fall of 2020, 89.74% of students identify as Latin* across all university enrollment levels. Moreover, as campus leaders strive to meet the needs and better serve Latin* students, they will likely find creative and effective ways to meet the needs and improve the outcomes for all students.

Summary

This literature review combined theory and constructs to help contextualize and understand the study (Grant & Onsaloo, 2014). The structural and functional theory helped explain why campus leaders behaved the way they did (Fennell, 2008). Moreover, the study of Hispanic-Serving Institutions is relatively new (Núñez et al., 2015). Therefore, this literature review delved deeper into campus leader beliefs, stakeholder roles, and university considerations. Additionally, this literature review explained how the HSI functions in its sociopolitical environment (Boys et al., 2018). To help contextualize this study, the literature review addressed: structural and functional theory, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, campus leader beliefs, stakeholder roles, university considerations, and the sociopolitical environment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research methods can be a practice in power (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). As Kincheloe et al. (2011) state, “the critical bricolage allows the researcher to become the participant and the participant to become researcher” (p. 173). Moreover, the transformative paradigm of this study ensured that the researcher and the researched attempted to form a relationship that would challenge future studies and research (Núñez et al., 2015). The researcher formed relationships with the study participants. Moreover, the researcher-built trust and understanding of the study by asking for member checking of the study data (Richards, 2009). The case study design of this study incorporated methods that allowed the researcher to triangulate the data (Creswell, 2012). Multiple information sources informed the study (Silverman, 2006). This chapter includes: (a) the research questions, (b) the theoretical framework, (c) the research design, (d) participant selection, (e) the study setting, (f) instrumentation and data collection procedures, (g) data description, (h) data analysis procedures, (i) limitations, and (j) a summary.

The researcher designed this study to investigate the perceptions of campus leaders. By asking the campus leaders how they define and support student success, this study helps inform policy, practice, and research. Additionally, this study contributes to the literature and informs higher education stakeholders about practices and initiatives other HSIs can replicate to serve Latin* students better. This study fills the gap in the literature about borderland HSIs.

Moreover, using a case study method, the researcher triangulated data to confirm findings and answer the research questions.

Research Questions

Research questions "validate that you have a workable way to proceed with your research" (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 77). Furthermore, the research questions also guide "the data collection strategies that the researcher will use to answer the question" (Mills & Gay, 2016, p. 77). Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain, "the research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study" (p. 39). As a result, the research questions for this study sought to investigate the beliefs and practices of the campus leaders. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do campus leaders perceive student success at a US borderlands HSI?
2. How do campus leaders support student success at a US borderlands HSI?
3. What organizational initiatives does this borderlands HSI do to serve Latin* students better?
4. How do the experiences and beliefs of campus leaders, students, and faculty inform practice?

Theoretical Framework

Structural functionalism is a theory from the 1950s business environment that can help explain relationships in educational settings today (Hemmer et al., 2018). For example, structural functionalism is a theory that helps explain the relationships between society and organizations and the relationships within the organization (Chilcott, 1998). In this study, structural and functional theory helped explore the relationships between the campus leaders and the students whom the campus leaders sought to support. Moreover, structural, and functional theory helped explain the relationship between the university as an organization and the students for whom the

campus leaders were trying to foster student success. Structural, functional theory allowed the researcher to explore the narratives of the four-campus leaders as well as their actions.

Latin*Moreover, structural and functional theory sheds light on the relationship between each campus leader and students for whom the leader was trying to facilitate student success. In addition, structural and functional theory helped explain the relationship between the university and the students. As Fennell (2008) explored, supplementary theories could further explain the relationships between campus leaders and students. Fennell (2008) added constructivist, feminist, and critical perspectives. In this study, the researcher chose to use the transformative paradigm.

The Transformative Paradigm

The transformative paradigm is something relatively new in education research. As Núñez, Hurtado, and Galdeano (2015) assert, "Less training and implementation of the transformative paradigm is apparent because the articulation of its principles is fairly recent, and it now serves as an umbrella for critical research focused on marginalized communities" (p. 10). Núñez et al. (2015) continue, "The transformative paradigm is characterized by unique assumptions regarding ethics and values (axiology), the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge and the relationship of the researcher to study participants (epistemology), and appropriate methods of systematic inquiry (methodology)" (p. 10). Núñez et al. (2015) outline four assumptions and examples of research changes in a transformative research paradigm; the following paragraphs will outline the examples.

There are at least four assumptions from which researchers work in the transformative paradigm. As Núñez et al. (2015) explain,

First, in terms of *ethics and values*, transformative paradigm researchers assume respect for the cultural norms of diverse communities in connection with a social justice agenda. They value inclusion and assume rigorous forms of research that advocate for improving the conditions of marginalized communities. In these communities, they recognize challenges, vulnerabilities, agency, and critical resistance. (p. 11)

The second assumption is about "the *nature of reality*" and how "multiple versions of reality are socially constructed, and privileged versions of reality influence what is accepted as real" (Núñez et al., 2015, p. 11). As a result, "versions of reality may not have equal legitimacy"—something for which HSIs are striving anyway (Núñez et al., 2015, p. 11). The third distinction is about "the *nature of knowledge*;" in this distinction,

the researcher recognizes power relations and dynamics in broader historical, economic, and social contexts while realizing that ways of knowing are linked with multiple social identities and positionalities. Instead of distancing themselves from the communities under study, researchers build dynamic relationships with these communities for action and empowerment. (p. 11)

In the fourth distinction, "transformative researchers often use *multiple research methods* to capture context, history, cultural norms, and structures of opportunity or inequality" (Núñez et al., 2015, p. 11).

In addition to these assumptions of the transformative paradigm, there are also shifts and changes in "axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology" (p. 11). For example, "The shift in axiology is reflected in emphasizing the assets that HSIs have and how these institutions contribute both the individual and social benefits of higher education to society" (p. 11). Moreover, the shift in ontology is characterized by the abandonment of the dominant research

narrative, based on selective four-year institutions, and the transference of unquestioned assumptions about definitions of institutional 'successes' and the behaviors that contribute to it in order to reflect the reality of HSI and broad access institutional contexts (p. 11).

In addition, Núñez et al. (2015) assert that "the struggle for legitimacy among HSIs—their status, mission, and perspectives—and how they serve the least privileged in the stratified system of higher education" is another essential ontological point to consider (p. 11). The epistemological shift is "reflected in research on HSIs that provides insights into alternative ways of knowing, and in higher education scholarship that takes into account broad access institutions and their standpoints within the higher education field" (p. 11). Finally, Núñez et al. (2015) assert,

> Transformative research and practice share the application of ethics, care, and respect for marginalized communities; acknowledgment of multiple realities of groups and actors on the same campus; and incorporation of different ways of knowing and methods to reach and educate diverse student populations. (p. 12)

Although other conceptual and theoretical frameworks apply or enact some of these principles, the transformative research paradigm allows a researcher to put all these ideas, practices, and beliefs together. Moreover, the design and questions of this study are part of the transformation.

Research Design

This study incorporated a bounded case study research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018. This case study was approved by UTRGV's Internal Review Board, IRB, on July 29, 2021. The identification number was IRB-21-0007. As Creswell (2007) explained, "In a single *instrumental case study*, the researcher focuses on an issue or concern and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue" (p. 74). In this case study, the researcher will investigate

the beliefs and practices of campus leaders. This bounded case study will consist of open-ended interviews, observations, and document analyses (Silverman, 2006). The researcher will answer the research questions by seeking to understand the "context and process" of the study (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 314).

As Richards (2009) states, a single bounded case study will enable the researcher to "see how all the themes, issues and processes interplay" (p. 180). Creswell and Poth (2018) explain, "case study research involves the study of a case…within a real-life, contemporary context or setting" (p. 96). In addition, Stake (2005), as cited in Creswell and Poth (2018), asserts that case study research is "a choice of what is to be studied (i.e., a case within a bounded system, bounded by time and place)" (p. 96). Creswell and Poth (2018) continue,

> Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) …over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in the case study might be…a single case (a within-site study). (p. 96-97)

In this study, the university is the "specific case that will be described and analyzed" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 97). Creswell and Poth (2018) explain, "The key to the case identification is that it is bounded, meaning that I can be defined or described within certain parameters" (p. 97). In this case, the parameters are the boundaries of the university. The researcher will investigate and collect data sources that are "persuasive and plausible, reasonable and convincing" (Silverman, 2006, p. 271). As Creswell (2012) confirms, "A case study is an

in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection" (p. 465).

According to Creswell (2012), the "bounded" part of the study "means that the case is separated for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries" (p. 465). Mills and Gay (2016) explain that "case study research is a narrative account that provides the researcher (and the reader of the case study) with new insights into the way things are and into the kinds of relationships that exist among participants in the study" (p. 399). Moreover, Mills and Gay (2016) continue, "Case study research is appropriate when a researcher wants to answer a description question (e.g., what happened) or an explanatory question (e.g., how or why did something happen?), or when the researcher is interested in studying process" (p. 408). In this study, the researcher investigated the beliefs and practices of university campus leaders.

Participant Selection

This bounded case study investigated campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and practices at one U.S. borderland HSI. The process included a student leader, a faculty leader, a staff leader, and an academic dean leader in their natural settings. The researcher interviewed and observed four campus leaders participating in the study. Julia Martínez, Joe de la Cruz, Henry Jones, and Alice Smith are pseudonyms for the participants in this study.

Table 1

Study Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Race	Role
Julia Martínez	**30s**	**Latin***	**Student Leader**
Joe de la Cruz	**30s**	**Asian**	**Staff Leader**
Henry Jones	**50s**	**White**	**Faculty Leader**
Alice Smith	**50s**	**White**	**Dean Leader**

Student Leader-Julia Martínez

This study incorporated input from one doctoral student leader, Julia Martínez, who also served as a university instructor. Julia was a third-year doctoral student in the dissertation writing phase of earning the degree. Julia also served as president of an organization for doctoral students. Julia also taught undergraduate content area discipline classes for the university for seven years. Julia was a first-generation college student. Moreover, Julia worked during their undergraduate and graduate studies. Julia identified as a Latin* Spanish-speaking person from the region.

Staff Leader- Joe de la Cruz

Joe de la Cruz, a pseudonym, did not identify as Latin*. Joe served in the Staff Senate. The University Staff Senate is "an advisory body through which eligible staff can convey information and make recommendations to the President and Administration relative to the interests, concerns, and issues that affect the staff of the university." This is important because this provides a mechanism by which staff can communicate directly with the university president and administration.

Joe had served the university in some capacity as a staff member for several years. Joe had served in different roles in the university and university Staff Senate. For example, Joe had worked for the university provost and been involved in student organizations as a university student.

Faculty Leader- Henry Jones

Like Joe, the faculty leader, Henry Jones, a pseudonym, did not identify as Latin*. Henry was a member of the university Faculty Senate. On its website, the university Faculty Senate states,

> The Faculty Senate is the elected legislative and deliberative faculty body whose primary purpose is to represent the faculty to the University administration, University-System administration, The Board of Regents of the university, and such other parties as may be appropriate or necessary. The Faculty Senate reviews and formulates policy and enacts legislation on the faculty's professional concerns, duties, ethics, responsibilities, privileges, and prerequisites.

This organization is essential because it gives faculty a voice for change (Clark, 2000).   In addition to serving on the Faculty Senate, Henry taught classes, conducted research, and guided students during their studies. As a result, it was helpful to have input and insight from Henry.

Administrative Leader- Alice Smith

Although the researcher attempted to interview members of the executive cabinet and others from the university's executive leadership team (i.e., president, deputy president, interim provost, and others from the university organizational chart located on the university website), only one dean, Alice Smith, a pseudonym, agreed to participate in the study. Alice guided students chaired an academic program, and worked with the university in various ways. Like the faculty and staff leaders, Alice did not identify as Latin*. Alice had previously worked at another HSI for 21.5 years.

Study Setting

This study investigated one borderland Hispanic-Serving Institution in the United States, the university. This institution is what Núñez et al. (2016) call "Big Systems Four-Years" (p. 71). In 2016, Núñez et al. (2016) identified fifty-seven schools in the U.S. Twenty-one percent of HSIs fall into this category (Núñez et al., 2016). Most institutions in this category were public, and women, full-time faculty, and students receiving federal government Pell grant assistance were "overrepresented" (Núñez et al., 2016, p. 71).

According to the university website, in the fall of 2018, the university enrolled 28,644 students: 87.8% were undergraduate students, 10.7% were master's students, 1% were doctoral students, and 0.5% were medical students. 87.9% percent of students identified as Hispanic or Latin*. 3.2% of students were White, 1.4% were Asian, 0.8% were Black, and the other groups had lower numbers. In fall 2018, 16,488 (57.6%) females attended this HSI; 12,156 (42.4%)

males attended. In the fall of 2018, the average age of undergraduates was 22. Master's students were approximately 31 years old. Doctoral students were approximately 40 years old, and medical school students were twenty-six years old. 92.6% of students came from the surrounding four counties.

Creswell (2007) explains, "In choosing which case to study, an array of possibilities for *purposeful sampling* is available" (p. 75). As a result, the researcher selected purposeful sampling based on the organizational chart and the leadership positions within the university. According to 2010 census data, the university is in a county in the United States with approximately 830,000 people. The county website estimates that 91% of residents are Latin* and 7% are Anglo. In addition, the website asserts that 51% of residents 25 and older had completed high school, and 13% had college degrees. According to the website, the county's largest city has approximately 140,000 people. People in the county work in healthcare and education, along with some farming and ranching.

According to the state Health and Human Services website, the university's county had been a hotspot for COVID-19, consistently ranking in the top ten counties for infections and deaths. Moreover, according to the county website, the university's county has transformed from a one-time ranching and farming community into a more industrialized center with foreign commerce, people, traditions, and beliefs. In the university's county, hundreds of immigrants from different countries, including Mexico and India. Although historically underserved medically, the university's county now has a burgeoning medical field with new doctors joining practices each year. All of these factors impact the university.

Instrumentation & Data Collection Procedures

In this study, the researcher used interview data, observation protocols, and document analyses to triangulate data (Richards, 2009; Seidman, 2006; Silverman, 2006). As Creswell (2012) explains,

> Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. The inquirer examines each information source and finds evidence to support a theme. This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes…it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (p. 259).

In addition to triangulating data using different sources, the researcher also used member checking to verify "the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). By member-checking interviews, the researcher attempted to represent each leader accurately (Silverman, 2006). In addition, the researcher tried to capture nuances and details of the campus leaders' beliefs and practices (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Table 2

Data Collection

Participant	Interviews	Observations	Document Collection
Julia Martínez	1	2	4
Joe de la Cruz	1	2	3

Henry Jones	1	2	6
Alice Smith	1	3	10
Total	4	9	23

Interviews

As part of the data collection, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with campus leaders using an IRB-approved protocol (see Appendix A). By reaching out to students, staff, faculty, and administrative campus leaders, the researcher obtained an "in-depth" understanding of their beliefs (Seidman, 2006, p. 15). In each interview, the researcher asked participants about their beliefs following the interview protocol. As Seidman (2006) explains, "Stories are a way of knowing" (p. 7). Moreover, "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9).

Table 3

Interview Data

Participant	Interviews	Duration
Julia Martínez	1	60 minutes

Joe de la Cruz	1	50 minutes
Henry Jones	1	45 minutes
Alice Smith	1	60 minutes
Total	4	215 minutes= 3 hr 35 minutes

Observations

The researcher observed the interactions of the university campus leaders in their natural settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). By following the campus leaders in natural settings, the researcher collected data about the university campus leaders' beliefs (Silverman, 2006). The observations lasted 60 minutes or more in length. In the observation, the researcher observed both the words and deeds of the leader in their natural setting. The researcher recorded data by monitoring and immediately afterward took notes and memos about the interaction. In addition, the researcher approached the campus assistants by email and phone to ask permission to attend events with the university campus leader. The researcher took on the observer role only unless participants invited the researcher to become a participant-observer. In addition, the researcher used her senses to record data such as visual, auditory, and other cues (Richards, 2009). The researcher could note observed interactions and behaviors using paper notebooks, pens, and laptop computers. Moreover, using analytic memos and special notes to describe the observations, all senses contributed to understanding the observation conveyed. Furthermore, the

researcher sought to observe the campus leaders in their natural leadership roles and settings to offer a complete picture of the practices of the campus leaders.

Table 4

Observation Data

Participant	Observations	Duration
Julia Martínez	2	Obs 1- 75 minutes Obs 2- 150 minutes
Joe de la Cruz	2	Obs 1- 60 minutes Obs 2- 75 minutes
Henry Jones	2	Obs 1- 70 minutes Obs 2- 75 minutes
Alice Smith	3	Obs 1- 65 minutes Obs 2- 60 minutes Obs 3- 65 minutes
Total	9	695 minutes= 11 hrs 35 minutes

Document Research

Finally, the researcher collected and analyzed documents on and related to the university campus leaders. For example, the researcher collected meeting memos, class syllabi, program documents, and other relevant documents appropriate for analysis (Richards, 2009). In addition, the researcher used data on the campus website regarding public information about graduation and retention rates. Because this is a bound case study, all events were related to the university campus (Creswell, 2007). The specific documents used in this study were meeting agendas, class documents, interview transcripts, the university strategic plan, formal records such as constitutions and meeting data, university media and recruitment materials, and additional research documents the researcher retrieved.

Instrument Development & Selection

The researcher developed the study instruments and decided to use an interview protocol, an observational protocol, and document collection to triangulate. After reviewing instruments from different dissertations and studies, the researcher decided to develop original instruments that would be unique to this study (See Appendices A & B). The researcher conducted an informal test of the study instruments before meeting with the campus leaders. The researcher used the same instruments for each study participant.

Data Description

The data description emerged logically and naturally from the data (Saldaña, 2009). Using coding cycles, the researcher allowed the themes to occur naturally. Moreover, the researcher used the words of the university campus leaders to identify and describe their beliefs. After using first and second-cycle coding strategies and analytic memos, and field notes, the researcher listed the main themes that emerged from the study. The researcher cross-referenced themes from different interviews, observations, and document analyses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis for this study took place in cycles (Saldaña, 2009). First, the researcher reviewed the data and began open, or initial, coding of the documents, interviews, and observations (Creswell, 2012). Next, the researcher revisited the data separately, checking members and beginning the coding cycles (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In addition to the actual words and observations, the researcher used analytic memos and other field notes to help augment the research findings (Creswell, 2007). After coding the data in the analysis stage and using themes to answer the research questions, the researcher also used Wolcott's (2001) notion of description and interpretation to identify university campus leaders' beliefs.

First Cycle Coding

In first cycle coding, the researcher used generic coding methods emphasizing "holistic coding" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 48). This method allowed the researcher to go through all the data and get a general or holistic view. Moreover, "initial coding" allowed the researcher "to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 81). Using generic holistic initial coding, the researcher could evaluate the data and begin allowing themes to emerge (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). By remaining flexible and open with coding in the first cycle, the researcher allowed room for natural emphases to emerge.

For example, the first coding cycle produced hundreds of codes for Julia, Joe, Henry, and Alice. Julia had 20 first-cycle codes. The data for Joe had 25 initial codes. The analysis for Henry included 36 initial codes, and the analysis for Alice had 18 initial codes. Altogether, those were 99 initial codes. Upon further analysis, the researcher collapsed those 99 codes into ten codes which included: Background, Preparation, Student Success (definitions & examples), university resources, opportunity, student organizations, events (with specific examples),

culturally relevant pedagogy, cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge, and culture, beliefs, identity, and food.

Second Cycle Coding

The researcher additionally employed second-cycle coding methods. As Saldaña (2009) states, “The primary goal during Second Cycle coding if needed, is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and theoretical organization from your array of First Cycle codes” (p. 149). In this study, the researcher used “focused coding” methods to follow up initial coding in the first cycle of codes (Saldaña, 2009, p. 155). The process of focused coding allowed the researcher to use the general findings of the first cycle of initial coding and go more in-depth using more detail. As a result, the final themes resulted from at least two cycles of researcher coding.

Post-Coding & Pre-Writing

Saldaña (2009) offers several strategies that can help researchers transition from coding cycles into text writing. First, he suggests establishing “the ‘top ten list” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 186). Using this strategy, the researcher identified the top ten themes or topics from the interviews, observations, and document analyses. Saldaña (2009) recommends putting this list of quotes in some order determined by the researcher. Next, Saldaña (2009) suggests identifying “the study’s ‘trinity’” (p. 186). With some allusion to religion, Saldaña (2009) offers the study into three “major codes, categories, themes, and concepts generated…which stand out in your study” (p. 186). Finally, Saldaña (2009) introduces the idea of “code weaving” as “a heuristic to explore the possible and plausible interaction and interplay of your major codes” (p. 187). Together, these strategies helped the researcher organize and prepare the data for the writing part of the task.

Interview Guide & Procedures

Over time, the researcher developed the interview guide with the co-chair and committee members. The interview protocol consisted of nine questions addressing all four research questions. Each research question had sub-questions that the researcher used to create the interview and observational protocols. If requested, the researcher provided the campus leaders with copies of the interview protocol before the interview. In addition, when it was time for the interview, the researcher asked the participants to turn off their cameras and change their names on zoom. As a result, the researcher tried to protect the participant's identity.

After the interview was over and the researcher offered the transcript for the campus leader to review, the researcher deleted the video recording within three weeks of the interview. Moreover, the researcher transcribed the interview after the interview took place. The researcher used the initial Zoom transcripts and then went back and corrected any errors, mistakes, or misspellings in the transcript. As a result, the researcher heard and reviewed the interview content multiple times. Again, upon member checking with each participant, the researcher deleted the Zoom video recording of the interview.

Trustworthiness & Reliability

Trustworthiness and reliability are essential to a qualitative study (Creswell, 2012). As a result, the researcher worked to establish trustworthiness and reliability with the participants. The researcher strove to establish trust and build a relationship with each participant by making contact and sharing study expectations honestly. Moreover, by member checking each interview, the researcher tried to ensure that the campus leaders' voice was authentic and transparent. In addition, the researcher sought to employ the triangulation process to check for trustworthiness and reliability between the words and deeds of the campus leaders.

Guba (1981) identifies credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as elements of trustworthiness in qualitative work. More specifically, Guba (1981) aligns credibility with truth value and internal validity. Next, Guba (1981) asserts that transferability has to do with applicability and external validity with generalizability. Third, Guba (1981) says that dependability is connected to consistency and reliability. Finally, Guba (1981) states that confirmability is related to the researcher's neutrality and objectivity. In this study, the researcher worked diligently to ensure that the input from the campus leaders was, in fact, credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable.

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) assert that investigator responsiveness and verification strategies during the study add to the trustworthiness, reliability, and validity of the study's findings. In this study, the researcher was responsive to information presented by the study participants. Moreover, the researcher used multiple verification strategies, such as member checking linking the study context to a theory. Additionally, as Morse et al. (2002) emphasize, the "pacing and iterative analysis between data and analysis…is the essence of attaining reliability and validity." By using multiple coding cycles and identifying codes and themes, the researcher was able to maintain reliability and validity while working with the participants and data.

Limitations

The main limitation of the study was the response of prospective participants. Some prospective participants shared that the amount of time they estimated participation to take influenced their decision not to participate. This study did take place during the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, the rigorous research methods and multiple cycles of coding practiced by the researcher ensured that the researcher could answer the research questions and have a

complete picture of the study data. Therefore, although the researcher only had four participants in the study, the researcher still got a full view of the beliefs and practices of university campus leaders. Moreover, the study limitation did not include cloud or diminish the findings.

Summary

Methods are essential for any study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative individual-bound case study used a heuristic approach to collect data (Creswell, 2007). This case study used interviews, document analyses, and observations to triangulate research data (Creswell, 2012). In addition, the study used participant member checks to affirm that the data collected in interviews and observations were accurate (Seidman, 2006). This qualitative case study will take place at one university in the United States.

This case study analysis incorporated purposive sampling from university leaders (Mills & Gay, 2016). The researcher coded and analyzed the data (Richards, 2009). Using an iterative process and multiple coding procedures, the researcher identified themes in the data (Saldaña, 2009). Upon coding the data and creating themes, the researcher analyzed the research findings and looked for overall patterns. The methods, conceptual framework, and theories applied to this study attempted to emancipate the researcher and researcher from previous patterns of ignorance and indifference (Smith, 1999).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This study focuses on campus leaders' information, perceptions about student success, and initiatives other HSIs can replicate to foster Latin* and further student success. Moreover, this study sought to find strategies to inform practice. Additionally, the purpose of this study is to help inform HSI leaders and stakeholders about best practices they can apply at all levels of serving Latin* and other students at HSIs. The researcher used four interviews, nine observations, and the collection of 23 documents to conduct a case study analysis. Moreover, the researcher used additional publicly available information about the university to inform the findings. This chapter includes a summary of the results and a detailed analysis of the study findings.

Description of the Sample

Campus leaders of the institution made up the study's sample. The researcher asked the administrative, teacher, staff, and student leaders to participate in the study. The researcher used purposeful sampling to choose leaders from the university's organizational charts. Additionally, to apply snowball sampling, the researcher selected four people, and four replied to the email invitation to participate in the study. The four participants had no suggestions for other research participants, however. The researcher chose the study subjects based on the university's organizational charts. Only four participants answered the research call of the 50 invitations.

Invitations were sent by email and phone to office numbers. Consequently, one dean leader, one faculty leader, one staff leader, and one student leader were included in the study.

Study Setting

This study investigated one borderland Hispanic-Serving Institution in the United States, the university. This institution is what Núñez et al. (2016) call “Big Systems Four-Years” (p. 71). In 2016, Núñez et al. (2016) identified fifty-seven schools in the U.S. Twenty-one percent of HSIs fall into this category (Núñez et al., 2016). Most institutions in this category were public, and women, full-time faculty, and students receiving federal government Pell grant assistance were “overrepresented” (Núñez et al., 2016, p. 71).

According to the university website, in the fall of 2018, the university enrolled 28,644 students. 87.8% were undergraduate students, 10.7% were master’s students, 1% were doctoral students, and 0.5% were medical students. 87.9% percent of students identified as Hispanic or Latin*. 3.2% of students were White, 1.4% were Asian, 0.8% were Black, and the other groups had lower numbers. In fall 2018, 16,488 (57.6%) females attended this borderland HSI; 12,156 (42.4%) males attended. In the fall of 2018, the average age of undergraduates was 22. Master’s students were approximately 31 years old. Doctoral students were approximately 40 years old, and medical school students were twenty-six years old. 92.6% of students came from the surrounding four counties.

According to 2010 census data, the university is in a county in the United States with approximately 830,000 people. The county website estimates that 91% of residents are Latin*

and 7% are Anglo. In addition, the website asserts that 51% of residents 25 and older had completed high school, and 13% had college degrees. According to the website, the county's largest city has approximately 140,000 people. People in the county work in healthcare and education, along with some farming and ranching.

According to the state Health and Human Services website, the university's county had been a hotspot for COVID-19, consistently ranking in the top ten counties for infections and deaths. Moreover, according to the county website, the university's county has transformed from a one-time ranching and farming community into a more industrialized center with foreign commerce, people, traditions, and beliefs. In the university's county, hundreds of immigrants from different countries, including Mexico and India. Although historically underserved medically, the university's county now has a burgeoning medical field with new doctors joining practices each year. All of these factors impact the university.

Summary of the Results

The researcher addressed the four research questions by identifying study themes. The study themes emerged from codes of the interviews, observations, document analysis, and additional research. In the first cycle of coding, the researcher identified hundreds of codes. As the researcher reviewed the data for the second and third cycles of coding, the three study themes emerged. The study research questions are listed below. The study themes are listed below in Table 4. The first theme- encouraging and empowering students- helped answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. Moreover, the second theme- removing barriers to student success- also

answered research questions 1, 2, and 3. The third theme- serving by default- answered research question 4.

This study affects borderland and other HSI leaders and stakeholders by informing them about best practices and actions they can take to serve Latin* students better. The factors that contribute to the problem of effectively serving Latin* students are complex. The factors include understanding what Latin* students need and working to secure resources to help Latin* students meet their goals. For example, support services such as counseling, tutoring, writing, and other academic support all cost money. In like manner, helping students face financial, immigration, and other challenges require college and university resources.

Programs like summer bridge programs from high school into college are examples of programs that help Latin* students. Moreover, mentoring programs within an academic department and with an upper-level or graduate student have also proven effective in assisting Latin* students to succeed. Services like counseling, tutoring, and peer mentoring or support have also proven effective in helping Latin* students succeed. Moreover, community, family, and peer social and academic support can help Latin* students achieve their higher education goals. The programs and services offered by the college or university and the broader community can positively impact Latin* student success.

Research Questions

The research questions helped to frame and guide the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). These research questions investigate campus leaders' beliefs, experiences, and opinions. The

campus leaders served in various roles on campus. As a result, student, staff, faculty, and dean campus leaders shared their perspectives in answering the following research questions:

1. How do campus leaders perceive student success at a US borderlands HSI?
2. How do campus leaders support student success at a US borderlands HSI?
3. What organizational initiatives does this borderlands HSI do to serve Latin* students better?
4. How do the experiences and beliefs of campus leaders, students, and faculty inform practice?

Table 5

Study Themes

Theme 1	Encouraging & Empowering Students	RQ 1 RQ 2 RQ 3
Theme 2	Removing Barriers to Student Success	RQ 1 RQ 2 RQ 3
Theme 3	Service by Default	RQ 4

Data Collection & Analysis Procedures

The researcher conducted four interviews and nine observations and collected twenty-three documents from participants. In addition, the researcher used online data to supplement the findings. The researcher used multiple-cycle coding to analyze the interviews and code the observations and documents. The researcher collected all data and maintained it in a binder. The

researcher referenced and used the binder throughout the data collection and analysis process. The study themes emerged from coding and working with the data.

Detailed Analysis

This study incorporated interviews, observations, and document analyses. By collecting data using all three methods, the researcher sought to triangulate data (Creswell, 2012). This study included four interviews with various campus leaders. In addition, the researcher conducted nine observations. Finally, the researcher collected documents from each campus leader to help identify campus leader practices. Three main themes emerged from this data. First, encouraging and empowering students to achieve success was one theme. The second theme was removing barriers to student success. The third theme was serving by default. The researcher found evidence of these three themes in interviews, observations, and documents. As a result, the three themes help answer the four research questions of this study.

Encouraging and Empowering Students

The four study participants, nine observations, and document collection revealed the theme of encouraging and empowering students to succeed. Each interview participant spoke about this theme in different ways. The researcher observed each study participant attempting to enact this practice in their roles. Finally, the documents supported the idea that encouraging and empowering students to succeed was a critical way to support student success. The following sections will reveal how inspiring and empowering students to succeed manifested in this study's interviews, observations, and document collection.

Table 6

Study Participant Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Race	Role
Julia Martínez	**30s**	**Latin***	**Student Leader**
Joe de la Cruz	**30s**	**Asian**	**Staff Leader**
Henry Jones	**50s**	**White**	**Faculty Leader**
Alice Smith	**50s**	**White**	**Dean Leader**

There were four participants in this study. Julia Martinez, a pseudonym, was a campus student leader who also served as an instructor. Joe de la Cruz, a pseudonym, was a staff leader who fulfilled different roles on campus. Henry Jones, a pseudonym, was a faculty leader who fulfilled both instructional and administrative duties. Alice Smith, a pseudonym, was a university dean who worked with students directly and completed administrative tasks. The four participants identified encouraging and empowering students as one strategy to define and foster student success.

Julia Martínez

Julia described encouraging and empowering students to succeed in several different ways. First, the researcher observed Julia striving to make a connection with students. Julia would call students by name and call the students "my people" and "my friends" during class. Second, Julia recognized students with the five highest grades on the last exam. Julia called each student's name and encouraged the other students to celebrate and recognize the high achievers. In addition, Julia urged students to make a personal connection with the content of the class and form relationships with the local community. For example, Julia offered extra credit opportunities to students who visited local sites. Julia Martinez also offered extra credit to students who wrote a reflection about themselves and their educational history.

Julia's efforts to recognize the high-achieving students and encourage participation in the class aligned with the theme of inspiring and empowering students. By striving to foster their academic identity and excellence, Julia encouraged and empowered her students to succeed. Moreover, Julia encouraged her students to make personal connections with their community. She offered extra credit opportunities to students who visited and reflected upon their visits to local historical sites. Together, these efforts encouraged and empowered students to be successful in class and beyond.

In addition to specific strategies that Julia used to help create a welcoming and inclusive classroom learning environment, she also attempted to deliver culturally relevant instruction by connecting to the local community and students' real lives. For example, some historical events

that the class studied happened locally. Therefore, Julia explained to the class the relationship between the events that had happened locally and the local communities' development. Additionally, Julia delivered the minimum instruction requirement and connected the local sites to the students' lives. Moreover, by striving to engage the students in the conversations, discussions, and connections of the local areas with the content of the rest of the class, Julia encouraged students to succeed.

During the interview process, Julia explained, "a lot of it has to do with college readiness…The skill sets that need to be refined as they transition…from their…1000 courses to their 2000 courses and then to their upper division." Julia continued to explain that "anything from processes and procedures, Blackboard, checking rubrics, listening carefully, problem-solving- all of those different things are critical for students." Moreover, Julia said, "I think student success…is when students feel empowered. They have a voice, and they are encouraged—they are encouraged to participate." Julia continued, "And what they do with this knowledge and… how they apply (it) in their own lives is very important." These quotes suggest that Julia sincerely sought to encourage and empower her students.

Julia explained, "One of the feedbacks (sic) that many students give me is that 'Your class prepared me for the next class.' Moreover, many times, it is those structures that the kiddos are missing." About the instructional and administrative structures, Julia said, "with the proper instructional techniques and … pedagogical techniques- the students are empowered- they have a voice." Julia continued, "They can apply and be problem solvers and be problem solvers in their

field. That is very, very important." Moreover, Julia expanded that "pedagogical techniques (that) resort to active learning methods, where to empower students because it not only gives the students a voice during the course but also, they can apply that in their fields, so that is very important."

Julia's commitment to culturally relevant instruction and active learning techniques encouraged and empowered students to be successful. Julia sought to empower students by making extra credit opportunities interesting, fun, and readily available to the students. In addition, Julia had perspective and experience as a graduate student and working professional to help students. Julia worked to make the class content and projects relevant, engaging, and personally connected to the students. Finally, Julia tried to encourage and empower students to succeed in her academic class and other areas of their lives.

The class documents provided by Julia helped to outline and define student success. According to Julia's class syllabus, success on the four-course exams, a term project, and two other assignments constituted student success. Additionally, the syllabus listed skills to acquire, such as "major themes, personalities, values, and philosophies" of the course content. Moreover, the syllabus emphasized "critical thinking rather than memorization" and "listening, reading, writing, research, and critical (content area) thinking skills."

In addition, the class syllabus described several skills students will be able to do "upon successful completion of this course." First, the student could "create an argument using (content area) evidence." Second, the student shall "analyze and interpret primary and secondary

sources." Third, the student will "analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces" on the content area. Fourth, the student shall "differentiate and analyze (content area) evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view." Finally, the student shall be able to "recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of (content area) evidence."

Moreover, the class documents provided contact information for the instructor and campus resources available to help support and encourage students. For example, the syllabus included Julia's name, phone number, email address, Twitter, office location, and office hours. In addition, the course syllabus listed "COVID-19 Resources," including information about the "University Vaccine Portal" and how students could obtain a COVID-19 vaccine. The course syllabus also included information about other campus services and resources available to foster and support student success.

For example, as required on all university syllabi, there is a statement on "Students with Disabilities," "Student Accessibility Services," and other "Student Services." For students with disabilities, the syllabus stated, "Students with a documented disability who would like to receive reasonable academic accommodations should contact (office name) for additional information." Moreover, the "Student Services" section could potentially guide and support students to succeed. The information rubric included "Center Name" and locations for different campuses. The centers included the "Advising Center, Career Center, Counseling Center, Food Pantry, Learning Center, and Writing Center." As a result, the syllabus helped explain how the

campus leader, instructor, and university worked together to help foster and support student success.

These skills that students would develop and the resources they could access to help them succeed in Julia and other classes were there to help empower them to achieve. Julia sought to empower the students with knowledge, information, and skills that they could use not only in her class but in other classes as well. In addition to taking steps to encourage and empower her students, Julia also had recommendations about organizational initiatives that other colleges and universities try to replicate. In these recommendations, she continued to express the theme of encouraging and empowering students.

Julia mentioned that "organizations…cultural…student organization components" were missing from her undergraduate experience. Julia said, "I think that it was something because of facilities and funding I did not have." Nevertheless, Julia explained, "Nowadays, there are so many organizations. There are so many…campus involvement…with the students. And I think that can serve our Latin* community significantly." In Fall 2022, the university student involvement supervised more than 250 student organizations in which students could engage. According to Julia and Joe, participating in these organizations could help foster academic and social success. Moreover, the existence of organizations that represent the students' interests encouraged students to develop and express their individuality and unique identities.

In addition, Julia continued, "Through holidays celebrating heritage- Hispanic heritage month, for example, with the start of Mexican Independence Day- just empowering people for who they are and where they come from- it is so important." Julia shared a personal story saying,

> I had a professor- he used to say, 'loud and proud.' I never really kind of understood it until the latter part…Moreover, what he was trying to convey was to be proud of who you are and where you are from…

Julia explained that the professor and others on campus wanted students to be aware and proud of their cultural and ethnic identities. In addition to fostering an environment where students could feel proud of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and heritages, Julia and other professors like the one she had believed in affirming the students' identities.

For Julia, there was a direct connection for students between being proud of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and succeeding in school.

Julia shared,

> You need to be proud of your cultural heritage; you do not have to apologize to anyone (sic). If your name is Latin* or you pronounce it in this manner- you be proud of who you are and where you come from- I think that's very powerful for students to understand. So organizational initiatives that empower our students to be themselves and through these different organizations and…student activities…are essential. For our students to be welcomed, for students and for organizations…to…support their development.

Moreover, Julia praised the more than 250 student organizations and events like Hispanic Heritage month and the celebration of Mexican national holidays as things other colleges and universities could do to help foster academic and social success for Latin* students.

Moreover, in her interview, Julia expressed her belief that "*Sí, se Puede*" roughly translates as "Yes! They can"- about the students. Julia believed in the capacity and ability of her students to succeed not only in her classrooms but in others as well. One practice that Julia suggested connected to this belief was to affirm the identity and cultures of the students. For example, Julia would call each student by name and remember specific details about their work, personal, and school lives. Additionally, Julia would attempt to connect with students from the area by highlighting historical facts about well-known local historical spots.

In like manner, Julia, the student leader, had several practical suggestions for informing practice. The first strategy was to engage students in both conversation and course content. The second suggestion was to match students with professors with similar life experiences. Third, Julia said that encouraging and supporting the development and success of the students would pay dividends for both the professor and the students. Finally, Julia, like Henry, recommended expanding, highlighting, magnifying, and celebrating the culture and identity of the students. Julia suggested that the culture, beliefs, identity, and food the students eat were ways to connect with the students.

In her classes, Julia sought to encourage and empower her students. She also suggested what other colleges and universities could do to serve Latin* students better. Julia also sought to

inform practice by enacting what she understood as best practices in her classroom and beyond. Julia's efforts aligned with those of Joe, Henry, and Alice to help encourage and empower the students. Moreover, Julia, Joe, Henry, and Alice shared their experiences through their interviews, observations, and documents. They also shared what they believed other colleges and universities could replicate to serve Latin* students better. The participants also sought to inform the practice of better serving Latin* students.

Joe de la Cruz

Joe worked as a staff leader at the university. One of Joe's most robust assertions in the study was that encouraging and empowering students is "what keeps us (the staff) going." Joe said,

> I sing to them (the staff) that we're here for students, and then we see the students, the stories that they share, and then when we get to know that they have graduated… that is what keeps us going.

Joe also encouraged and empowered students to succeed by encouraging students to ask questions. Joe said, "Being a resource- that is what I like…To be seen when I interact with students is to be a resource. I always encourage students to ask questions." Joe explained,

> I do not know everything; however, I will do everything I can to find that resource to get the question or the help that a student needs. So to me, as a campus leader- being a good resource and guiding light…that is how I can support their success.

In addition, Joe emphasized the importance of listening to and attempting to work with and serve the students. Joe emphasized the role that staff plays in encouraging and empowering student success. Joe said,

> We have (the university) got a lot, many resources to help our students succeed. And not just in their academic journey, but also in their personal growth…We have got staff dedicated to just the different populations of students that we have on campus. We've got wonderful technologies, (and) we've got…a myriad of student organizations. We've been able to bring in guest speakers to talk with our students and be open with them about their…life stories. So, I think…to have those opportunities available to our students.

Moreover, Joe continued explaining, "We've got staff dedicated to making sure that nobody gets left out…everybody has equal access to these opportunities so just continuing to have … robust resources available to the students and making it accessible for everyone." Therefore, Joe looked at encouraging and empowering student success from the staff's perspective.

As a staff campus leader, Joe facilitated one meeting in which a guest, Mr. López, a pseudonym, emphasized the needs and preferences of the students and campus community. Mr. López was the university's director for auxiliary business services. Mr. López described the on-campus dining and convenience options for students. Additionally, Mr. López explained to the staff plans to add dining and convenience options for students and the campus community. Mr. López and the staff members attending the meeting brought attention to the point that although dining preferences and needs were not directly academic, they impacted student satisfaction with

their university experience. Mr. López expressed confidence that the new dining and convenience options would attract new and diverse students to attend the university.

Joe facilitated another meeting in which guest speakers informed the staff about new academic program options and additional student resources. For example, an assistant professor from a STEM field, Mr. Huang, a pseudonym, gave a presentation to the staff leaders about a new academic program in which students could enroll. Mr. Huang gave details about the educational content and rigor of the program as well as job opportunities that students could expect to encounter upon program completion. In addition, the director of the Military and Veteran's Success Center, Ms. Sánchez, a pseudonym, also visited the meeting. Ms. Sánchez informed the staff about the resources available to students (and staff) at the center. The resources include academic and personal counseling referrals and individual meetings with someone who could help students (or staff) individually. Together, these meeting guests explained how their offices and programs empowered students and encouraged student success.

Together with other staff members, Joe sought to encourage and empower students on their social and academic journeys. By striving for excellence in his work role, Joe and others wanted to help university students realize their full potential and achieve their personal and academic goals. Joe mentioned vital resources available to students and staff to help students. Moreover, Joe suggested things other colleges and universities could do to serve Latin* students better. Finally, Joe offered his ideas about how to inform practice at the university.

Joe submitted meeting agendas and the Constitution of the Staff Senate as documents. Although the Staff Senate constitution did not directly mention or address encouraging or empowering student success, it was evident through the observation of the meetings that the Staff Senate included encouraging and empowering students to succeed as part of their work. For example, one meeting agenda reflected the visit of the university's Vice President and Director of Athletics, Mr. James, a pseudonym. Mr. James presented to the university staff senate a vital referendum that would affect student tuition. Mr. James mentioned the importance of encouraging the students to have their voices and preferences heard by voting in the referendum.

Mr. James visited with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to encourage students to vote and have their voices heard. The referendum was vital because it reflected a growing institution that wanted to expand athletics and other programs for students. This referendum reflected the vision and mission of the university to grow and better serve the region and its students. One draw of the referendum was attracting more diverse students to attend the university. Additionally, there would be the chance for local and other students to participate in more sports and work opportunities.

In the agenda for a different meeting, Joe helped facilitate the discussion about the university's annual Veteran's Day celebration and resources available to students and staff who were veterans. The Veteran's Day discussion and presentation, in particular, are directly linked to students' academic and social success. The director of the Military and Veterans Success Center specifically addressed the academic performance of students who were veterans and the

resources that the center had available to help students academically and socially. Joe helped facilitate and participated in that specific discussion. Therefore, the meeting agendas and accompanying meeting documentation were the documents that Joe shared, providing evidence of encouraging and supporting university student success.

Joe had several thoughts about organizational initiatives that other colleges and universities could replicate. Joe said,

> I think the one thing I pride myself on with the university…is that we have a lot of resources to help our students succeed. And not just in their academic journey, but also in their personal growth…We have got staff dedicated to just the different populations of students that we have on campus. We've got beautiful technologies. We've got just a myriad of student organizations. We've been able to bring in guest speakers to talk with our students and be open with them about their…life stories, so I think to have those opportunities available to our students. It's wonderful that every single one of our students… knows that those opportunities are open to them because we have staff dedicated to making sure that nobody gets left out. Everybody has equal access to these opportunities, just continuing to have that vital resources available to the students and making them accessible for everyone.

Although Joe did not offer many specific things that colleges and universities could do, he suggested making campus opportunities available and accessible to all students. At the university, approximately 90% of students identified as Latin*. However, other colleges and

universities could help serve Latin* students by following Joe's recommendations. For example, offering technologies, student organizations, and guest speaker programs could help Latin* students succeed.

Additionally, Joe saw these efforts as ways to empower and encourage students. By offering technologies, over 250 student organizations, and a guest speaker program for all students, Joe believed that this would empower and encourage students to succeed in their classes and academic programs as well as on their journeys. Moreover, Joe recommended making all kinds of student organizations, the guest speaker program, and superior technologies available to Latin* and other students to inform practice. Joe and other staff sought to empower and encourage students to succeed in their academic and social roles by working to be a guiding light to students. Finally, Joe sought to affirm the identities and foster the success of all students.

Henry Jones

Henry served in a leadership faculty role at the university. Henry explained that when asked about student success, "It comes in many forms." For example, Henry said, "When I see a student with that 'Aha' moment…where they discover something, realize something, or accomplish something. Alternatively…they discover a new perspective…I see that as success." Moreover, Henry elucidated, "When I see them (the students) viewing things from a growth mindset…embracing challenges, but then that satisfaction when they persist and achieve…that is a success." Henry continued, "When they (the students) feel empowered, they see that effort pays off.

Henry had many ideas about how to identify and define student success. Henry explained,

> When I see that they're inspired to learn more and beyond just…what I'm teaching in the class, but they (the students) see it as meaningful for their lives. I see that as student success…beyond…achieving a grade or degree.

Henry expressed, "When I see them with hope for and looking forward to their future and career or their…next steps- that's a success." Henry sought multiple ways to support student success and encourage and empower students. Henry said, "I think there are several ways that we have opportunities to support student success- one is connecting with and talking with students and listening." Henry further explained, "doing what we can as faculty to support them (the students)."

Henry facilitated group meetings that worked to encourage and empower students. In one session Henry facilitated, for example, the university president gave a 15-minute presentation about the university's financial status. In this presentation, the university president included information about how the health and financial status of the university affect student success and faculty fostering of student success. One main point of the presentation was the lower debt load with which the university strives to leave students at the end of their degrees. Henry and others first respectfully listened to the president's presentation, and then Henry facilitated questions for the president.

In another meeting, Henry listened to faculty share their perspectives on keeping themselves and their students safe during the pandemic. Faculty members said they believed the students would be more successful if they felt safe. This conversation about keeping faculty and students safe in the meeting showed Henry sought to listen to and encourage faculty. By striving to listen to and empower faculty, Henry said

> For us all to thrive, people need to be supported and heard…I elevate their (the faculty's) concerns and questions so that they can teach their students to the best of their ability.

Henry explained that listening to and working with faculty helped "support faculty who then, in turn, support their students."

Henry shared the Faculty Senate Constitution, which states, "The function of the Faculty Senate shall include…2. To develop and propose educational policies to promote the university's mission." According to the university's strategic plan, the mission of the university is "To transform the (region), the Americas, and the world through an innovative and accessible educational environment that promotes student success, research, creative works, health and well-being, community engagement, sustainable development, and commercialization of university discoveries." Student success is the first goal that the university mission strives to address. As a result, Henry's work with the Faculty Senate helped promote student success. Therefore, Henry encouraged and empowered students and faculty to promote student success in the interview, observations, and documents.

Henry mentioned a few ideas for other colleges and universities to replicate to foster student success for Latin* students. Henry shared, "When I think about initiatives like diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, recognizing and celebrating…cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge of our students- being…receptive and encouraging and celebrating the language diversity we have." Henry said,

> I think one of the things that I talked to my doctoral students about and my undergraduate students when I'm teaching undergrad is really getting to know your students as individuals, as people who bring their own unique strengths and perspectives and culture and background to our community. Really getting to know them and then…designing what we do to be culturally responsive and respectful.

Henry also recalled a story:

> They (the students) were… trying to be respectful. I had them working in groups, and when I'd walk by a table, they would hush, or they would start speaking in English, but then, when I'd pass that table, they'd start speaking in Spanish together, and so I asked, 'Why are you switching or…whispering in Spanish?' 'If that's your first language if you're more comfortable discussing the concepts…I want you to…really understand and learn and use both languages or multiple languages is perfectly okay.' I said, 'I encourage you to speak and…draw on your linguistic repertoire to…learn.'

Henry explained, "I think culturally responsive pedagogy is important to serve Latin* students better and acknowledge and celebrate…the cultural backgrounds of our students."

Additionally, Henry shared how he thought practices at the university could inform practice. Henry believed students would thrive and succeed by practicing culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy. The approach Henry suggested was allowing students to speak Spanish (or other languages as needed) to clarify their understanding of concepts discussed in class. Although this practice would have to be implemented in different ways for different content and subject areas, Henry felt strongly that allowing students to speak in Spanish (or other languages) would help affirm the identity and culture of the students. In addition, Henry also believed that this practice would help demonstrate to students that the university and professors value the cultural and linguistic resources they bring with them as assets to the classroom and university. Although this practice could take some time to implement and support, Henry felt strongly that it could help the students.

Henry, the faculty campus leader, also had several suggestions to inform practice. First, Henry recommended gathering data before making decisions. Second, Henry advised that seeing diversity as an asset helped everyone to value diversity. Third, Henry recommended that the executive leaders of the university integrate language, culture, and heritage into the university's culture. Fourth, Henry suggested that a growth mindset would benefit everyone. Henry explained that embracing challenges, persisting through difficulties to achieve, believing that making an effort to get an education (or achieve another goal) pays off, and supporting "Aha" moments for all stakeholders would help facilitate the growth mindset. Finally, Henry believed that acknowledging and celebrating cultural and linguistic differences and strengths along with

personal and professional funds of knowledge would help practitioners succeed in embracing students who may have a different background than their own. Henry specifically mentioned the university mariachi, Folklorico, Mexican American Studies program and department, and Spanish for faculty as tools and strategies to improve practice.

Alice Smith

Alice worked in various ways to encourage and empower students to succeed. As a campus administrator, Alice had the opportunity to work directly with students and administer an academic program. In working with students, Alice directly encouraged the individual and collective groups to continue their paths to academic excellence and success. Moreover, Alice could work administratively to help foster and promote this academic excellence by encouraging the students to perform academically. Alice said, “Essentially, I administer… (and) set the direction for the program.”

Alice described encouraging and empowering students to succeed by “seeing them achieve the goals they set for themselves.” Alice explained, “I think practically everything I do deals with students, and it isn’t just paper pushing. It is related in some way to student success.” Alice offered the following examples, “Whether it’s helping students to navigate the…curriculum, helping students prepare for their professional goals or career goals, writing letters of recommendation for students, I do a lot of that.” Therefore, Alice loaned his expertise to the student groups he helped sponsor and the students in the academic program he helped lead.

Alice facilitated meetings to help students learn about social and academic enrichment opportunities. One meeting was a leadership meeting of a club that Alice sponsored. In that meeting, the students discussed ideas about fundraising for the club. Alice listened to and encouraged the students further to discuss the topic in the general student meeting. Alice was patient and supportive. Alice asked the students questions and gave them items to consider about the prospective fundraising idea.

In another meeting, Alice helped facilitate a discussion about a national enrichment program available to university undergraduate students. Alice described some of the barriers students sometimes face when considering the enrichment program. Because the physical location of the enrichment program was out of state, Alice helped address topics such as finances, academic credits, and finding a place to live. Moreover, Alice invited program alums from the university to help answer current or potential students' questions. For example, one student wanted to know how the academic credits would impact a degree plan. The enrichment program student alum member was able to share some of her personal experiences with her degree plan. Additionally, Alice clarified some academic information about the enrichment program.

Alice provided several documents related to the enrichment programs for students. At least two promotional materials for one of the enrichment programs were in English and Spanish. This is significant because some parents of university students may not speak English. As a result, this effort to translate the enrichment program promotional materials into Spanish made

the program information more accessible for Spanish speakers. Moreover, because the enrichment program information was also offered in English with the same information, students and parents could both read and consider the presented facts.

In addition to enrichment program promotional materials, Alice provided additional information about two other enrichment programs available to university students. These programs are offered to help encourage and empower students to succeed. For example, one of the program material information sheets states, "(University Name) MD is a pre-medicine Early Assurance program at (the university). The goal of the program is to increase the number of (regional) high-achieving students who enroll and complete their medical education at the (university) School of Medicine (SOM)." This program offered students in the undergraduate enrichment program to meet medical school requirements and have a seat in medical school in four years.

Moreover, Alice provided additional reference material about another different undergraduate enrichment program. This undergraduate enrichment program empowered students to participate in independent studies. The program information stated, "Working in your major or related field under faculty guidance; you will develop special knowledge and experience which will expand your writing abilities, research skills, and thinking ability." Additionally, the informational guide continued with, "original research begins with a great deal of background reading." This is one way that this individual undergraduate enrichment program encouraged and empowered students to succeed.

Additionally, Alice shared her thoughts about organizational initiatives for other colleges and universities to replicate to help Latin* students succeed. Alice said, “I think of our (academic program) at HSIs. I feel like we’re something of a model system. I feel like we serve our students really well.” The dean’s academic department had a unique system in which students could enhance their learning and develop their research interests as undergraduate students. Alice explained, “So many of our students are coming in, within (the academic department), at least, with really clear goals.” As a result, Alice, the academic dean, could assist these specialized students in extending their learning goals within their undergraduate studies.

Alice also shared her thoughts about informing practice. Alice believed that her system in the university could be used as a model. She suggested that other universities and colleges study the model of this and other universities like Florida International University. As a result, the practice that Alice told was studying effective and successful programs and learning how they operate and serve students. By offering students additional rigor and depth in their courses, Alice believed that the university was challenging students to meet their full academic potential. Alice also mentioned supplementary programs that could help students achieve their personal and academic goals.

The dean campus leader Alice also had a few suggestions to inform practice. First, Alice suggested specific activities such as the annual Latin*s in STEM conference (a pseudonym) and the annual border conference as strategies that help build understanding and cultural appreciation. Second, Alice suggested looking at university education as education with value

added. Alice said that the low student debt with which students can graduate and the social mobility that degrees from the university can afford were ways in which the students could see their educations as value-added. Third, Alice mentioned specific academic programs at the university that provided additional breadth and depth for students in their classes as a strategy that could help students experience their academic experiences more profoundly. Finally, Alice recommended seeking out personal and professional experiences that would help inform practice. For example, Alice mentioned working at another HSI before joining this university, studying Spanish, and traveling to Spanish-speaking countries or areas to help connect with students.

In addition to input from study participants, the researcher investigated other university initiatives that other colleges and universities could replicate. The Faculty and Staff Resource Office, a pseudonym, is a faculty office that encourages and supports instructors to deliver the best instruction that they can to students. The FSRO offers programs, events, and resources to faculty and staff. The FSRO programs include Teaching Conversations, Faculty Learning Communities, and Learning Circles. Each program enriches the teaching and awareness of each faculty or staff member to help better serve students.

Moreover, the FSRO offers at least three pedagogical initiatives to help faculty more effectively reach students. For example, one pedagogical initiative is teaching for inclusivity, diversity, and equity. The second pedagogical initiative is “Teaching at a Hispanic Serving Institution: Exploring Inclusive, Diverse, and Equity-Minded Pedagogies.” Finally, the third

pedagogical initiative is "Students as Learners and Teachers at an HSI." By incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion in the training and teaching sessions, the FSRO helps support the faculty and staff to serve Latin* and other students effectively.

Like other colleges and universities, this university has a DREAM Support Center, DSC, a pseudonym. The university DSC offers resources and support services for undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, students. In addition, the university has a DREAM Zone which includes roundtable discussions, socials, and DREAM Zone Advocate training and support. The DRC has a robust directory with faculty and staff trained to support students who may have questions or need assistance. The DRC and other campus offices also provide a list of resources available to students. Such resources include the university food pantry, counseling center, and other university and community resources designed to help students.

Removing Barriers to Student Success

Removing barriers to student success was the second theme of this study. Julia sought to remove barriers to student success by equipping students with information and offering high-quality instruction. Joe strove to be a guiding light resource who could guide students to remove barriers to success. Henry tried to remove the obstacles to student success by working with students and empowering faculty. In addition, Alice endeavored to remove barriers to student success by collaborating with students and carrying out administrative tasks. Each participant diligently made an effort to remove barriers to student success.

Julia. Julia worked in multiple ways to remove barriers to student success. First, Julia focused on high-quality academic instruction. Julia mentioned "the proper instructional techniques and pedagogy pedagogical techniques" as strategies and tools to help encourage and empower students to succeed. Julia expanded on active learning methods. Julia said,

> I certainly encourage anyone…in the university setting to resort to pedagogical techniques to active learning methods to empower students because it not only gives students a voice during the course but also allows them to apply that in their own fields.

Julia continued, "Anything from processes and procedures, Blackboard, checking rubrics, listening carefully, problem-solving- all of those different things are critical for students."

Therefore, Julia worked to remove barriers to student learning by forming a personal connection with the students. Julia said,

> Take the time and the opportunity to work with students- and yes, it's about the assignment, but it's more than the assignment… Asking students to reflect, to think critically- to work not only independently but collaboratively because these are the skill sets. Certainly, they will apply this in their real life- in their careers.

Moreover, Julia said, "I think a lot of little things are connected to culture and identity." When asked about helping the 10.63% of the student body who does not identify as Latin*, Julia said,

> They also need to understand, be informed, and be included with all these different components. And also celebrate their cultures—their beliefs. And you certainly want

> to…celebrate the majority but also take the time and opportunity…for them (the minority) to be celebrated as well.

As a result, Julia attempted to remove barriers to student success by striving to inform and include all university community members.

In one of the class observations, Julia offered extra credit to students if they would write a one-page paper about themselves. Julia encouraged the students to write about their backgrounds, likes, dislikes, and goals. Moreover, Julia modeled making a connection with the students in the class. In a different class observation, Julia invited students to connect with the content of the class by visiting and documenting the visit to local historical sites. Again, Julia offered extra credit to students who accepted this academic challenge. As with the last additional credit opportunity, students who could not or chose not to visit the historical sites were not penalized; however, students who participated could earn extra credit for the class. With these additional credit assignments, Julia tried to remove barriers to academic success for the students.

In addition, the structure of the class was also set up to help remove barriers to student success. The class syllabus listed multiple additional resources available to students. For example, the class syllabus included contact information for:

- Advising Center
- Career Center
- Counseling Center
- Food Pantry

- Learning Center
- Writing Center

The class syllabus also included COVID-19 resources with information about the university vaccine portal and how students could obtain a COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, Julia worked to remove barriers to student success by offering university support.

In addition, Julia explicitly stated how the instructor sought to remove academic barriers to student success and foster higher-order thinking. The syllabus listed acquiring knowledge about the "major themes, personalities, values, and philosophies" of the course content. Additionally, Julia also emphasized "critical thinking rather than memorization" and "listening, reading, writing, research, and critical (content area) thinking skills" in the syllabus. Furthermore, Julia explained that at the end of the course, the student should be able to "create an argument through the use of (content area) evidence." Moreover, the student should be able to "analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources" and "analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces" upon the content area.

Joe. Joe also sought to remove barriers to student success in various ways. First, Joe said,

> I had a wonderful supervisor that really guided me and coach(ed) me on how to deal with different things and…I think because of that very positive and supportive experience, I have gained the confidence and the skills that I need to carry on what I have been charged as my role.

Joe felt that by doing a good and effective job at work, staff could help remove barriers to student success. For example, Joe spoke about "being a good resource" and "being a guiding light" to help answer students' questions and guide them to available resources. Joe said, "I don't know everything; however, I will do everything that I can to find out that resource- to get the question or to get that help that a student needs."

Joe identified organizational initiatives or activities that could help affirm the identity and culture of the majority of Latin* students. Joe mentioned "national holidays" like "September *dies y seis*." Joe shared, "And then we've got the Día de Los Muertos." Joe revealed that "I didn't even know what Dias Festivas (a pseudonym) were until I got…to the (southern) campus…I know the festivities that goes on, and it's a wonderful celebration." Joe shared, "I feel that the culture, here in the (region) is valued and celebrated as well." About flexibility during the pandemic, Joe said, "I feel that the university does keep that at the forefront and…allows for some flexibility for whatever accommodation the student may need."

During one observation, the researcher observed Joe facilitating a discussion about getting students accurate and up-to-date information. When the university vice president and director of athletics visited the staff gathering, Joe helped direct questions from the staff members about how a referendum on campus would affect students. Joe first allowed the guest speaker to present and then guided questions from the staff about the topic. By helping to ensure that students had accurate and up-to-date information, Joe attempted to remove barriers to

student success. Moreover, Joe repeated the activity with other guest speakers and staff members.

The purpose of the guest speakers at the staff gathering that the researcher observed was to inform the staff so that they could serve as resources and guides not only to other staff members but also to students. As a result, staff members who attended the meeting got up-to-date and accurate information about various topics affecting student life on campus. Joe helped disseminate information to staff members about academic programs, campus student resources, and staff and student activities. One of the most direct examples of a staff member working to remove barriers to student success was the Military and Veterans Success Center guest presenter. The director explicitly shared with staff what steps students on campus should take to meet with an academic counselor familiar with the affairs and needs of veterans.

Joe provided limited documents for this research study. The documents provided for the study included meeting notes and agendas and the Staff Senate Constitution. As a result, the observations and interview yielded better examples of how Joe worked to remove barriers to student success. The documents provided by Joe did support the findings of the observations and interview that staff members were trying to remove barriers to student success. However, all of the documents needed strong examples of words or phrases about removing barriers to student success.

To inform practice, Joe shared his ideas. One of Joe's core beliefs was that students could succeed. Another belief that Joe espoused was that it was the responsibility and duty of the

university faculty and staff to help the students succeed. The practice that Joe suggested as part of helping students succeed was to offer resources for students' academic and personal journeys. By encouraging and sometimes demanding that the university invests in programs and offices that support students, Joe believed this would contribute to student success. He also emphasized the importance of supporting not only the academic but also the personal growth journeys of all students.

Joe, the staff campus leader, suggested various strategies to inform practice. First, Joe indicated that staff and others work together to serve students better. Second, Joe said that she encouraged students to ask questions. Third, Joe mentioned a speaker series by the university in which guest speakers would speak to students about their personal and professional lives. Finally, Joe suggested recognizing and celebrating national holidays and events from Mexico and other countries that could help students connect with a familiar culture. More specifically, Joe mentioned: 16 de Septiembre, Cinco de Mayo, Día de Los Muertos, Dias Festivas (a pseudonym for a community celebration), the grito contest, the university mariachi activity, and Latin*s in STEM (a pseudonym for an annual conference hosted by the university).

Henry. Like the other campus leaders, Henry worked in various ways to remove barriers to student success. Henry said, "I try to remove barriers for faculty and students to support student success." Henry explained, "I have lots of meeting with…people…like the dean of students and… Dr. Dean (a pseudonym) who is the leader of our student success and university college. (I) just try to facilitate their work and support it." Moreover, Henry also worked with

students to remove barriers to success. Henry said, “connecting with and talking with students and listening. And then doing what we can as faculty to support them.”

Moreover, Henry elaborated on her role as a faculty campus leader. Henry said, “In my role…I reached out to the student government association and met with their president and had a conversation and offered to collaborate and support their initiatives and their ideas for how they would like to improve things for them.” This is one strategy that Henry used to remove barriers to student success. In addition, Henry worked with students as an instructor. Henry described working with students who achieve “that Aha moment…where they discover something, or they realize something, or they accomplish something, or…they discover a new perspective.” Working to teach students in a way that facilitates discoveries and perspectives is one way that Henry worked to remove barriers to student success.

Henry invited the researcher to observe the role of faculty leadership in meetings. As a result, the researcher observed Henry facilitating and helping guide conversations on different topics related to removing barriers to student success. In one session, Henry reported, “We met with faculty from the department and identified some problems, addressed some problems, and we hope to see improvement in the functioning of the Faculty Senate this year.” This was one example of Henry working with faculty to remove barriers for them facilitating student success. In addition, during another part of the meeting, Henry shared that the Faculty Senate had agreed on the following statement, “In all cases, the review committees should be advised to follow a

holistic approach and extend compassion in all review categories to accommodate the impact of COVID-19."

At a different point in a meeting that the researcher observed, Henry guided the discussion about presentations from guest speakers about a student referendum happening during the study. One of the guest speakers shared,

> This is a unique opportunity for students to be involved in a referendum, regardless of the outcome. (We) expect at least 500 new opportunities for student involvement- student-athletes, musicians, dancers, cheerleaders, student managers, student athletic trainers, student media, (and) student employment. (We also) expect expansions on both campuses in resident life, dining, etc.

After this presentation, Henry fielded questions from at least nine faculty members in the meeting. Some questions were about the details of the referendum or how the referendum results could impact students. One faculty member commented and asked, "We are not a traditional community; how is this culturally responsive?" Henry guided the guest speakers to respond in order. One of the guests explained, "With growth and expansion comes the responsibility to look at the cultural aspect. (We) always are evaluating and keeping this conversation open." In this example, Henry did not attempt to dominate, direct, or guide the conversation's outcome. Henry fulfilled her duty to allow the question to be asked and then responded to it as ultimately as possible.

In another meeting topic, the researcher observed Henry listen to a presentation from the president about the university's financial status. In his presentation, the university president shared,

> The Goal (is) to be a national leader in higher education, providing general and professional education of the highest quality for students while maintaining low student debt loads and creating opportunities that serve as catalysts for transformation in the (region).

Again, in this circumstance, Henry allowed the guest speaker (university president) to present the information. Next, Henry fielded questions from those present about the presentation. The university president's responses emphasized "Transformations" as "Key Take Aways." More specifically, the president emphasized:

1. Transformation of the undergraduate student body
2. Transformation of campus life
3. Clinical expansion to transform health care in the (region).

Henry helped guide the conversation and guide the faculty to understand how these topics related to removing barriers to student success.

Alice

Like all campus leaders, Alice worked multiple angles to remove barriers to student success. First, Alice was an administrator. He explained the administrative role, "I administer…and set the direction for the program." In that capacity, Alice said, "I spend most of

my time dealing with issues related to students- sort of budget and fundraising kinds of issues." For Alice, budget and fundraising issues are linked directly to removing barriers to student success.

In addition, Alice also worked directly with students. Alice explained,

> I think practically everything I do deals with students, and it isn't just paper pushing. It is related in some way to student success. Whether its helping students navigate the (enrichment) curriculum, helping them prepare for their professional or career goals- writing letters of recommendation for students. I do a lot of that.

From this perspective of Alice, these tasks had to encourage and empower student success and remove barriers to student success. Alice explained, "I think we are an example (enrichment) program for HSIs." Moreover, Alice gave the example of "additional breadth and depth in courses" that students in the enrichment program could achieve.

The enrichment program documents help further elucidate how the program could help remove barriers to student success. One way to help remove barriers to student success was by offering students enrichment. One pamphlet explained, "The (enrichment program) at (the university) attracts academically motivated students who enjoy interacting with their classmates and instructors, who seek opportunities inside and outside the classroom to become well-rounded individuals, and who want to become campus and community leaders." The informational pamphlet continued explaining that,

> Students in the (enrichment program) are not only successful in their courses but also tend to be successful at securing competitive scholarships and internships, traveling abroad, and gaining admission to the best graduate schools, law schools, and medical schools. In addition, (enrichment program) students are entitled to early registration and receive preferential placement in campus housing.

Therefore, Alice sought to remove barriers to student success by offering additional challenges to students looking for extra educational and personal opportunities.

In addition, Alice facilitated information, funding, and assistance for another enrichment program available to students. The information sheet for this additional enrichment program stated in part, “Tailored to students’ own personal and intellectual interests, the (enrichment program) provides an experience that students find professionally, academically, and personally rewarding.” Moreover, Alice guided interested students to apply and supported university students accepted to this enrichment program. The “eligibility” section of the information sheet for this enrichment program stated, “The (enrichment) program is available to undergraduate students of all majors and academic backgrounds, and we welcome a diverse array of student interests.” Again, Alice worked to remove barriers to student success by empowering students to find enriching academic and personal experiences to supplement the traditional university undergraduate experience.

In addition to input from participants, the researcher investigated university initiatives that would remove barriers to student success. “Student Plus” is a pseudonym for a university

initiative benefitting students whose families earn less than $95,000 per year. Student Plus offers students whose families earn less than $95,000 per year tuition and mandatory fees covered by the university. There are criteria for first-time freshmen, new transfer, readmit, and continuing students. For example, all students must apply for admission by April 1 and have their financial aid FAFSA applications completed by that date.

Additionally, students must be Texas residents and enrolled for 15 hours or more. New transfer, readmit, and continuing students must maintain a 2.5 GPA, while first-time incoming freshmen must have a minimum of 19 ACT, 990 SAT, or top 10% of high school class. For all students, the Student Plus program offers a waiver for tuition and mandatory fees.

Moreover, "Student Leaders" is a pseudonym for another university initiative in which the university offers financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate students. There are seven qualifications that student leaders must demonstrate before being selected for this prestigious and competitive award. First, students must demonstrate academic achievement through high school class rank, GPA, SAT and ACT score, and high school course selection. Additionally, Student Leaders must register as a first-year student at the university. Next, Student Leaders must be responsible leaders who demonstrate their commitment through work, extracurricular activities, or participation in volunteer high school activities. Commitment to community and community involvement is another requisite of the program. Students must demonstrate their commitment to the community during high school. Additionally, students must be permanent residents, US

citizens, or otherwise meet Texas residency requirements. Next, the student must complete the university application by December 1.

In addition, students must apply to live on campus for the first two years of undergraduate study. Second-year "Student Leaders" will mentor the first-year students in the program. Finally, students must commit to working in the university region for each year that the student is funded beyond an undergraduate education. Therefore, a four-year academic program would require four years of work service in the university region. Applying for the "Student Leader" program is relatively easy. First, students must apply for admission and the scholarship by December 1.

Additionally, students must apply for campus housing and be prepared to live on campus for at least the first two years of undergraduate studies. Finally, students must be prepared for an on-campus interview. The university advises selected students in mid to late spring.

Another initiative that other colleges and universities could replicate is the COVID Relief Package Incentives that the university implemented. Beginning in Spring 2021, the university awarded cash grants to students to help offset costs caused by COVID. For example, in Spring 2021, students with $0 Expected Family Contribution, EFC, received $250. In Summer 2021, the university awarded $500 to students with $0 EFC and then to other students depending on fund availability. In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, the university awarded $850 to students with $0 EFC and $750 to students with no FAFSA or more than $1 of EFC. For what the university called Module II, the university offered $2,000 to students with $0 EFC and $1,900 to students with $1

or more EFC or no FAFSA. These incredible student offerings helped offset some of the costs and strains of COVID-19 and other factors affecting students.

Serving by Default

The third theme that emerged from this study was serving by default. Although Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCUs, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, TCUs, have the mission of serving Black and Native American students, most Hispanic-Serving Institutions do not explicitly state serving Latin* students as part of their mission (Nunez, Hurtado & Galdeano, 2015). Data from the interviews, observations, and documents indicated that serving Latin* students was by default and not institutional design. For example, although approximately 91% of university students identified as Latin* in Fall 2021, the university should have explicitly stated serving Latin* students in its vision and mission statement. Moreover, a careful review of the data sources produced a similar finding: the university serves Latin* students by default and not by design.

Interviews. Data from the interviews proved that the university serves Latin* students by default and not by design. Julia worked to identify with her students based on their backgrounds and characteristics. Joe tried to understand and serve Latin* students while affirming and getting to know students from other cultures. Henry made a personal effort to attend cultural events as a strategy to get to know and appreciate Latin* culture. Finally, Alice served all students- Latin*

and others- who sought enrichment in their studies. None of the participants had institutional support or guidance about serving Latin* students by design.

Julia identified as Latin*, and her social and cultural identity matched many of the students in her classes; there was no evidence that Julia received special training or guidance about serving Latin* students. Julia, a resourceful and emotionally intelligent instructor and a student leader, used her similarities with the students to help connect with them. For example, Julia would discuss visiting the students at their workplaces and identifying with the students who worked. However, Julia never mentioned special training or discussing connecting with the students regarding employment or Latin* identities. Moreover, Julia used her experience as a first-generation college student to help her understand her students.

In contrast, Joe did not identify as Latin*. Nevertheless, Joe mentioned trying to understand and value Latin* culture. Joe said celebrating Mexican national holidays and specific local celebrations as efforts of the university to affirm Latin* culture. However, throughout the interview, there was almost no mention of Latin* students. All the work that the university staff and Joe would do was for all students, whether they identified as Latin* or not. Joe said, "I think the university does a great job of integrating and collaborating with everybody and helping them educate about the (Latin*) culture." Joe continued explaining his perspective of what the university did by saying, "This is what the Hispanic culture does. What does your culture do?

Moreover, together, how can we celebrate that? Moreover, how can we complement each other and work together?" Therefore, although there was some acknowledgment and

celebration of Latin* culture, serving Latin* students by design was never mentioned in the interview.

Henry took a different approach in exploring how to serve Latin*-the vast majority- of the university students. Henry felt strongly that university faculty, staff, and administration should take the personal initiative to learn more about Latin* culture, identity, and language. Henry mentioned how university faculty had invited him to attend Folklorico and Mariachi cultural events. Moreover, university faculty and staff had invited Henry to eat in Mexico and explore Mexican culture in that way. However, Henry also mentioned that these were individual initiatives that needed to be applied across the faculty and staff. Moreover, they would benefit if individuals chose to take these steps to learn more about Latin* culture, identity, and language. However, if they decided not to participate in the cultural activities and events, there was no consequence or incentive on an institutional level.

In like manner, Alice mentioned how her time working 21+ years at another Hispanic-Serving Institution had helped prepare her to work at the university. In the interview with Alice, she said all of the enrichment activities and opportunities for students. However, none of the opportunities or activities were explicitly or exclusively for Latin* students. Any student could apply for and participate in the opportunities. As a result, the researcher deduced that serving Latin* students was by default- the result of approximately 90% of university students identifying as Latin* students- and not by the university's design.

Observations. Julia, a student leader, also served as a university instructor. Most of Julia's students were Latin*. As a result, Julia used Spanish words and phrases in her class to help add meaning or emphasis. However, the researcher observed Julia's efforts to connect with her students' cultural identity and background as an individual effort, not something sanctioned or expected by the university department or administration. Julia herself was an outstanding instructor who modeled student engagement and recognition strategies that would help motivate any student. Again, the researcher observed these strategies to be individual efforts of Julia and not departmental or university strategies to help other (or the majority) university students.

Joe conducted his leadership roles in the university in a multicultural setting. As a staff leader, Joe effectively managed his leadership roles and responsibilities. During the researcher's observations of Joe in his leadership roles, explicitly serving Latin* students was never mentioned directly. It seems evident that most faculty, staff, administration, and students are aware that approximately 90% of students identify as Latin*. However, the researcher did not observe an institutional awareness of or commitment to specifically serving Latin* students at the university. Nevertheless, the researcher observed staff members committed to serving all enrolled students- whether that service to Latin* students was by default or design.

Like Joe, Henry worked diligently in his faculty leadership role. Henry worked to empower faculty to serve students better and empower them to achieve their full potential. The faculty observations showed more racial and ethnic diversity but less Latin* representation. Moreover, the researcher did not observe faculty discussing serving Latin* students specifically.

Again, all faculty know that approximately 90% of students identify as Latin*. However, there is no institutional or administrative commitment to acknowledging and explicitly stating that we serve Latin* students.

Like Joe and Henry, Alice served Latin* students indirectly. The researcher observed Alice in her administrative leadership roles. However, nowhere in the activities or programs were Latin* students mentioned exclusively or explicitly. For example, Latin* students were in the student club that Alice helped sponsor, but it was not required for Latin* students to be a part of the leadership or general membership. Moreover, Alice's enrichment programs were open to all Latin* students. As a result, the researcher found no institutional or administrative commitment to serving Latin* students by design.

Document Analysis. Julia provided class syllabi, other class handouts, and resource materials for document analysis. Nothing in the documents about expressly or explicitly serving Latin* students. There was general information about helping students with disabilities and other required statements of nondiscrimination. However, there was no evidence of departmental or institutional commitment to explicitly serving Latin* students by design. As a result, the researcher found that serving Latin* students in the classroom was by the default of having approximately 90% of students identify as Latin*. Moreover, the university could work to state explicitly its intention and desire to serve Latin* students effectively.

Like Julia, Joe provided documents that did not explicitly state serving Latin* students. In Joe's role as a staff leader, Joe guided discussions about how to help students better and how

to improve the student experience on campus. However, there was no explicit statement about serving Latin* students by design. Again, the understanding was that because 90% of the student body identifies as Latin*, the university happens to help Latin* students. As a result, Joe worked to guide staff in serving all students. There was nothing explicit about serving Latin* students by design.

Henry provided several documents about various topics. As a faculty leader, Henry worked on a double front of serving students and faculty. In terms of documents, Henry provided documents about faculty service and leadership. One document was about the long-range financial planning of the university, and another document was about the tenure and tenure track faculty market equity. The leadership did not explicitly mention serving Latin* students in these documents. As a result, the researcher found that serving Latin* students at the university was, by default, 90% Latin* student enrollment and not by design.

Alice was responsible for recruiting students into the programs that she administered. However, again, there was no explicit mention of Latin* students. The programs and opportunities were open to all students. Serving or focusing on Latin* students were not mentioned in the requirements or mandatory outputs. As a result, serving the Latin* population was, by default, not designed. Therefore, although one might hope that Latin* students would get represented and served in these enrichment programs, there is no guarantee or requirement.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the results of this study. Three main themes emerged using interviews, observations, and document analyses to triangulate findings (Creswell, 2012). The first theme was about encouraging and empowering students to succeed. The second theme was about removing barriers to student success. The third theme was serving Latin* students by default. The first two themes answered research questions 1, 2, and 3. The third theme answered research question 4. Each study participant worked to encourage, empower students, and remove barriers to student success.

Additionally, the researcher did not find evidence of serving Latin* students by institutional or administrative design- only by default. Moreover, the researcher investigated additional information about the university related to these three themes. This chapter used the perspective of each participant's perspective and further research to answer the four research questions.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study aimed to investigate campus leaders' perceptions of student success at one borderland HSI. Moreover, the study investigated organizational initiatives and practices that other HSI leaders could replicate. This study incorporated a critical bounded case study methodology that included four interviews, nine observations, 23 analyzed documents, and additional research. This chapter will review a summary and discussion of the results of the literature. The chapter will also review limitations, implications for leadership practice, and recommendations for further research and policy.

Summary of the Results

The researcher summarized the results of this study in three themes. The first theme the researcher identified was to encourage and empower students. All four participants spoke about and worked to do this. The second theme of the study was removing barriers to student success. Again, each participant mentioned eliminating barriers to student success and showed how they sought to remove the obstacles in their actions. The third theme of the study was service by default. This theme was more implicit in the study. The researcher deduced that the participants served Latin* students because almost 90% of the student body identified as Latin*.

The researcher came to three conclusions based on the findings of the study. First, HSI leaders and stakeholders must genuinely seek to inform themselves of best practices. By telling themselves of best practices at borderland and other HSIs, campus leaders and stakeholders can strive to serve Latin* students better. Second, the culture of the HSI should strive to reflect the culture of Latin* and other students. By getting to know students and seeking to remove barriers to their success, HSI leaders can truly serve Latin* and other students. Finally, HSI leaders must understand and distinguish between serving Latin* and other students by default and design. By striving to serve Latin* students by design, HSI leaders and stakeholders can work to help the students and meet their needs truly.

Discussion of the Results

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study was the service by default of Latin* students. Because HSIs are critical in helping serve Latin* and other nontraditional and at-risk students, HSI leaders and stakeholders must understand best practices in serving Latin* students. Moreover, HSI leaders need to know and implement the best practices at all levels of borderland and other HSIs. The research questions of this study were undoubtedly answered. University campus leaders shared their understanding and actions to support Latin* and other student success. The campus leaders also shared what they believed other HSIs could replicate to serve Latin* students better. Finally, the campus leaders in the study sought to inform practice by sharing what worked for them in various settings in the university.

Because the sample size in this study was only four participants, each participant had a loud and clear voice in sharing their perceptions, understanding, and experiences. Moreover, the researcher could go in-depth with each participant in observing them in his professional leadership role. Additionally, the four participants were as open, honest, and straightforward as

they could be in sharing data and being available to discuss, model, and interpret their experiences. Despite the limitations of a few participant responses, the researcher conducted four interviews, nine observations, and the collection of 23 related documents. As a result, the researcher could answer the four research questions using three study themes.

Discussion of the Results in Relationship to the Literature

Higher education is recently under attack (McGuire, 2022). There are serious questions about the returns on investment that higher education provides (Lu, 2022). Moreover, society at large seems to doubt the value of a degree in higher education (Brint, 2022). As a result, it is more important than ever that Hispanic-Serving Institutions study what works for Latin* and other students and implement those practices immediately (Nunez et al., 2015b). Additionally, administrators and leaders must explore the actual servings at an effective borderlands Hispanic-Serving Institution. This study's structural, functional lens (Charmaz, 2011) helped explain how campus leaders at the university defined and helped support student success. Each campus leader worked to serve the students in their care effectively.

Nevertheless, the researcher found almost no evidence of servingness by design. In other words, the researcher found almost no intentionality or seeming awareness of the institution and its administrators in singling out or recruiting Latin* students for programs, recognition, or support. However, the transformative paradigm (Nunez et al., 2015) allowed the researcher to "value inclusion and assume rigorous forms of research that advocate for improving the conditions of marginalized communities" (Nunez et al., 2015, p. 11). The individual efforts and commitment of the campus leaders to serving students supported this. At the university, approximately 90% of students identify as Latin*. Therefore, by sheer numbers, Latin* students should benefit from the programs, incentives, and support available to students on campus.

However, the researcher found that although the university recently won an award from Excelencia for serving Latin* students, the reality of servingness for Latin* students was very much by default.

Although the university may meet student needs and work to remove barriers to student success on campus, the administrative and leadership culture is doing so by default. Moreover, part of the university's mission is to be the nation's "premier Hispanic-Serving Institution." Although this may be written as a goal, the researcher did not find evidence of commitment on an institutional level to exclusively serving Latin* students. For example, according to the university website, only 28% of the Class of 2022 School of Medicine students were Latin*. At the same time, 90% of the overall student body identified as Latin*, and a small percentage of medical students identified as such.

Several initiatives are related to and impacting Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the borderland states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. There are more Latin* students in California than in any other state. Nevertheless, like in the university in this study, "California lags in Latin*s' degree completion and degree attainment" (Excelencia, 2021, p. 17). On its website and according to IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey, the university in this study reported a 25% 4-year completion rate for the fiscal year 2021. In addition, the university had a 50% 6-year completion rate for the fiscal year 2021. Therefore, one can conclude that many non-traditional students are studying as undergraduates at the university.

Serving non-traditional students who may work significant numbers of hours, help support parents or children, be first-generation college students, come from low-income or impoverished families, and struggle with other social and academic issues such as acquiring and functioning in an all-English environment and dealing with immigration issues- can be daunting.

Nevertheless, HSIs in the borderland states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas have made inroads in successfully serving this population. For example, in Arizona, Subbian, Franco, and Lozano (2019) found several practices that can help improve servingness. Their findings included: (1) advising, mentoring, and non-academic support systems, (2) using evidence-based pedagogies, (3) using culturally responsive practices, (4) using high-impact practices, and (5) making faculty, staff, and administrators responsible for recruiting students into the enrichment programs (Subbian et al., 2019). Moreover, Lozano and Kiyama (2021) state, "Servingness goes beyond reducing attrition and graduating Latin* students. It encompasses nurturing and affirming Latin* strengths and identities by design and as part of the learning experience—being not just Latin*-producing, but fundamentally Latin*-enhancing."

In New Mexico, Huvard, Bayat, Way, Brewer, Miller, and Garcia (2022) found that "we recommend recruitment of e3 participants to be more targeted towards low-income and first-generation students, who may differentially benefit from the initiative" (p. 7). The e3 Initiative was an engineering program created for low-income and first-generation students. Nevertheless, any US citizen or permanent resident who studied in the New Mexico State University engineering program could join the initiative. In Texas, the 60x30 Plan is an ambitious effort by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The plan aims to ensure that by 2030, 60% of Texans aged 25-34 have a college degree or certificate.

According to Texas statistics, there are currently 1,729,843 people ages 25-34 in Texas (https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-texas). Sixty percent of this number today is 1,037,906. Because the population of Texas is projected to grow, this number could be even more significant by 2030. According to the Texas Almanac, in the fall of 2019, there were 1,581,945 students enrolled in public and private universities and colleges in Texas.

Therefore, if the enrollment numbers continue, Texas should have a chance to reach its goal. However, students must persist in their studies and continue through graduation (Marrero & Millaci, 2018). Texas colleges and universities will also benefit by striving to serve Latin* students to achieve this goal.

Student success can be defined and described in many ways (Cuellar, 2015). Some scholars and institutions measure and define student success as retention and graduation rates (McKeown-Moak & Mullin, 2014). However, other scholars and practitioners take a softer and more comprehensive view of student success (García, 2017). In addition to retention and graduation rates, some researchers count student self-esteem, validated identity, and cultural appreciation as measures of student success (Rendón et al., 2015). This study found that campus leaders define student success in many ways. However, the study did not find that the institution or administration explicitly or intentionally "served" Latin* students. In contrast, the findings from this study suggest that the 90% Latin* student body was "served" by default. Because student success can be defined and described in various ways, the summary of study findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for research will help present an additional point of view.

The study findings confirmed some theoretical study concepts and disconfirmed others. For example, the study disconfirmed the theoretical concept of serving by design. The study did confirm the theoretical concepts of the structural, functional theory and the funds of knowledge in higher education approaches. Structural functionalism states that the organization will do what it needs to survive. The study findings confirm this was the case as the campus leaders sought to serve students best. Although the campus leaders were not serving the students by design for Latin* student success, many Latin* students were served. Additionally, the funds of knowledge

approach of valuing the resources and strengths of students were also confirmed in this study. Henry and Julia, in particular, spoke at length about the importance of building upon the student's strengths, backgrounds, and identities.

The theoretical ramifications of the study findings include understanding that serving by default is not the same as service by design. Although it is noble that the university campus leaders sought to and did serve Latin* students at the university, surprisingly, none mentioned a personal mission, value, or goal of explicitly and directly helping Latin* students. Moreover, serving Latin* students is not mentioned anywhere in the university's vision, mission, or strategic plan. As a result, college and university HSI and other leaders must consider whether they plan to serve Latin* students by default or by design. Identifying how they intend to serve Latin* students will help clarify the vision, mission, and strategic plan of colleges and universities for years to come.

Limitations

The researcher did not encounter many limitations in this study. However, one limitation of this study was the response of prospective participants.

The researcher consciously chose to conduct this study even though a global pandemic was happening. Nevertheless, the researcher incorporated rigorous methods and practiced multiple coding cycles for the interviews, observations, and document analyses. As a result, though there was a limit to how many people chose to participate in the study, the researcher captured a complete picture. The study's limitation did not include cloud or diminish the findings.

The scope of the study included investigating the perceptions and actions of four campus leaders at the university. The researcher gained insight into their perceptions and practices by

working with the four campus leaders through interviews, observations, and document collection. Moreover, additional investigation by the researcher about the university helped add context to the study findings. This study did not attempt to quantify practices or measure the impact on students, faculty, staff, or administration. Future research could incorporate a mixed methods approach to help quantify the beliefs of campus leaders about student success. Additionally, a larger sample size would provide more insight into practices at the university. Finally, a different study could compare and contrast input from different borderlands and other HSIs to offer a broader picture of perceptions of student success by campus leaders at borderland and other HSIs.

Implications for Leadership Practice

The research of this study implies many things. First, there is a difference between serving Latin* and other students by default or design. As a result of this research, it is clear that leaders at the university currently serve Latin* students there by default. Second, leaders in higher education must set high expectations for all students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Anaya & Cole, 2003). Third, leaders should take the time and invest the time and energy to get to know their students. Fourth, leaders must empower and encourage students. Fifth, leaders must work to remove barriers to student success. By attempting to enact each of these practices, higher education leaders will foster student success.

The area of specialization relative to this study is the borderland and other HSIs. As a result of this research, HSI leaders and practitioners can further inform themselves about best practices. These findings relate specifically to borderland and other HSIs. Studying a borderland HIS, this study helped inform practice about serving Latin* and other students. Moreover, HSI

leaders and stakeholders can learn from the experiences and practices of the campus leaders at the university in this study.

Serving by Design

Serving by design is a challenging phenomenon. Serving Latin* students by design means that HSI leaders would intentionally seek out and design to serve Latin* before and in addition to other students. Serving by design would include recruiting Latin* students to all magnet and enrichment programs and making sure that Latin* students are proportionally represented in all majors and areas of study. This is different than what is currently happening at the university in this study. The university in this study enrolls approximately 90% of Latin* students. As a result, many Latin* students get served. However, the students need to be served because the university prioritized serving Latin* students.

By striving to arrange service by design model, the university and other HSIs would commit to serving Latin* and other students. For example, a service-by-design model would ensure that a certain percentage of Latin* students enroll in medical school, magnet enrichment programs, and other opportunities open to all students. The current system leaves enrollment in specialized programs to chance. Therefore, service by design would mean that the university leadership and administration would take on a new responsibility and intention to serve Latin* and other students. This research helps highlight the reality that university students are currently served by default.

High Expectations

Setting high expectations for students is essential for educators at all levels. In higher education, leaders can sometimes look at a student and only see the student's barriers or challenges. To combat a deficit view perspective, higher education leaders must look for each

student's strengths and set high expectations for each student's development, achievement, and progress. As Rendón et al. (2015) state, “Absent from this deficit-based grand narrative are asset-based views that focus on Latin@ student cultural wealth and experiential ways of knowing that these students employ to transcend their socioeconomic circumstances and to excel in education” (p. 92). As a result, maintaining high expectations for each student and historically challenged marginalized groups of students will help all students succeed.

Latin* students sometimes face specific challenges when pursuing higher education (Cuellar, 2015). For example, students whose first language is not English sometimes struggle in higher education English and other classes. Higher education stakeholders must maintain high expectations for students whose first language is not English while offering and informing students of the support that is available to assist them. For example, students in an English class might want to visit the writing center or form a small writing group to help support effective writing. Additionally, higher education instructors and leaders can learn from K12 and other educators what strategies could help students whose first language is not English to have comprehensible input in every class.

Another challenge that many Latin* students face is economic. Many Latin* students come from underprivileged or even impoverished financial circumstances. Although economic conditions might limit the enrichment of academic experiences of students, these students can still learn. Just because a student comes from an underprivileged or deprived economic circumstance does not mean that the student does not have the funds of knowledge and intellectual capacity to achieve (Moll et al., 2006; Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2018). As a result, higher education leaders must strive to assist Latin* and other economically disadvantaged students to address and overcome their financial difficulties to achieve higher education.

However, another challenge many Latin* students face is being first-generation American college students (Fuentes, 2006). First-generation college students often simultaneously encounter language, financial, and sometimes even immigration and other issues (Montiel, 2018). As a result, it is the benefit and advantage of each higher education institution and leader to find ways to encourage, value, and support first-generation Latin* and other students (Orozco, 2003). Moreover, helping institutional leaders to hold high expectations for first-generation students is key (Canales & Chahin, 2019). Resources such as the university counseling center, writing center, library, tutoring center, and food pantry can assist first-generation college students. Additionally, special support groups and programs can help first-generation American college students to succeed even though they are the first person in their families to pursue higher education.

Get to Know Students

Making the time and investing the effort to get to know students is another critical implication for practice. Each research participant mentioned the importance of understanding and appreciating students as individuals. In addition to trying to get to know the students as individuals, practitioners and researchers also suggested affirming the identities of the individual students (Herrera, 2003). Verifying the identity of the individual students includes appreciating additional languages that the student may speak, understand, read, or write. For some professors, getting to know students means familiarizing themselves with a different language culture. Additionally, researchers recommend getting to know the students, their background, heritage, and culture and learning to value and affirm these essential pieces of a student's identity (Rendón et al., 2015).

Affirming a student's background, language, culture, and identity may seem daunting or challenging, especially if the student is from another country or has views radically different from that of the dominant culture. As a result, it falls to each stakeholder- faculty, staff, administrators, and students to investigate how s/he could work to build understanding, appreciation, and value to the background and culture of all students. Events such as cultural appreciation days, movie nights about different languages and cultures, and guest speakers from different backgrounds can help build a bridge of understanding for students from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, as stakeholders in higher education become more aware and sincerely make an effort to get to know, value, and appreciate the experience, histories, and strengths of the languages and cultures of their students, they will likely be more effective in working with these groups of students (Gasman et al., 2019).

Empower & Encourage Students

Empowering and encouraging students is a theme of the study. Each research study participant mentioned the importance and value of inspiring and empowering students. In this study, the instructors sought to encourage and enable students in various ways. First, Julia strove to build a strong bond and connection with each student in the class. Moreover, by providing culturally relevant and high-level academic instruction, Julia believed that the knowledge and information would empower students. Henry wanted students to feel comfortable speaking in Spanish or any other language that would help facilitate their learning.

Although some students felt uncomfortable or believed it disrespectful to speak in Spanish while discussing class content, Henry made a special effort to tell students that she approved of students using Spanish (or other languages) to discuss class concepts. Moreover, Joe sought to encourage and power students by having knowledge about and access to resources on

campus. Joe wanted to be able to answer the students' questions and know where to help guide students to get help if they needed it. Alice sought to empower and encourage students to succeed by adding to their regular academic courses and programs. In programs and opportunities on and off campus, Alice worked directly with students to enrich their academic and personal undergraduate experiences.

In addition to learning about a student's language, culture, and background, higher education stakeholders can also take other steps to help encourage and empower students to succeed. For example, a family could offer a scholarship program in a relative's name or donate books to the library. Another example is to begin or participate in a mentoring program that helps students of a similar background or demographic experience higher education success. Simply affirming and accepting a student's identity can help empower a student. Therefore, higher education stakeholders must consider all these ways to encourage and empower students.

Remove Barriers to Student Success

Removing barriers to student success is a theme of this study, a strategy to help facilitate student success, and an implication for higher education practice. For example, faculty, staff, administrators, and students work daily to remove barriers to student success. Staff members offer students counseling, tutoring, writing feedback, and research resources. Some faculty members provide instruction, guidance, challenges, and support. Administrators work to remove institutional barriers to success by offering scholarships, financial aid, parent information sessions, and other forms of support. Finally, the students are often crucial in identifying and seeking to remove barriers to their success by communicating with the university's faculty, staff, and administration.

As a result, higher education stakeholders must learn to listen to all students' needs, voices, and realities. The reality of each student individually makes us the composition and identity of the whole institution. Therefore, although individual students' needs and requests may differ, administrators, faculty, staff, and other students must learn to listen and attempt to assist them in removing barriers to their learning and success. In some cases, the barrier may be financial. In that case, the office of financial assistance, scholarship team, and others may work with that student or group of students to address their needs. In other cases, the barrier is academic.

Therefore, academic and writing tutors, peer and faculty mentors, students in the same program, and enrichment programs can help students to remove academic barriers. In other cases, a student may have a social circumstance presenting a barrier to success. For example, sometimes, students become homeless, find themselves in an abusive relationship, or lose a job. Each of these situations presents a barrier to student success. Therefore, the higher education stakeholders must be prepared with resources and strategies to help these students cope.

By striving to assist students in helping remove their barriers to success, the institution not only empowers the student now but often can also teach the student valuable life skills that s/he can use in the future. Again, whether the barrier is economical, linguistic, academic, or personal, higher education stakeholders must be prepared to offer the university’s resources and a confidential listening ear to help the student identify and overcome the barrier to success. University faculty, staff, and administrators who can assist students in answering their questions and finding resources on campus are key. Moreover, peer networks, student organizations, and mentor programs can help students feel more connected to the university. Finally, family support can help make a difference for students who encounter challenges at the university.

In this study, the structural, functional lens helped explain the behavior of campus leaders. Julia and Henry encouraged leaders to get to know and strive to understand their students. Moreover, Joe wanted staff leaders to do their best work and do everything they could to serve students. Alice sought to empower students by offering multiple enrichment and research opportunities. The transformative paradigm helped explain how "the application of ethics, care, and respect for marginalized communities; acknowledgment of multiple realities of groups and actors on the same campus; and incorporation of different ways of knowing and different methods to reach and educate diverse student populations" informed the study (Nunez et al., 2015, p. 12).

Recommendations for Further Research & Policy

This section will highlight recommendations for further research and future policy. Several recommendations for research and policy emerged from this study. First, the greater academic community needs more research about how campus leaders define and ensure student success. By learning more about how campus leaders define and foster student success, the education community and leaders can implement practices that support students. Second, higher education leaders must know what is working at effective institutions. Third, higher education leaders should study and understand what effective educators and programs are doing. Finally, researchers, leaders, and stakeholders should investigate and understand the current barriers to student success.

Study Student Success

Student success can be defined and described in various ways (Cuellar, 2015). As a result, higher education stakeholders and researchers should further investigate how different stakeholder groups define and help create student success. Moreover, the voices of students, in

particular, should be given special credence. Students are often the best ones to describe, identify, and explain what is affecting their academic experience. Therefore, it can only benefit higher education leaders to reach out and listen to students explain their experiences and needs.

One definition of student success is annual retention and degree completion (McKeown-Moak & Mullin, 2014). This is a traditional institutional measure of students' academic progress and success. With this measure, institutions evaluate their effectiveness based on how many students they retain and graduate. Unfortunately, many Latin* and other students face difficulty meeting the requirements of the traditional 4-year retention and graduation rate (Núñez et al., 2015). As a result, higher education leaders must study what facilitates student success beyond retention and graduation rates.

Another measure of student success is the feeling of student belonging, self-esteem, and acceptance. Although this construct may be much more challenging to measure in a student population, it is likely well worth the effort of an institution or leadership team to study and explore this topic (Nora et al., 2006). Research shows that additional student success measures may help facilitate greater student success (Cuellar, 2015). Therefore, it is in the best interest of institutions and leadership teams to study and help foster an environment in which students believe they are valued and belong.

This study found that student success transcends graduation and retention rates. In addition to four- and six-year graduation and first-year retention rates, Julia, Joe, Henry, and Alice described different ways to measure and describe student success. For Julia, student success was engaging students in class and watching them succeed on classwork and exams. For Joe, student success was creating access for students to abundant resources on campus. For Henry, student success transcended rote learning and required classwork. Alice supported

student success by integrating rigor and unique research opportunities into a student's undergraduate studies. For the study participants, studying student success was integrated into their daily work lives.

The rationale for this recommendation is that to do something well, one must understand what it is comprised of and what it entails. For example, if HSI leaders want to understand student success, they must study the topic as it relates to their students. Research shows that not all students have the exact needs (Nunez et al., 2015). As a result, HIS leaders and practitioners must know what constitutes Latin* student success. Qualitative, mixed method, and quantitative studies could investigate the perceptions of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. For example, a qualitative study could give voice to students' experiences. A quantitative study could investigate the exact beliefs of faculty, staff, administrators, and students through a survey. A mixed-method study could incorporate qualitative and quantitative measures to help define Latin* student success.

Investigate What Works at Successful Institutions

Organizations like *Excelencia* in Education annually investigate what is working at effective institutions (Excelencia, 2022). For example, on its website, Excelencia in Education states,

> For 17 years, *Excelencia* in Education has served as a reputable research organization and a noted change agent in higher education. With a steadfast commitment to accelerating Latin* student success, *Excelencia* works with institutions and education leaders to take a holistic, intentional approach to serving Latin* students.

Effective institutions have often learned how to meet the needs of students with significant financial, academic, and social-emotional demands. Therefore, it can only benefit other

institutions seeking to serve their students to investigate, discover, and attempt to replicate how other effective institutions serve their students.

For example, *Excelencia* in Education annually awards seals to institutions effectively serving Latin* students. In 2021, 10 institutions earned *Excelencia*'s certification seal (Excelencia, 2022). Of the ten institutions, two were from Texas, five were from California, two were from Florida, and one was from Illinois. Excelencia said, "This year's cohort of 10 trendsetting institutions…ensure(e) America's future through their unwavering commitment to intentionally SERVE Latin* students while serving all." Additionally, Deborah Santiago, the CEO and co-founder of *Excelencia,* said, "They (the ten institutions) are having a measurable impact in changing the face of higher education." As a result, other institutions can study what works at the ten examples *Excelencia* has identified.

Although the university in this study earned recognition from Excelencia, the researcher needed to find evidence of great intentionality in serving Latin* students. Because almost 90% of the student body identifies as Latin*, Latin* students should theoretically benefit from the university's resources and programs. Nevertheless, the university could undoubtedly improve its communication about and commitment to serving Latin* students explicitly and by design. For example, instead of striving to be "the nation's premier Hispanic-Serving Institution," the university could commit to serving Latin* students. Moreover, the university could seek to ensure that programs, awards, scholarships, and incentive programs all have 90% Latin* participation.

Investigating what works at successful institutions further empowers HSI leaders to implement best practices. By studying the reports and findings of Excelencia and other similar organizations, HSI leaders can be even more effective. Moreover, they can get ideas and use

models other colleges and universities use to serve Latin* students. A qualitative study of reports and articles outlining what works at effective institutions could help inform practice. Moreover, either one qualitative case study or multiple case studies of different borderlands and other HSIs could also highlight what is working at successful institutions.

Study Effective Educators & Programs

Much like investigating what effective institutions are doing, studying effective educators and programs is another strategy for success. Individual educators often know years before an institution can implement something on a large scale how best to meet the needs of students. Moreover, individual educators often work in teams and in tandem with other educators and systems. Therefore, individual academic programs also can help inform general practice about what works for a population of students (Watt & Reyes, 2005). Therefore, studying effective educators and programs will likely assist institutions in learning how to best meet their students' needs.

Effective educators often show empathy to their students (Orozco, 2003). Sometimes, students appreciate or connect well with faculty and staff with similar cultural or life circumstances. As a result, it benefits the institution to find out and hear from the students what effective educators are using strategies and how their methods and practices impact student achievement. Individual research projects and institutional efforts to identify and investigate what effective educators are doing can benefit the institution, the educator, and the students. Moreover, outlining and explicitly sharing the roles of various higher education stakeholders can help other stakeholders better serve students (Canales & Chahin, 2019).

Like effective educators, effective academic programs are often comprised of talented educators with a new and innovative vision of serving students (Anaya & Cole, 2003).

Mendez, Bonner II, Palmer, and Méndez-Negrete (2015) offered three specific things HSIs can do. First, they recommend "more scholarly perspectives of faculty working in these special institutions" (Mendez et al., 2015, p. 34). Second, Mendez et al. (2015) suggest "employ(ing) more aggressive means to develop candidates for administrative leadership and faculty who can reach out to Latin* communities and serve as cultural conduits" (p. 35). Third, Mendez et al. (2015) note,

> As advocates of underrepresented students, they can put a caring face on an institution as students transition to a new phase in their life. However, to enable and sustain effective advocacy, administrators and faculty need to be in a position of power (p. 35).

Effective academic programs usually have strong leadership, ample support, quality instruction, and vital resources (Canales & Chahin, 2019). In addition, unique or niche academic programs may have suggestions, ideas, or strategies to educate specific populations of students.

The campus leaders in this study strove to be effective and lead transformative programs in higher education. Julia was undoubtedly a transformative educator who connected with her students. Joe sought to be the best staff member he could be in hopes of effectively serving and empowering students. Henry, like Julia, sought to be an effective instructor. Additionally, Henry and Alice both worked to serve students. Together, these campus leaders strove to empower and encourage the students they worked with.

Like studying effective institutions, effective educators and programs could greatly assist HSI leaders in serving Latin* students. Qualitative studies that describe effective educators' practices, habits, and beliefs could help inform leaders and stakeholders about what effective programs and educators do differently. Moreover, an in-depth qualitative analysis of what effective educators and programs do could also help describe what distinguishes them as

effective educators and programs. A quantitative analysis of practices and program features could list, compare, and evaluate these practices' power to impact Latin* student success. Studying effective educators and programs could enable borderland and other HSIs to learn how to serve their Latin* students by design.

Investigate Barriers to Student Success

They are investigating barriers to student success requires many steps. First, researchers must look at the data and see if any glaring obstacles affect a student population. Next, researchers must consider traditional barriers to student success, such as financial, academic, and social or emotional hardships. For example, research shows that homeless, migrant, and immigrant students sometimes struggle significantly more than other students (Montiel, 2018). Therefore, it will benefit researchers and higher education stakeholders to understand the perspectives of students, institutions, educators, faculty, staff, and others who strive to serve students in higher education.

Although some barriers are traditional, they still merit a current and complete investigation. For example, financial barriers continue to affect students in higher education. Rodríguez and Galdeano (2015) explain,

> Research on Latina/o students has also found that financial aid positively affects persistence, rivaling or exceeding other factors. There is also a strong positive relationship between family income and persistence to a baccalaureate degree, with Latina/os experiencing more financial stress while attending college than non-Latina/os (p. 201).

Therefore, researchers must continue to study how higher education institutions can better serve students with financial challenges while fully considering institutional financial needs and resources. Moreover, the students often have brilliant ideas about addressing their financial and other challenges.

As a result, it only benefits the institutions to investigate, identify, and seek to remove whatever the barriers are to student success in higher education. In addition to the financial burden of seeking to pursue higher education, many students face academic, social, and emotional challenges (Orozco, 2003). Sometimes, these barriers are more challenging to address because the student must first recognize the barrier and then seek or attempt to remove it. For example, a student struggling in organic chemistry must first realize that his current knowledge is insufficient to keep up with the pace of the class. Next, he must make a personal study plan and possibly invoke the assistance of a class or other tutor to help address any deficiencies or gaps in his knowledge. Then, he must diligently and attentively work daily to close his learning gap and master the content of his class.

Another circumstance a student might face is an unforeseen social or emotional challenge (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003). The period of undergraduate studies is sometimes also a time of exploration of personal interests and strengths (Orozco, 2003). Moreover, most students begin pursuing career paths (Neri, 2018). Challenges like a problematic or painful end to a relationship or the unexpected death of a relative can affect a student's academic performance. In that case, it is helpful for university personnel to be able to refer the student to counseling or medical care on or off campus and or to other resources available to students (Martínez & Gonzáles, 2015; Torres, 2015).

The campus leaders in this study each set an example of personally committing to trying to remove barriers to student success. Julia created multiple extra credit opportunities in her class so students could succeed academically and learn more about their communities. Joe sought to connect students with campus resources. Henry encouraged students and faculty to identify and strive to remove barriers to student success. Alice removed barriers to student success by offering enrichment opportunities to students. Together, these campus leaders served their students, many of whom, by default, were Latin* students.

Investigating barriers to student success would help inform HSI leaders about their students' challenges. Although some student challenges can be generalized and understood at a group level, others may be nuanced and particular to a small group of students or individuals. As a result, it benefits borderland and other HSIs to study their students' barriers to success. Qualitative studies, including interviews and focus groups, would enable researchers to hear directly from students about their barriers to success. Moreover, students could also fill out a quantitative survey answering questions about barriers to success. By combining research's qualitative and quantitative aspects, university leaders and administrators will be better equipped to understand the barriers to students' success.

Summary

More than ever, Hispanic-Serving Institutions must truly serve Latin* and other students (García, 2017). With higher education under attack and in question, the results of this study inform higher education leaders about what university campus leaders say in working at one borderland HSI. As this study has shown, student success can be defined and described differently through a structural, functional lens and by employing the transformative paradigm (Cuellar, 2015; Rendón et al., 2015). As a result, researchers and educational leaders must seek

to investigate and inform themselves of best practices and what is working for effective educators, programs, and institutions. The study answered the four research questions through three themes- encouraging and empowering student success, removing barriers to student success, and serving by default.

In addition, the chapter reviewed serving by design, setting high expectations, getting to know students, encouraging and empowering students to succeed, and removing barriers to student success as implications for practice. The research recommendations included: (1) studying student success and (2) effective educators and programs, investigating (3) what is working at successful institutions, and (4) barriers to student success. In summary, this chapter reviewed a discussion of the study findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for research. The Latin* population is expected to keep growing. As a result, borderland and other HSIs must genuinely know how to serve their students truly. This study helped inform leaders, practitioners, and stakeholders about best practices and strategies to help get to know and serve Latin* and other students.

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APPENDIX A

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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your role as a campus leader? (RQ 4)

2. What, if anything, in your personal or professional background do you feel has prepared you to be a campus leader at an Hispanic-Serving Institution, HSI? (RQ 4)

3. What, in your opinion, does student success look like? (RQ 1)

4. How do you, as a campus leader, support student success? (RQ 2 & 3)

5. What organizational initiatives can other HSIs replicate in order to better serve Latin* students? (RQ 1 & RQ 3)

6. In 2020, 89.37% of the student body identified as Hispanic or Latin*. How does the university strive to reflect this majority of students its organizational identity? (RQ 2)

7. In like manner, what does the university do for the 10.63% of students—as well as faculty, staff, and administrators--who are not Latin* to help inform, educate, or socialize them to facts and understanding about Latin* culture and the university's organizational identity as an HSI? (RQ 2)

8. In your opinion and experience, how does the university work to ensure that Latin* culture and identity are affirmed and integrated throughout the university's identity as an HSI? (RQ2)

9. What are some examples of the way that way student success manifests? (RQ 1 & 2)

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

1. What actions do you observe? To what beliefs could these actions link? (RQ 1)

2. Is there evidence of collaboration and interdependent work happening? To what beliefs could/do these actions link? (RQ1)

3. Is there evidence of organizational outcomes for Latin*s discussed and prioritized in the participants' work? (RQ 1)

4. Is there evidence of an organizational culture and identity that reflects the culture of Latin* students, faculty, staff, and administration? (RQ 2)

5. Is there evidence of Latin* culture emphasized or valued in the setting (artwork, plaques, awards, names)? (RQ 1)

6. Did you observe specific behaviors focused upon organizational outcomes for Latin*s? What were they? To what beliefs could/do these link? (RQ 1)

7. Is there evidence of specific behaviors that reflected the organizational culture and identity valuing Latin* culture? What were the behaviors? To what beliefs could these behaviors be linked? (RQ 1 & 2)

8. Is there evidence of an effort to inform students, faculty, staff, and administration of the organizational outcomes, organizational culture that reflects Latin*s, and organizational identity of the university as an HSI? (RQ 2)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Neda Goerlitz Ramírez earned her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in December 2022. In addition, Neda holds a Master of Education in Bilingual Education and a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Texas Pan American. Neda Ramírez is an Edinburg, Texas native who has worked as an educator in both K12 and higher education settings. Neda's research and work focuses upon student and stakeholder success in educational and community settings. Contact information for Neda Ramírez is NedaRamirez22@gmail.com.