

Definition

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined in federal law as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment.¹

History

The concept of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) surfaced in the 1980s. Leaders at the federal, state, and institutional levels recognized that a small set of institutions enrolled a large percentage of Latino students but had low levels of resources. The classification of HSIs formally recognized these institutions for capacity-building and other support.

Overview

- In 2003-04, there were 236 HSIs located in 12 states and Puerto Rico, representing 6% of all institutions of higher education.²
- Overall, almost half (46%) of Latino undergraduates were enrolled at HSIs in 2003-04.
- The number of HSIs is growing. In 8 years, the number of HSIs increased from 131 to 236.

Location

- HSIs are very concentrated geographically. Over 75% of HSIs are located in 3 states and Puerto Rico. California has the most HSIs (68), followed by Puerto Rico (52), Texas (37), and New Mexico (23). HSIs are also growing in states not generally known for having large Latino populations, such as Kansas, Massachusetts, and Washington.

Governance

- The majority of HSIs are community colleges. Almost half (46%) of all HSIs (109) are public 2-year institutions. Just over 20% of HSIs (50) are public 4-year institutions. Only 26% of HSIs (62) are private, not-for-profit institutions granting baccalaureate degrees or above and 8% (15) are private not-for-profit institutions granting associate degrees.

Admissions

- HSIs provide more access to Latinos and other students than other degree-granting institutions of higher education. In 2003-04, 60% of HSIs (140) had an open admissions policy³, compared to 44% of all degree-granting institutions.

Tuition & Fees

- HSIs were much more affordable than comparable institutions of higher education. The average in-state tuition at public 4-year institutions (\$3,400) was more 50% higher than tuition at public 4-year HSIs (\$1,590). The average in-state tuition at public 2-year institutions (\$1,977) was 35% higher than that of public two-year HSIs (\$1,273).

Graduation

- While HSIs only represented 5% of all 2-year institutions in the U.S., they awarded 42% of all associate degrees earned by Latinos in 2003-04. While HSIs made up only 2% of all 4-year institutions, they awarded almost 40 percent of all baccalaureate degrees earned by Latinos.

Source: Santiago, D. (2006). *Inventing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): The Basics*. Excelencia in Education. Washington, D.C.

¹ Summary of Title V of the Higher Education Act, as amended in 1998. To be eligible for the "Developing HSIs Program", the law further requires that an HSI have a high enrollment of needy students and low educational and general expenditures.

² Institutions of higher education are defined as public or private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions.

³ IPEDS defines an open admissions policy as one where the institution will admit anyone who applies.