REPORT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION—AN INQUIRY INTO ITS IMPORTANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION, ITS STATUS AT SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY, AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS

By Savannah L. Williamson, Ph.D.,
Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Assistant Professor of History
Sul Ross State University

April 2018

S<small>UL</small> R<small>OSS</small> S<small>TATE</small> U<small>NIVERSITY</small>
R<small>EPORT AND</small> R<small>ECOMMENDATIONS ON</small> D<small>IVERSITY AND</small> I<small>NCLUSION</small>

PURPOSE
This report was designed to meet the requirements for making a case for diversity and inclusion initiatives as illustrated by the American Council on Education (ACE) Center for Policy Research and Strategy (CPRS) reports, which underscores the need for Campus Diversity. In addition, this report proposes short-term and long-term objectives and strategies to improve diversity and inclusion at Sul Ross State University. In making a case for diversity and inclusion, this report discusses the following areas in the listed order:

I. Summary/Overview

II. Defining "Diversity" in Higher Education
  a. What *is* diversity?
  b. Why Diversity is Important
    i. For Institutional Outcomes
    ii. For Student Success
    iii. Assessment and Measurement
  c. Theory
    i. Retention Theories
    ii. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model
    iii. Effectiveness of the CECE Model
  d. Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) & Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)
  e. Conclusions
  f. Successful Strategies

III. Key Questions for the University
  a. Institutional Effectiveness
  b. Infrastructure
  c. Faculty and Staff Policies and Practices
  d. Curriculum, Co-Curriculum, and Learning Outcomes
  e. Student Support and Success

IV. Articulated Institutional Commitment and Observations
  a. Vision, Mission, Values
  b. Non-Discrimination Policy
  c. Strategic Plan
  d. QEP
  e. University Diversity and Inclusion Committee

V. Recommended Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for Diversity and Inclusion
  a. Institutional
  b. Infrastructural
  c. Professional Development
  d. Curriculum, Co-Curriculum, and Learning Outcomes
  e. Student Experiences and Success

VI. Conclusions: Achieving Institutional Goals at Sul Ross State University

I. SUMMARY

This Report includes a review of diversity and inclusion at Sul Ross State University, including: theories and data supporting the effectiveness of diversity initiatives; expressed institutional support for diversity and inclusion initiatives; inquiries pertaining to the campus climate; and recommended goals, objectives, and strategies for improving the campus climate of diversity and inclusion.

Questions, theories, and research about diversity and inclusion in higher education provide a useful conceptual lens for educators to examine and illuminate the extent to which the environments on our campuses reflect the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities of our campus population, assess which indicators are associated with success at our institution, and clarify how we can cultivate more culturally engaging campus environments to maximize success among our diverse campus populations – all critical components of holistic efforts to promote institutional transformation toward the end of maximizing college success outcomes.

Support for diversity and inclusion initiatives has proven an effective strategy for colleges and universities, especially for minority serving institutions (MSIs), in improving: recruitment, enrollment, persistence, and graduation among students, retention of quality staff and faculty, generation of revenue, the institution's image and reputation, and contributing to a positive campus climate and environment in which all members feel supported and valued, contributing to overall effectiveness, success, and positive growth.

Finally, this report recommends the university adopt five goals for diversity, inclusion, and equity—Institutional Prioritization, Climate, Recruitment, Curriculum, and Community—each intended to ensure Sul Ross's success in achieving each of the five goals expressed in our strategic plan: promoting growth in academic, research, and artistic excellence; targeting recruitment, maximizing retention, and increasing graduation; strengthening the university as a sustainable and diversified financial base while ensuring affordable access; recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty, staff, and student employees; and unifying and enhancing the image and visibility of Sul Ross.

I humbly submit this report to the Executive Council for its consideration.

--Savannah L. Williamson, Ph.D.

I. DEFINING DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A. WHAT IS DIVERSITY?
Diversity is characteristics that make people similar and different from one another, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, citizenship status, age, language, culture, religion, and economic status.[1]

Within higher education, diversity enhances institutional excellence by improving learning, critical thinking, creativity in research, and workplace productivity. It can also be used to define and categorize behaviors and practices relating to instruction, assessment, student experience, and any host of campus dialogues and initiatives.

Campus diversity is more, however, than a list of communal traditions and experiences with which individuals may identify and to which others may react. The term 'campus diversity' has also come to refer to the variety of strategies institutions and leaders have developed to address the consequences of earlier homogeneity both at a particular institution and in higher education generally...For some it is a code word for the presence of designated and previously excluded groups; for others it is a climate that welcomes heterogeneity; for still others it is a range of programs designed to influence what and how students learn. For many it is all of these things simultaneously.[2]

Jeffrey Milem and Kenji Hakuta identify a three-part definition of diversity of the college or university campus:

- Structural Diversity—the numerical and proportional representation of different groups in a context
- Interactional Diversity—interactions with a diverse people and interactions with diverse information/ideas
- Institutional Diversity (Curricular/Co-Curricular)—diversity courses, intergroup dialogue programs, cultural awareness centers, that occur on the university campus

The interrelatedness of each of these elements is to be stressed; the first, structural diversity, which reflects numbers and proportions of representation, often feeds initiatives to expand diversity related activities. The presence of both encourages the development of diverse interactions, or exchanges between diverse persons, or of diverse ideas and experiences. Both of the latter can and often do assist in the growth of the former, and so the cycle goes.[3]

---

[1] Tyrone Forman, Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Diversity at the University of Illinois at Chicago, "Why Diversity Matters in Higher Education," *A Mosaic for UIC Transformation: University of Illinois Chicago Diversity Strategic Planning,* 2012.
   Note: several sections of this report, particularly those pertaining to theory, are copied from the cited sources.
[2] Daryl G. Smith, et al., *Diversity Works: The Emerging Patter of How Students Benefit* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1997), 8.
[3] Jeffrey F. Milem and Kenji Hakuta, "The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education," *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education* (ASHE Reader Series, 2002), 389-410 (excerpt p.391-92).

Diversity issues have broadened to include questions concerning pedagogy, the curriculum, notions of community, retention, decision making, faculty composition and evaluation, leadership, the role of staff, funding resources, and fundamental questions concerning institutional mission. In the past students were the focus, but now all constituents are part of the discussion. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) publication *Diversity Works: The Emerging Picture of How Students Benefit* describes such a design, ordered around four dimensions of campus diversity: representation, education and scholarship, institutional transformation, and climate and intergroup relations.[4]

---

[4] Smith, et. al., *Diversity Works,* 1, 9.

Additional Resources: ACE Center for Internalization and Global Engagement:
http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Center-for-Internationalization-and-Global-Engagement.aspx

B. WHY DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT

1. For Institutional Outcomes

a. The need to educate an increasingly diverse citizenry is not lost on higher education institutions, whose missions are often informed and enabled by recognition of the educational benefits of diversity. Institutions throughout the United States—public and private and of varying levels of selectivity—articulate through their mission statements and elsewhere the essential role student body diversity plays in their educational aims. Diversity benefits often cited by institutions, supported by research, and affirmed by federal courts and agencies include student preparation for a twenty-first-century workforce, civic participation, and improved teaching and learning. These benefits require cross-group understanding and collaboration, the breaking down of stereotypes, and the enhancement of critical thinking and complex problem-solving among a diverse peer group.[5]

Yet beyond articulated diversity goals there remains a gap between an increasingly diverse society and the diversity of America's selective institutions, which are looking less and less like the population at large in terms of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. Institutional leaders working to reverse these trends know that doing so will require mindful and strategic investment at a systemic level aided by policy and practical tools to prepare, attract, admit, enroll, and graduate diverse students.[6]

b. According to Tyrone Forman, Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Diversity at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in "Why Diversity Matters in Higher Education," diversity enhances institutional excellence by improving learning, critical thinking, creativity in research and workplace productivity.[7]

c. Campus climate is made up of the quality of the exchanges and interactions between community members, our shared community values and how they are articulated and upheld, and the ease with which individuals take advantage of the opportunities available to them. On an inclusive campus, all students, faculty and staff members feel that they belong, respect others' right to belong, and have an equal opportunity to thrive and contribute fully. A negative campus climate is one that exhibits disrespect, inhibits the ability of community members to participate equally, and marginalizes individuals or creates a sense of being less valued. Fostering an inclusive campus climate requires a sustained and long-term commitment which acknowledges that engaging diversity and difference is hard and sometimes uncomfortable work.

The experiences and perceptions of students, staff, and faculty contribute greatly to a University's public image as well as the ability of members of a campus community to achieve excellence in research and learning. Data from undergraduate surveys at other institutions of higher learning, as well as a variety of qualitative reports, indicate that negative experiences on campus are disproportionately borne by individuals with minority identities: people of color,

---

[5] American Council on Education, "Report on Race, Class, and College Access," 2015.
[6] American Council on Education, "Report on Race, Class, and College Access."
[7] Forman, "Why Diversity Matters in Higher Education."

women, LGBTQ people, members of religious minority groups, low-income and first-generation students, people with disabilities, and others.[8]

2. Student Success

a. Research shows that diversity initiatives do more than help racially and ethnically minority students; they help ALL students, including white student populations. Much recent literature focuses on the benefits of diversity in the collegiate curriculum. According to Milem and Hakuta, these benefits are:

- the enrichment of the educational experience
- the promotion of personal growth and a healthy society
- strengthening of the community and the workplace
- the enrichment of America's competitiveness[9]

b. Of these benefits, the enrichment of the academic experience of students and faculty may be of primary importance. This leads many to consider diversity "as central to teaching and learning, not just because some students may require new approaches, but because what and how we need to be teaching has changed." Institutions nationally have been challenged to review their curricula and mission to ascertain to what degree they address diversity and inclusion academically, as well as in terms of social service and operations. "The most current set of initiatives focusing on the curriculum, then, respond to significant developments in scholarship, the demands for new knowledge in a pluralistic society, and to calls for new capacities for intercultural understanding in students.[10]

c. With skilled workers in demand by industry and student enrollment declining, ignoring diversity initiatives is impractical, even unproductive. Students, employees and job candidates can easily see through an institutional façade that claims to embrace diversity but makes little effort to promote it.

A Hart Research Associates 2013 Survey of Employers found that:

- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of employers want colleges/universities to "place more emphasis" on intellectual and practical skills that foster teamwork skills in diverse groups.
- Ninety-one percent (91%) of employers agree that, regardless of a student's chosen field, they should attain knowledge and skills to problem-solve in diverse settings.

---

[8] Special Task Force, "Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," (Princeton: Executive Committee of the Council of the Princeton University Community, May 2015).

[9] Milem and Hakuta, "The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education," 389.

[10] Smith, et.al., *Diversity Works,* 11.

- Ninety-six (96%) of employers said that Intercultural Skills is of greatest importance in an employee.[11]

3. Assessment and Measures

a. How will an institution know when it's "diverse?" When will it know it has reached objectives of diversity planning? Key elements to successful planning include selecting appropriate measures for the success of any one goal and ensuring that processes exist for monitoring progress. For minority serving institutions, the challenge it not "how to become more diverse... [it is] how to translate diversity in the student body into equity in educational outcomes."[12] The Diversity Scorecard Project is used to establish whether this kind of equity is present at the institutions. Designed around four "perspectives"— access, retention, excellence, and institutional receptivity— the Scorecard captures some fifty-eight measurements. The project hopes to stress the importance of using data disaggregated by race and ethnicity as routine practice and to make "disparities by race and ethnicity…. more readily recognized."[13]

b. It is important for planning and assessment to be outcomes-based, meaning that successes will be measured by outputs, rather than assumed by inputs or theoretical, "placeholder" language. Jeffrey Milem and Kenji Hakuta describe four types of such outcomes. Two relate learning and democracy outcomes. Learning outcomes include "active learning processes in which students become involved while in college, the engagement and motivation that students exhibit, the learning and refinement of intellectual and academic skills, and the value students place on these skills after they leave college."[14] Democracy outcomes relate ways in which "higher education prepares students to become involved as active participants in a society that is becoming increasingly complex." Milem builds on these concepts by introducing process and material benefits. Process outcomes reflect ways students "perceive that diversity has enriched their college experiences;" also of assessment value are also the "material benefits students accrue when they attend diverse colleges." These material benefits include financial gains of salary/wages and "the attainment of advanced graduate or professional degrees and/or better job placement for students educated at more diverse institutions and/or who receive affirmative action in college admissions."[15]

c. A recent Chronicle of Higher Education article by Robert Shireman, former director of the higher education program at California's James Irvine Foundation, poses ten important questions that college officials should ask about diversity:

- How do we define diversity?
- Why do we have this particular array of students?

---

[11] Hart Research Associates, "It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success," (The Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013).

[12] Bensimon, et. al., "The Accountability Side of Diversity," *Diversity Digest* (2003), 14.

[13] Bensimon, et. al., "Accountability," 15.

[14] Milem and Hakuta, "The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity," 393.

[15] Ibid., 393-94.

- Who gets financial aid?
- How successful are our students?
- What multicultural education are students receiving?
- What does it feel like to be a student here?
- Who are our faculty members?
- What are our relationships with nearby communities?
- Who is thinking about these issues on campus?
- What do we want to change, and how will we know that we have changed it?[16]

---

[16] Robert Shireman, "10 Questions College Officials Should Ask About Diversity," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 15, 2003).

C. THEORY

1. **Retention Theories and Diversity Initiatives**
   o Astin's (1977, 1985) Theory of Involvement – The more involved a student is with the college, the higher likelihood of student retention.
   o Bean's (1980, 1983) Model of Work Turnover to Student Attrition – Used concepts from organizational studies of worker turnover. Examines how organizational attributes and reward structures affect student satisfaction and persistence.
   o Bean and Metzner's (1985) Nontraditional Student Attrition – Environmental factors have a greater impact on departure decisions of adult students than academic variables.
   o Kamens (1971, 1974) – Used multi-institutional data to demonstrate how colleges of greater size and complexity had lower attrition rates.
   o Kuh et. al. (2005) Student Engagement Theory—examined the impact of engagement on educational outcomes to conclude that it is high-impact practices that promote students' participation in educationally purposeful activities and enhance those students' levels of learning and likelihood of success in college.
   o McNeely (1937) "College Student Mortality" – Examined many factors in college student retention including time to degree, when attrition was most prevalent in a student's education, impact of college size, etc.
   o Seidman (2005, 2012) – Retention = Early Identification + (Early + Intensive + Continuous) Intervention
   o Spady Model (1971) – Interaction between student characteristics and campus environment
   o Summerskill (1962) – Personality attributes of students is the main reason for persistence and leaving.
   o Tinto Model (1975, 1993) – Academic and social integration with the formal and informal academic and social systems of a college.[17]

---

[17] Most of these theories have been taken from: J.B. Berger & S. Lyons, (2005) "Past to present: A historical look at retention," in A. Seidman, ed., *College student retention: Formula to student success* (ACE/Praeger Press, 2005); J.M. Braxton & A.S. Hirschy, "Theoretical developments in the study of college student departure," in A. Seidman, ed., *College student retention: Formula to student success* (ACE/Praeger Press, 2012). For more, see: Dr. Alan Seidman – Executive Director (Center for the Study of College Student Retention (http://cscsr.org/)

2. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model of Student Success

Almost half of all college students who enter a four-year postsecondary institution will fail to complete a bachelor's degree within 6 years of entering higher education.[18] In addition, students of color face substantial racial and ethnic disparities in college persistence and degree attainment. Indeed, while 62 % of White students who begin college at a four-year institution complete a bachelor's degree within 6 years of matriculation, that figure is only 39, 40, and 50 % for American Indian and Alaskan Native, Black or African American, and Latinx students, respectively.[19]

These low rates of degree attainment among college students in general, and the especially low rates of success among populations of color in particular, have significant negative consequences for individual students and society at large.[20] The negative individual ramifications that result from these low success rates, for example, include lower lifetime earnings and higher rates of poverty. Moreover, the negative consequences that accrue to larger society, due to these low rates of success, include lower tax revenues, higher rates of incarceration, and lower rates of civic participation throughout society.[21] Given the aforementioned low rates of bachelor's degree attainment and the negative consequences that are associated with them, understanding how to maximize success among racially diverse college student populations should be of paramount importance to postsecondary education researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

The CECE model acknowledges that external influences (e.g., financial factors, employment, and family influences) and precollege inputs (e.g., academic preparation and academic dispositions at the time of entry) shape college success (e.g., learning, satisfaction, persistence, and degree completion) (Figure 1).[22]

---

[18] National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], *Graduation rates of first-time postsecondary students who started as full-time degree/certificate-seeking students, by sex, race/ethnicity, time to completion, and level and control of institution where student started: Selected cohort entry years, 1996 through* 2007 (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

[19] NCES, *Graduation Rates,* 2012.

[20] "Success" denotes persistence and degree completion, learning, and developmental outcomes.

[21] S. Baum, J. Ma, & K. Payea, *Education pays, 2010: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society* (New York: The College Board, 2010); W.S. Swail, *The art of student retention: A handbook for practitioners and administrators* (Washington, DC: Education Policy Institute, 2004).

[22] Explanation of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model taken from Samuel D. Museus, "The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model: A New Theory of Success Among Racially Diverse College Student Populations," in M.B. Paulsen, ed., Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research: Volume 29 (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2014).
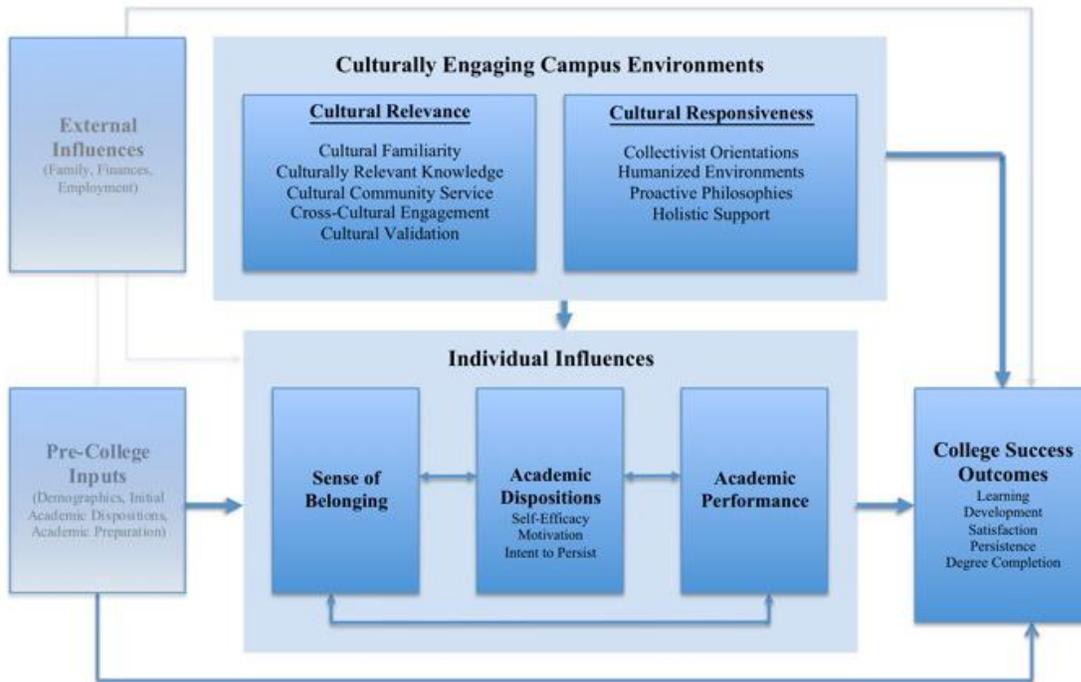
Figure 1: The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model of College Success

However, the focal point of the CECE model emphasizes that college students' access to culturally engaging campus environments is positively correlated with individual influences (e.g., sense of belonging, academic self- efficacy, motivation, expectation or intent to persist, and performance) on success and an increased probability of succeeding in college.

The CECE model emphasizes that undergraduates who encounter more culturally engaging campus environments are more likely to (1) exhibit a greater sense of belonging, more positive academic dispositions, and higher levels of academic performance and ultimately (2) be more likely to persist to graduation. In addition, the CECE model suggests that there are nine indicators of culturally engaging campus environments (Figure 2). Put another way, the CECE model hypothesizes that there are nine indicators of culturally engaging campus environments that engage students' racially diverse cultural backgrounds or identities, reflect their diverse needs as they navigate their respective institutions, and facilitate their success in college.

CECE Indicator #1: Cultural Familiarity

First, the CECE model posits that the extent to which college students have opportunities to physically connect with faculty, staff, and peers with whom they share common backgrounds on their respective campuses is associated with greater likelihood of success. This hypothesis is consistent with existing research that indicates that students who are able to establish connections with institutional agents who have similar backgrounds and experiences as they are

more likely to succeed in college. For example, several qualitative inquiries have demonstrated how college students of color benefit from connections with same-race agents on their respective campus, as well as different-race institutional agents who have shared and understand their background or individual experiences.[23]

CECE Indicator #2: Culturally Relevant Knowledge

Second, the CECE model indicates that postsecondary institutions that offer opportunities for their students to cultivate, sustain, and increase knowledge of their cultures and communities of origin can positively impact their experiences and success. Specifically, the extent to which students have opportunities to create, maintain, and strengthen epistemological connections to their home communities through spaces that allow them to acquire knowledge about their communities of origin is associated with increased likelihood of success. For White students from low-income backgrounds, for example, access to social sciences courses that pro- vide opportunities to learn about class inequalities and oppression might offer those students opportunities to develop epistemological cultural connections. For college students of color, involvement in ethnic studies courses, culturally relevant courses and programming, and ethnic student organizations on campus might be salient vehicles for the development and maintenance of epistemological cultural connections. This proposition is congruent with existing qualitative research that suggests that, when students have opportunities to learn and share knowledge about the issues within and needs of their own communities of origin, it can be associated with stronger connections to their respective institutions, higher levels of motivation, and greater likelihood of success.[24]

---

[23] Museus, "The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model: A New Theory of Success Among Racially Diverse College Student Populations," in M.B. Paulsen, ed., Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research: Volume 29 (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2014); L. F. Burrell, "Is there a future for Black students on predominantly White campuses?" *Integrate Education,* 18 (1980): 23–27; D. A. Guiffrida, "African American student organizations as agents of social integration" *Journal of College Student Development* 44 (3: 2003), 304–319; D.A. Guiffrida, "Other-mothering as a framework for understanding African American students' definitions of student-centered faculty," *Journal of Higher Education* 76 (6: 2005), 701–723; S.R. Harper & S.J. Quaye, "Student organizations as venues for Black identity expression and development among African American male student leaders" *Journal of College Student Development* 48 (2: 2007), 127–144.

[24] Museus, "The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model: A New Theory of Success Among Racially Diverse College Student Populations," in M.B. Paulsen, ed., Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research: Volume 29 (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2014); L. F. Burrell, "Is there a future for Black students on predominantly White campuses?" *Integrate Education,* 18 (1980): 23–27; D. A. Guiffrida, "African American student organizations as agents of social integration" *Journal of College Student Development* 44 (3: 2003), 304–319; D.A. Guiffrida, "Other-mothering as a framework for understanding African American students' definitions of student-centered faculty," *Journal of Higher Education* 76 (6: 2005), 701–723; S.R. Harper & S.J. Quaye, "Student organizations as venues for Black identity expression and development among African American male student leaders" *Journal of College Student Development* 48 (2: 2007), 127–144; P.N. Kiang, "Stories and structures of persistence: Ethnographic learning through research and practice in Asian American Studies" in Y. Zou & H. T. Trueba, eds., *Advances in ethnographic research: From our theoretical and methodological roots to post-modern critical ethnography* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 223-255; P.N. Kiang, "A thematic analysis of persistence and long-term educational engagement with Southeast Asian American college students," in L. Zhan, ed., *Asian American voices: Engaging, empowering, enabling* (New York: NLN Press, 2009), 21-58; Samuel D. Museus, (2008b). "The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominantly White institutions," *Journal of College Student Development* 49.6 (2008): 568–586; Samuel D. Museus, "Using cultural perspectives to understand the role of ethnic student organizations in Black students' progress to the end of the pipeline," in D. E. Evensen & C.

CECE Indicator #3: Cultural Community Service

Third, the CECE Framework hypothesizes that cultural community service positively impacts the experiences and success of racially diverse populations. Cultural com- munity service manifests when institutions provide students with spaces and tools to give back to and positively transform their cultural communities via various mechanisms, including activities aimed at spreading awareness about issues in their respective communities, engaging in community activism, participating in community service and service-learning opportunities, or engaging in problem-based research projects that aim to solve problems within their cultural communities. The model suggests that the level of access that students have to opportunities to develop such transformational cultural connections is positively associated with success. And, this concept of transformational cultural connections is congruent with extant empirical research, which suggests that activities allowing both White students and students of color to give back to their communities are linked to stronger connections to their respective campuses, which are related to higher levels of success in college.[25]

CECE Indicator #4: Opportunities for Meaningful Cross-Cultural Engagement

Fourth, the CECE Framework indicates that students' access to opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement is positively associated with their success in college. The model indicates that opportunities to engage in positive and purposeful interactions with peers from disparate cultural origins can have a positive impact on college experiences and success. Although research examining the relationship between meaningful cross-cultural engagement and persistence and attainment in college is difficult to find, existing literature does offer substantial evidence that campus environments that promote meaningful cross-cultural engagement are conducive to many positive outcomes in college. For example, a plethora of quantitative inquiries suggest that environments that promote such engagement lead to higher levels of learning, development, and cultural awareness.[26] In addition, this evidence indicates

---

D. Pratt, eds., *The end of the pipeline: A journey of recognition for African Americans entering the legal profession* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2011), 162-172; S.D. Museus, S. Lam, C. Huang, P. Kem, and K. Tan, "Cultural integration in campus subcultures: Where the cultural, academic, and social spheres of college life collide," in S. D. Museus & U. M. Jayakumar, eds., *Creating campus cultures: Fostering success among racially diverse student populations* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 106-129.

[25] A.W. Astin, & L.J. Sax, "How undergraduates are affected by service participation," *Journal of College Student Development* 39. 3 (1998): 251–263; J.S. Eyler, & D.E. Giles, Jr. *Where's the learning in service-learning?* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999); Ibid.

[26] A.L. Antonio, "Diversity and the influence of friendship groups in college," The Review of Higher Education 25.1 (2004): 63–89; A.L. Antonio, M.J. Chang, K. Hakuta, D.A. Kenny, S. Levin, & J.F. Milem, "Effects of racial diversity on complex thinking in college students," Psychological Science, 15.8 (2004): 507–510; Astin, *What Matters in College?;* M.J. Chang, "Is it more than about getting along? The broader educational relevance of reducing students' racial biases," *Journal of College Student Development* 42.2 (2001): 93–105; D.H. Gruenfeld, et. al., "Cognitive flexibility, communication strategy, and integrative complexity in groups: Public versus private reactions to majority and minority status," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 34.2 (1998), 202–226; Gurin, et. al., "How does racial/ethnic diversity promote education?" *Western Journal of Black Studies* 27.1 (2003): 20–29; Hurtado, et. al., *A Model For Diverse Learning Environments;* U.M. Jayakumar, "Can higher education meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and global society? Campus diversity and cross-cultural workforce competencies," *Harvard Educational Review* 78.4 (2009): 615–651; Locks, et. al., "Extending notions of campus climate and diversity to students' transition to college," *The Review of Higher Education* 31.3 (2008): 257–285; Ibid.

that campus environments that are conducive to meaningful cross-cultural engagement are also associated with higher levels of self-confidence, satisfaction, and sense of belonging among both White students and students of color in college – which are related to greater levels of success.

CECE Indicator #5: Collectivist Cultural Orientations

Fifth, the CECE model proposes that college students who encounter institutional environments that are based on more collectivist cultural orientations, as opposed to more individualistic ones, are more likely to succeed. This proposition is congruent with existing evidence indicating that both White students and students of color from communities with more collectivist cultural orientations might encounter salient challenges adjusting to and navigating colleges and universities with more individualistic orientations. In addition, researchers have underscored the potential positive impact of collective environments on the success of racially diverse student populations. However, heretofore, scholarship that actually empirically tests the relationship between collectivist cultures and success outcomes is difficult to find.[27]

CECE Indicator #6: Culturally Validating Environments

Sixth, the CECE model postulates that culturally validating environments are positively related to success in college. Specifically, the CECE Framework suggests that students who are surrounded by postsecondary educators who validate their cultural backgrounds and identities will have more positive experiences and be more likely to succeed in college. Cultural validation can be considered the extent to which postsecondary institutions and educators convey that they value the cultural backgrounds and identities of their diverse college student populations. The inclusion of cultural validation in the CECE model is congruent with a small and growing body of empirical scholarship that suggest that such validation has a positive impact on the adjustment, sense of belonging, academic dispositions, and success of racially diverse students in college. For instance, Barnett examined a sample of 263 community college students using linear regression analysis and concluded that faculty validation of two-year college students was a significant, strong, and positive predictor of intent to persist.[28]

CECE Indicator #7: Humanized Educational Environments

Seventh, the CECE model hypothesizes that the extent to which students encounter humanized educational environments on their campuses is related to more positive experiences and a greater likelihood of success. The concept of humanized educational environments refers to campus environments that are characterized by institutional agents who care about, are committed to, and develop meaningful relationships with their students. The incorporation of humanized educational environments within the CECE model is consistent with a small and growing body of qualitative and quantitative evidence that such environments are related to more positive experiences and greater likelihood of success among racially diverse student populations.[29] For example, Museus qualitatively analyzed the campus cultures of three institutions that exhibited high and equitable persistence and degree completion rates among their Asian American, Black,

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.; E.A. Barnett, "Validation experiences and persistence among community college students," *The Review of Higher Education* 34.2 (2011): 193–230.

[29] Ibid.

Latinx, and White students. He concluded that the cultures of these institutions were, in part, characterized by "a belief in humanizing the educational experience" – which was characterized by the aforementioned caring, commitment, and relationships – contributed to the success of undergraduates on those campuses.[30]

CECE Indicator #8: Proactive Philosophies

Eighth, the CECE model indicates that the existence of proactive philosophies at postsecondary institutions is positively associated with the likelihood of success among racially diverse college student populations on their respective campuses. That is, the model indicates that, when faculty and staff go beyond making information and support available to making extra efforts to bring that information and support to students and maximize their likelihood of success, they can increase the rates of persistence and attainment of among the racially diverse college student populations they serve. This construct is congruent with existing evidence that highlights the positive influences of such proactive philosophies and practices. Indeed, multiple qualitative studies of success among students of color have concluded that proactive philosophies and approaches to serving under- graduates were associated with greater likelihood of success among their participants.[31]

CECE Indicator #9: Availability of Holistic Support

Finally, the CECE Framework posits that the availability of holistic support on college and university campuses is positively associated with levels of success among their respective student bodies. The availability of holistic support is characterized by the extent to which postsecondary institutions provide their students with access to one or more faculty or staff members that they are confident will provide them with the information they seek, offer the help that they require, or connect them with the information or support that they need. While research examining the impact of holistic support is limited, the literature that does exist suggests that this type of support facilitates success among racially diverse college student populations. More specifically, evidence suggests that, when students are not always expected to hunt down the information and support they require on their own, but rather can access one or more institutional agents that function as conduits to broader support networks on their campuses, those students are more likely to succeed in college.[32]

---

[30] Samuel D. Museus, "Understanding racial/ethnic differences in the direct and indirect effects of loans on degree completion," Journal of College Student Retention: Theory, Research, and Practice 11.4 (2010): 499–527.

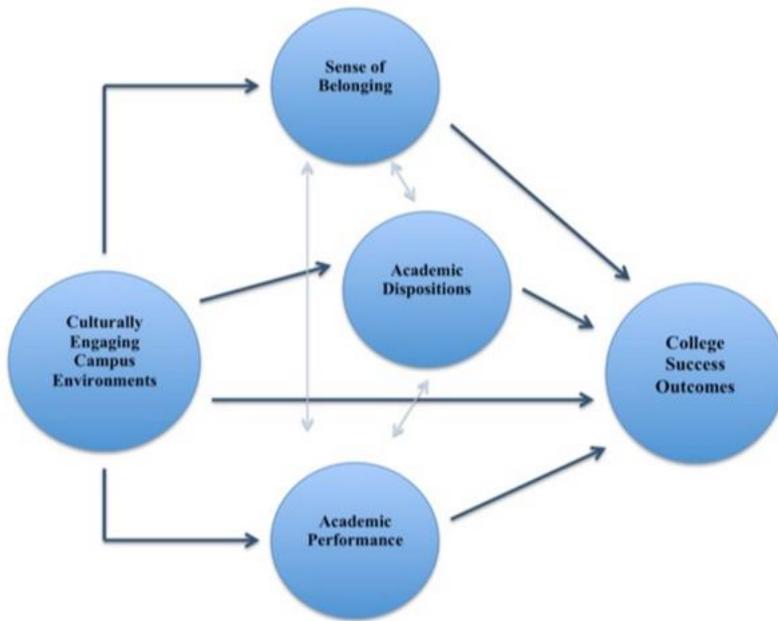[31] Museus, "The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model."

[32] Ibid.

Figure 2: The focal point of the CECE Model

3. Effectiveness of the CECE Model

The CECE model concludes that undergraduates' access to culturally engaging campus environments is directly and indirectly (via sense of belonging, academic self-efficacy, motivation, expectation or intent to persist, and performance) related to a greater likelihood of persistence (Figure 2). Museus's CECE Model of nine indicators suggest that a culturally relevant environment should allow racialized and ethnic students to interact with people from similar cultural backgrounds as well as disparate ones, learn about topics that cultivate and sustain their own cultural background, and have the opportunity to give back to their communities through activism, civic engagement, and service-learning activities. Furthermore, the environment should validate students as cultural beings, allow them to interact with institutional agents who empower them, and support them holistically. In sum, the CECE Model suggests that the greater the extent to which institutions foster and maintain culturally engaging campus environments, the more likely their environments will allow their diverse student populations to thrive in college.

The CECE model may be a useful tool for institutional leaders to better understand the ways in which their respective campus environments might be influencing the experiences and outcomes of their diverse students. The framework can also serve as an important tool for institutional leaders, assessment specialists, and college educators to utilize in efforts to assess their respective campus environments, pinpoint areas for improvement, and construct holistic intervention efforts aimed at transforming their institutions in ways that better serve their racially diverse student populations. Specifically, the CECE model can provide a useful conceptual lens for college educators to examine and illuminate the extent to which the environments on their respective campuses reflect the CECE indicators, assess which indicators are associated with success at their institutions, and clarify how they can cultivate more culturally engaging campus environments to maximize success among their racially diverse student populations – all critical components of holistic efforts to promote institutional transformation toward the end of maximizing college success outcomes.

D. MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIs) & HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (HSIs)

CHALLENGES

Low-Income Students: Recent reports confirm that institutions that enroll a large percentage of low-income students have lower graduation rates than those that enroll fewer low-income students. Although Latinx students are members of the largest community of color in the United States, they continue to achieve college degrees at lower rates than other racial and ethnic groups. As institutions that are often underfunded and enroll a large percentage of Latinx and low-income students it is no wonder that six-year graduation rates at HSIs are low. This is not to say that HSIs should make excuses for graduating Latinx students in lower numbers, but rather to suggest that there may be more Latinx-serving identity than enrollment and graduation.[33]

Retention and Graduation Rates: Swail et al. analysis of data from the NELS:88/00 database found substantial differences between Hispanic and white students with regard to postsecondary persistence and completion. Nearly two thirds (66%) of Latinx students that survived a K–12 educational system and were encouraged to enroll in college failed to earn any degree by 2000. This figure compares to only 40% for white students. As discouraging as this may sound, while half (50%) of white students earned a bachelor's degree or higher, only 24% of Latinx students accomplished the same. Contributing to the differences in educational attainment among students included *attendance patterns*, *delay of entry into college*, *time to degree completion*, and *semester credit hours earned*. Not only do Latinx students take longer to enroll in college but they also need more time to graduate; 44% of white students earn a degree within four (4) years compared to only 23% of Latinx students.[34]

Research has found that the institutional missions of several MSIs and minority-serving institutions do not directly address the specific needs of students of color. Thus, what MSIs should be challenging and altering is the "Whiteness as norm" underlying structure that often serves to exclude non-whites implicitly, if not explicitly.[35]

Student and faculty retention has become an important issue for all universities today. No longer is it enough to simply enroll students; many states are demanding that universities raise their retention and graduation rates. How students perceive social support from their peers as well as their institution affects student persistence. Students noted the need for better advising at both the

---

[33] [33] A. Rodríguez & A.P. Kelly, *Access, affordability, and success: How do America's colleges fare and what could it mean for the president's rating plan?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2014); L. Malcom-Piqueux & J.J.M. Lee, (2011). "Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Contributions and challenges," *College Board* (2011) in Garcia, "Complicating a Latina/o- serving Identity at a Hispanic Serving Institution," *The Review of Higher Education* 40.1 (Fall 2016): 117-143.

[34] W.S. Swail, A.F. Cabrera, C. Lee, & A. Williams, *Latino students and the educational pipeline* (Washington, D.C.: Educational Policy Institute, 2005).

[35] F.E. Contreras & E.M. Bensimon, (2005, November). "*An equity-based accountability framework for Hispanic Serving Institutions*," Paper presented at the meeting of the *Association for the Study of Higher Education* (Philadelphia, PA: 2015); J.E. Lane & M.C. Brown, M. C. "Looking backward to see ahead: Implications for research, policy, and practice," *New Directions in Institutional Research* 118 (2003): 27–40; T.J. Guess, "The social construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, racism by consequence," *Critical Sociology* 32 (2006): 649-637.

high school and college levels as well as a more supportive environment to aid their transition. The role of university comfort as a predictor in student success has been documented in the literature.[36]

According to the American Council on Education (ACE) data from NSC on public four-year Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs):

- Completion at Starting Institutions—Date reveals a close to 50% total completion rate for the 2007 cohort of public four-year HSI students. The total completion rate increased to over 74% for students who enrolled exclusively full time. However, the federal graduation rate for public four-year HSIs was over 31 percentage points lower (42.7 percent). Furthermore, approximately 64% of exclusively full-time students completed their certificate/degree at their starting institution.
- Transfer and Completion—Approximately 13% of the total cohort completed their first certificate/degree at another institution: 4% did so at a two-year institution and approximately 9% transferred to and completed at a different four-year institution. Approximately 10% of students in the exclusively full-time sub-cohort completed their first certificate/degree at a different institution, with nearly 3% transferring to a two-year institution and 7.6% transferring to another four-year institution.
- Persistence: Almost a quarter of the total cohort (24.1%) and 6.9% of the exclusively full-time sub-cohort were still pursuing their first credential in the sixth year. Around 26% of the total cohort had yet to complete a certificate/degree and were no longer enrolled at any institution in the sixth year. This rate dropped to 19% among students who had enrolled exclusively full time.[37]

First-Generation: Most Hispanic higher education students nationwide are first-generation college students. Not having a parent or role model to turn to for advice about attending college is common among Latinx students (Dayton et al., 2004) and a challenge that a supporting environment with the right programs can help students overcome.[38]

Campus Environment: Hurtado & Kamimura point out that to more fully realize why Hispanic students may not persist to graduation, we must understand that a student's withdrawal decision is contingent on a variety of institutional support structures and college experiences. However, other factors external to an institution have also been found to contribute to a student's resolve to

[36] A.M. Gloria, J. Castellanos, A.G. Lopez, & R. Rosales, "An examination of academic non-persistence decisions of Latino undergraduates," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 27.2 (2005): 202–223; M.G. Constantine, J.S. Robinson, L. Wilton, & L.D. Caldwell, L. D. "Collective self-esteem and perceived social support as predictors of cultural congruity among Black and Latina/o college students," *Journal of College Student Development 43* (2002): 307-316.

[37] American Council on Education, "Pulling Back the Curtain: Enrollment Outcomes at Minority Serving Institutions (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2017).

[38] M.J. Fischer, "Settling into campus life: Differences by race/ethnicity in college involvement and outcomes," *Journal of Higher Education* 28.2 (2007): 125–161; B. Dayton, N. Gonzalez-Vasquez, C.R. Martinez, & C. Plum, "Hispanic-Serving Institutions through the eyes of students and administrators," *New Directions for Student Services,* 105 (2004): 29-40.

stay in college or, in a far more negative sense, to consider nonacademic options in their lives (dropping out of college). A recent publication of the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA) identified nine propositions found in the literature that influence student college success, including:

- co-curricular activities
- a rigorous academic curriculum
- academic, college, and career counseling
- mentoring
- peer support
- family and community engagement
- incorporating students' cultures in intervention efforts
- funding priorities
- the timing of interventions[39]

Climate and Perceptions: The support and comfort that Latinx students feel while attending a university with a positive campus climate can be beneficial to their psychological well-being and college achievement. If students have negative feelings or perceptions about their campus, then students of color may be more likely to fail. Students who perceive a positive campus climate may gain a valuable support system in which they have opportunities to interact with their peers, reach out to faculty and staff, and therefore achieve academically. Therefore, the level of support received enhances the campus climate, making it more conducive to learning.[40]

Sense of Belonging: One highly important factor for students' educational achievements is the belief that they are part of the academic and social life going on around them (Hurtado Carter, & Spuler 1996). This sense of belonging on campus subsequently influences a student's desire to remain in college. In an attempt to apply Tinto's theoretical model of student departure to a population of minority students, Hurtado & Carter (1997) focused on clarifying the structure of a conceptual model that specified those factors that led to a sense of belonging on the part of the student. The authors tested the extent to which minority students' background characteristics (i.e., gender and academic self-concept) and academic and social experiences in the first and second years in college contributed to a sense of belonging in the third year. Their findings confirmed that the first-year academic and social experiences of Latinx students at 4-year institutions led to a strong sense of belonging at their respective institutions in their third year of college. Hurtado & Carter established that Hispanic students' sense of belonging on campus was

---

[39] S. Hurtado & M. Kamimura, "Latina/o retention in four-year institutions," in J. Castellanos & L. Jones, eds., *The Majority in the Minority* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2004).

[40] A.M. Gloria, J. Castellanos, A.G. Lopez, & R. Rosales, (2005). "-An examination of academic non-persistence decisions of Latino undergraduates," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 27.2 (2005): 202–223;A.M. Gloria, J.S. Hird, & R.L. Navarro, "Relationships of cultural congruity and perceptions of university environment to help-seeking attitudes by socio-race and gender," *Journal of College Student Development* 42 (2001): 545–562; K.C. Booker, "Perceptions of classroom belongingness among African American college students," *College Student Journal* 41.1 (2007): 178–186; J.L. Edman & B. Brazil, (2007). "Perceptions of campus climate, academic efficacy and academic success among community college students: An ethnic comparison," *Social Psychology of Education,* 12.3 (2007): 371-383.

closely linked to the frequency with which they engaged in discussions with other students outside of class, their membership in religious and social-community organizations, and negatively associated with perceptions of a hostile racial climate on their campuses. In other words, in an environment that encourages tolerance and acceptance and engages students and faculty in academic and social discourse, a Latinx student's sense that they belong in college and are accepted at that institution is established and nourished.[41]

Representation: In the CECE model, *Cultural Familiarity* is the level to which students have the opportunity to interact with other people who are like them or who understand them. At an HSI, this is typically present at the student level, as the defining indicator of being an HSI is the critical mass of Latinx students. Where HSIs fall short is that the faculty and staff tend to be less reflective of the student population. While enrolling a large percentage of students of color is natural for HSIs, the challenge is that they must disrupt the embedded practices for hiring and promotion that have kept faculty and staff of color out of the institution. This process includes changing practices for reviewing applications, diversifying search committees, and altering reward structures in order to value the diverse ways of knowing of minority and under-represented people. Until this happens, Latinx students will not fully experience the cultural familiarity posited in the CECE Model.[42]

Programming: In the CECE model, *Culturally Relevant Knowledge* refers to the institution's ability to provide students with knowledge about who they are as racial and cultural beings. Campus educators offer curricular and co-curricular options that are grounded in diverse ways of knowing. Though retention theorists have stressed the importance of providing culturally relevant practices at HSIs, research shows that HSIs fall short on this indicator as well, with only 3% of all HSIs offering culturally relevant curricula. HSIs must actively work towards disrupting the white normative curricula and practices that are embedded within the institution. This cannot fall on the faculty and staff working in ethnic studies departments and in special programming for diverse students. All curricular departments, including STEM, social sciences, humanities, and all programmatic areas, from residence life to the career center, must incorporate the ways of knowing of minority and under-represented peoples.[43]

Targeted funding allows for the improvement of existing programs and student support services and the opportunity to create new ones, not only for diverse students but also for the entire campus (Laden, 2001). It is important to note that serving minority and underrepresented students serves as a best practice that will work for the larger student body as well.

---

[41] S. Hurtado, D.F. Carter, & A. Spuler, "Latino Student Transition to College: Assessing Difficulties and Factors in Successful College Adjustment," *Research in Higher Education* 37.2 (1996): 145-157.

[42] G. Garcia, "Cultivating Culturally Engaging Campus Environments at Hispanic Serving Institutions," *National Institute for Transformation & Equity* (January 23, 2018), https://www.indiana.edu/~cece/wordpress/2018/01/23/ceceathsis/

[43] Garcia, "Cultivating Culturally Engaging Campus Environments at Hispanic Serving Institutions."

Campus Philosophy: In the CECE model, *Proactive Philosophies* suggests that faculty and staff proactively provide minority students with information and services that maximize their success. This is a major challenge facing HSIs. HSIs cannot assume that their practices are conducive to the learning and success of their students. The philosophies must be proactive from pre-matriculation through graduation, both inside and outside of the classroom. HSIs must first recognize that students who enroll in HSIs are likely to experience multiple forms of oppression, ranging from being low income, food insecure, and/or homeless, to being immigrants, undocumented, and/or English language learners. They must also understand that the K-12 educational system has likely misunderstood and failed these students. HSIs must take a holistic, organizational approach to addressing the needs of minority students, starting with understanding who they are and what challenges they have faced. HSIs cannot afford to be passive when it comes to serving their students.[44]

---

[44] Ibid.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Serving diverse students requires intentionality. Research suggests that institutions that are minority-serving should enhance academic outcomes and non-academic outcomes. Furthermore, the literature suggests that the campus culture at MSIs should provide students with connections to diverse faculty and staff, should enhance students' diverse identities, and should enact culturally relevant curricula and pedagogy. Beyond outcomes and culture, some suggest that for an organization to embrace an identity for serving diverse individuals, the institutional structures must change.[45] Students' perceptions of diversity play an important part in their view of campus climate issues. Students who are more aware of diversity issues reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with their campus environments. Further, the more students actively dealt with diversity issues, such as if they were victims of micro-aggressions, the less satisfied they were with the campus.[46]

Guided by these theories, Gina A. Garcia argues that **an institution with a Latinx-serving identity should sustain the culture of Latinx students while enhancing their educational experiences.** While other studies have shown that HSIs have the ability to be culturally relevant to Latinx students in ways that predominantly white institutions cannot, Garcia's study pushes these ideas a step further, suggesting that enhancing and sustaining the culture and education of Latinx students is part of the central, distinct, and enduring elements of a Latinx-serving organizational identity. This aligns with arguments made by theorists who believe that an organizational identity is based on reactions of the deeply embedded practices and culture of the institution. Although HSIs seeking to produce more equitable outcomes for diverse students should consider structural elements such as their mission statements, policies and practices, decision-making protocols, and hiring and tenure decisions the data in this case show that the day-to-day practices of the organization are more salient to students' sense-making when it comes to constructing an organizational identity for serving Hispanic students.[47]

---

[45] American Council on Education, "Pulling Back the Curtain: Enrollment Outcomes at Minority Serving Institutions (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2017).

[46] E.G. Helm, W.E. Sedlacek, & D.O. Prieto, "The relationship between attitudes toward diversity and overall satisfaction of university students by race," *Journal of College Counseling* 1 (1998): 111-120.

[47] G. Garcia, "Complicating Latina/o-serving Identity at Hispanic Serving Institutions," *The Review of Higher Education* 40.1 (Fall 2016): 117-143; G. Garcia, "Cultivating Culturally Engaging Campus Environments at Hispanic Serving Institutions," *National Institute for Transformation & Equity* (January 23, 2018), https://www.indiana.edu/~cece/wordpress/2018/01/23/ceceathsis/

F. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

1. CREATING SPACES TO FIND CULTURAL FAMILIARITY ON CAMPUS

College faculty, administrators, and staff should invest substantial energy in racial- and ethnic-specific campus programming that can provide undergraduates with opportunities to connect with people from similar backgrounds.

- One critical way in which institutions offer such support is by providing Latinx student groups spaces where they can find cultural familiarity and connect with support from peers and mentors. Institutions can use such physical spaces to construct culturally relevant spaces that are based on the notion of *familismo* and reflect cultural values of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity. In addition, institutions should constantly seek new ways to engage broader Latinx communities in their environments.[48]
- For example, Metropolitan State University of Denver recently implemented *Orientació n Familiar*, an orientation program designed specifically for Spanish-speaking families. The program focused on building upon family knowledge and resources while sharing examples of how to continue supporting students once they make the transition into college.[49]
- City College of Chicago-Harry S. Truman College's Transitional Bilingual Learning Community (TBLC) works to increase enrollment and retention of Latinx English language learners in the institution's credit program. This two-semester, full-time credit initiative was designed to help Latinx English language learners transition into college-level courses taught in English upon completing the program. TBLC utilizes learning communities to provide students with academic support, bilingual, and financial services. The program provides a space in which students can learn the culture of higher education while also supporting their identities and experiences. As a result of the program, TBLC students earn their associate degree at four times the rate of nonparticipants and also transfer after earning their degree at seven times the rate of nonparticipants.[50]
- In a study on Latinx identity at Hispanic Serving Institutions, students at Naranja State University (NSU) said that when they went into certain buildings on campus, they felt a cultural connection. The building that houses the Chicanx Studies department is full of colorful murals and cultural artifacts that students said made them feel validated. At the same time, some students suggested that an HSI should offer more cultural spaces, including a more robust Latinx cultural center.[51]

---

[48] G. Garcia, "Complicating Latina/o-serving Identity at Hispanic Serving Institutions," *The Review of Higher Education* 40.1 (Fall 2016): 117-143; D.M. Harris & J.M. Kiyama, "The role of community and school-based programs in aiding Latina and Latino student high school persistence," *Education and Urban Society* (2013); Castellanos & Gloria, "Research considerations and theoretical application for best practices in higher education: Latina and Latinos achieving success," *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education 6.4* (2007): 378-96.

[49] American Council on Education, "Pulling Back the Curtain: Enrollment Outcomes at Minority Serving Institutions (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2017).

[50] ACE, "Pulling Back the Curtain."

[51] G. Garcia, "Complicating Latina/o-serving Identity at Hispanic Serving Institutions," *The Review of Higher Education* 40.1 (Fall 2016): 117-143.

2. Support Structures

A recent study assessed the degree to which social support, university comfort, and self-beliefs were interrelated and predictive of undergraduate Hispanic students' decisions to persist. All three constructs were found to be significantly interrelated as well as predictive of student attrition. Individual variables of perceived mentorship, perceptions of social support from friends, and perceptions of the university environment as comforting to Latinx students were found to have the strongest predictive value.[52]

- The University of Texas at San Antonio combined a student support program with academic services and financial aid to facilitate Latinx student success. The Access College and Excel (ACE) Scholar Program provided academic resources such as the College Success Seminar, Supplemental Instruction, specialized academic advising, and a staff mentor for students. Freshmen participating from three high-risk high schools received the services along with a scholarship. Follow-up data indicated that the 2001-02 retention rate for ACE scholars was 87%, compared to only 66% for the entire freshman cohort.[53]

- Many MSIs emphasize collaboration over competition through cohort models in which students understand that their success is deeply tied to others and not merely a product of their own doing. CUNY-Lehman College strove to improve student retention through the Implementation of a Comprehensive Student Development Program. The program was designed to increase the retention of first-time, full-time, regularly admitted freshmen at CUNY-Lehman College, nearly half of whom are Latinx. The project helped students' progress through a model of intellectual, professional, and personal development. The program included tracking student development, linking support services in academic and student affairs, establishing new advising and counseling protocols, developing a peer program to enhance academic advising, career counseling, and personal counseling, and involving faculty to help students succeed.[54]

- One strategy of success used at Morehouse College (GA), for example, is a focus on effective peer-to-peer learning within a cohort model, where students are charged with supporting one another in completing their degrees. Notably, students who are encouraged to participate as leaders in these cohort groups are those who may have initially struggled in their own coursework. This allows peer leaders to see themselves in those seeking guidance, and also allows struggling students to recognize and aspire to the success of those who came before them.[55]

- Successful MSIs instill a commitment to intentionally serve beyond themselves. For example, with an emphasis on service, Paul Quinn College has been producing

---

[52] A.M. Gloria, J. Castellanos, A.G. Lopez, & R. Rosales, "An examination of academic non-persistence decisions of Latino undergraduates," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 27.2 (2005): 202–223.
[53] ACE, "Pulling Back the Curtain."
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

activist leaders who give back to their broader community through service and leadership.[56]

- Supportive MSIs place emphasis on ensuring that students' academic and social needs are met in order to further develop students' competencies and readiness for college-level coursework. A summer bridge program at Norfolk State University (VA), for example, pairs incoming and current students whereby the latter group provides mentoring, academic, and social support, and helps keep new students accountable throughout the transition to college.[57]

- Student support programs that serve Latinx students provide reinforcement beyond the academic programs to facilitate success. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) developed a strategy to improve student retention by enhancing its Entering Student Program. The program provided a first-year seminar, learning communities, tutoring, and developmental education with the goal of improving the academic success of new students. The seminar began with 18 sections in 1998 but by 2001-02, had increased to 128 sections. As a result, the percent of first-time freshmen who enrolled in the seminar increased to 87 percent that year. Evaluation results show that first-time, full-time freshmen who successfully completed the seminar persisted to their second year 8 to 10 percent more than other students in the original cohort. Based upon their success, UTEP made a commitment to expand the program.[58]

- California State University-Los Angeles had a Chicano/Latino Student Resource Center that supported the advancement, recruitment, and retention of the Latinx student community while also enriching the cultural and social awareness of the entire campus. By presenting workshops, films, seminars, and other programs, the center promoted cultural preservation, education, and self- determination related to the Latinx community. The Chicano Studies and Latin American Studies Department provided courses and programs that address Chicano/Latino issues and created an intellectual presence on the campus for Latinx students.[59]

3. USING MULTIFACETED APPROACHES TO ENGAGE IN AND EXCHANGE CULTURALLY RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE

The role of space is also a critical consideration within the context of academic programs. First and foremost, it is important for campuses to consider the value of Latinx studies and Black studies programs and courses as spaces where culturally relevant knowledge for the Latinx community can be acquired and exchanged. Faculty and staff should consider compiling resources that can help Latinx students find spaces where they can learn and exchange knowledge about their own cultural communities.

---

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

- On campuses that do not house Latinx or Hispanic, Gender and Sexuality, Afro-American, Disability, Diversity, or Cultural or Studies programs, faculty and staff can construct a list of courses relevant to studies so that students know where to access such courses upon their arrival. In addition, faculty and staff can make concerted efforts to provide student organizations with information about other minority and underrepresented individuals and communities, as well as more general diversity-focused scholarly events on their respective campuses.[60]

4. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE BACK TO CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Many Latinx students arrive on campuses with a strong desire to provide service to their communities. To capitalize on this passion, institutions should provide a wide range of culturally relevant service-learning opportunities that are built into academic courses or co-curricular projects. Since many Latinx students in higher education are enrolled at institutions located in large Latinx communities, institutional programs that strengthen community outreach and partnership provide external support for Latinx students and engage additional resources. Furthermore, work-study opportunities could offer unique experiences embedded in Latinx community needs, and educators should make efforts to ensure that opportunities to engage in undergraduate research, service learning, and community service projects that are culturally relevant.[61]

For example:
- CUNY-Lehman College participates in ENLACE, a program that strengthens and creates partnerships with Hispanic-serving institutions, local school districts and businesses. The goal of ENLACE is to encourage and facilitate Latino students in entering and completing college and to implement this goal by linking together the students and the community.[62]
- As an HSI, CUNY-Lehman College serves as a model for community and educational change and supports higher education/community partnerships that create an atmosphere of educational success for Latino and other students. Similarly, The University of Texas at El Paso participates in the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, an integrated K-16 initiative. This community initiative includes the three major, public school districts, El Paso Community College, UTEP, and other partners from the community, business and industry, and civic organizations. It focuses on improving the educational achievement of all El Paso students so that they can pursue a college degree and successful careers.[63]
- South Texas College's Early College High Schools Program aims to close achievement gaps through partnerships with 30 high schools, preparing ninth and 10th graders for college-level courses and offering eligible 11th and 12th graders the opportunity to enroll in and complete dual credit courses in high school. The program

---

[60] Museus, "Cultivating Campus Environments."

[61] Ibid.

[62] Santiago, Andrade, & Brown, *Latino Student Success at Hispanic Serving Institutions: Findings from a Demonstration Project* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

[63] Santiago, Andrade, & Brown, *Latino Student Success at Hispanic Serving Institutions.*

focuses on low-income students who are likely to be the first in their families to attend college. It provides them a nurturing environment in which they can receive the additional support needed to succeed. As a result of the program, over the last five years, more than 1,400 students have graduated with an associate degree at no cost to the student or their family.[64]

5. UNDERSTANDING AND ENGAGING CULTURAL SYMBOLS TO PROVIDE CULTURAL VALIDATION

Making efforts to cultivate culturally validating environments can prompt institutions to review cultural symbols across campus. For example:

- If campuses host "fiesta nights," they could refrain from tokenizing Latinx culture by engaging in interdisciplinary programming efforts with history or anthropology departments and student organizations. Programming efforts can offer information on the historical significance of Latinx symbols like sombreros in Mexican mariachi song and dance or the relevance of sombreros in both Mexico and the Philippines. When institutions engage cultural aspects of Latinx communities, it is important that they review these items with faculty, staff, and students knowledgeable of *Latinidad,* or "the diverse array of competing paradigms of identity and heterogeneous experiences of various Latinx national groups" to offer a more accurate representation of Latinx culture and therefore a more culturally validating environment.[65]

6. CONDUCTING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TO INFORM INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

It is critical that institutional leaders engage in continuous assessment of their campus environments. For example, colleges and universities can use the CECE Survey to better understand the extent to which they are providing the types of campus environments that allow diverse populations to thrive. The CECE Survey is a questionnaire that is derived from the CECE Model, has been tested and validated, and can be used to measure the nine CECE indicators. The data generated by the survey can continuously inform strategic planning, pro- gram evaluation and development, policy revision, and curricular reform efforts at postsecondary institutions.[66]

---

[64] Ibid.
[65] Museus, "Cultivating Campus Environments."
[66] Ibid.

II. KEY QUESTIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

A. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1. In what ways does the university currently support diversity and inclusion initiatives in its practices?

2. What is the current campus diversity climate? Does the university work to ensure an inclusive environment in which students, staff, and faculty feel safe, accepted, supported, and valued for their diversity?

3. What opportunities are there for Sul Ross to promote diversity and inclusion at all levels to ensure faculty, staff, and student success?

4. Is the university currently using resources effectively to promote diversity as part of achieving the strategic goals of the institution?

5. What is the current image of Sul Ross, and how can the image be improved through diversity initiatives?

B. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. In what ways in the current infrastructure working to promote diversity initiatives?

2. How can existing infrastructure be improved to support diversity initiatives?

3. What new infrastructure can be developed to foster a more inclusive and accepting environment?

4. Does the university support diversity-hire practices?

5. Are the voices of minority and underrepresented faculty and staff included, considered, and made part of decision-making processes and practices?

C. FACULTY AND STAFF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. How are current staff and faculty members sensitized to current diversity issues at the university?

2. What do they need to ensure that they continue to feel welcome and stay at SRSU?

3. Are current faculty provided with opportunities to communicate their reasons for applying to SRSU, and staying at SRSU? If they did leave, what were their rationales?

4. What are the current programs to promote faculty mobility? Are faculty members supported to pursue professional development for increasing diversity and inclusion throughout their curricula and/or research and/or service?

5. Is diversity incorporated in the guidelines for tenure and promotion?

6. Are there faculty awards and grants for diversity engagement? Are there support services for faculty to search for external faculty grants for diversity engagement?

D. CURRICULUM, CO-CURRICULUM, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. What are the curricular, co-curricular, and learning outcomes of our current students?

2. How are current students sensitized to current diversity issues at the university? What do they need to ensure that they continue to feel welcome, and stay at SRSU?

3. Does the university encourage and support the development of programming, courses, capstone projects, and service learning projects, in which the topics, subjects, and objectives support issues related to diversity and inclusion?

4. What has been our retention levels for our domestic students in the past five years? Why do students leave SRSU?

5. Will promotional and educational materials be offered in languages other than English? What about in other media for students with different abilities?

6. What are the current services for students who speak a second language at the university? Are there systems in place to identify and support domestic and international students who need additional support in English language competency? How can we identify those students "at-risk" sooner?

7. Is the infrastructure (Blackboard, technology support services, etc.) for diversity and inclusion programming and initiatives fully functional? What are the affordances and drawbacks?

E. STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

1. What are the current resources at SRSU to support domestic students, as they enter, continue their education, and leave the institution?

2. What are the current resources at SRSU to support international students, as they enter, continue their education, and leave the institution?

3. What support services allow faculty, staff, and students to alert the university of an "at-risk" student?

4. How can the university improve current support services to promote student success?

5. How can the university implement new support services to promote student success?

III.   ARTICULATED INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

Key Questions:
1. Does the institutional mission articulate a commitment to diversity and inclusion?
2. Does the university have a non-discrimination policy that protects minority and under-represented groups? If so, is that policy included in HR orientation materials for new faculty, staff, and student employees? Is the university non-discrimination policy included in mandatory EEO trainings?
3. Is diversity included as part of SRSU's strategic plan? If so, how?
4. Are diversity and inclusion expressly supported through the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)? If so, how?
5. In what ways does the university's infrastructure work to increase diversity and inclusion? Does that infrastructure have adequate authority and resources to do so?

A. SRSU's VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Vision: Sul Ross State University seeks to be a **national and international** leader in achieving excellence among universities in the areas of Education, Research, Social Mobility, Service, Affordability, and Shared Governance.

Mission: Rooted in the distinctive surroundings and history of the Big Bend and the US-Mexico border regions of Texas, Sul Ross State University provides accessible, comprehensive, and life changing education through high quality teaching, research, cultural awareness, creativity, and service.

Values: Excellence, Leadership and Service, Ethics and Integrity, Personal Connection, **Diversity and Inclusiveness** Effective Communication, Growth and Exploration

B. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Equal Opportunity Statement: "No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by Sul Ross State University on any basis prohibited by applicable law, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity."

Key Observations:
Although SRSU has adapted its non-discrimination policy, this information is neither expressed in new employee trainings, nor is it easily accessible to employees who seek out information on the university's non-discrimination policy. Furthermore, employee EEO trainings only cover applicable law and do not ensure that university employees are aware of the entire policy.

C. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SECOND CENTURY, 2017-2022:

Key Observations:

Nowhere in the Final Report of the SRSU Strategic Plan for the Second Century, 2017-2022 do the words: *Hispanic Serving Institution (HIS), Minority Serving Institution (MSI), Hispanic, minority,* or *multicultural* appear in the strategic plan, nor are directly- or indirectly-related concepts or initiatives discussed. Furthermore, the singular appearance of the word *diversity* is found under the stated Values of the University as "Diversity and Inclusiveness" (see SRSU Strategic Plan Final Report, pg.3). *Diversity* does not appear anywhere in the strategic plan.

This lack of recognition of the diversity among our student body, staff, and faculty, and the lack of expressed interest in initiatives and programming that works to highlight and increase diversity throughout the campus, gives students, staff, faculty, and prospective students and employees the impression that SRSU does 1) consider the diversity of its student population in the educational process (i.e., the ways in which cultural understanding can increase student success and retention), 2) value the diverse cultures and experiences of our campus population as an asset to the strength and success of the University, or 3) prioritize diversity and inclusion as a way to a.) improve and increase recruitment, retention, and graduation of students, and b.) promote diversity and inclusion to ensure that students, staff, and faculty feel accepted, recognized, and valued for their diverse backgrounds and unique knowledge based off of their experiences. If students, staff, and faculty do not feel a sense of belonging or inclusion at SRSU, turnover rates for employees, both faculty and staff, as well as recruitment, retention, and graduation rates will continue to suffer.

Based on the expressed goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in the strategic plan, this report indicates the following as areas in which diversity and inclusion initiatives and programming on campus can enhance outcomes of the strategic plan. This will be expanded upon further in sections VI. Strategic Goals and Recommendations for Diversity and Inclusion, and VII. Institutional Outcomes for Sul Ross State University:

Goal 1: Promote Growth in Academic, Research and Artistic Excellence

Objective 1: Develop new or build on existing learning programs (including distance education programs) to create expanded opportunities to "learn by doing" across the curriculum, emphasizing tangible skills for lifelong learning and preparation to contribute to 21st century society.

- Strategy 5: Establish a Task Force within the Office of International Studies to develop programs that encourage participation in national and international field study and travel programs.

Objective 2: Establish SRSU, as a regional leader in providing curricular programs that leverage the educational potential of our rich and diverse campus community. Support, improve and recognize research and its impact on faculty development and student engagement and learning.

- Strategy 1: To promote high impact educational experiences each SRSU college will establish a Task Force on the Sul Ross Educational Experience that will develop specific actions to support this and the previous Objective #1.
- Strategy 2: Create department-level programs that engage the student community around shared experiences.

Objective 4: Support, improve and recognize excellence in artistic endeavors.

- Strategy 2: Implement a Cultural Life Program.

Objective 5: Encourage and support efforts to obtain external funding for all forms of activity, including: research, education, scholarly, creative, service and outreach.

Goal 2: Target Recruiting, Maximize Retention, & Increase Graduation Rates

Objective 1: Increase new student enrollment over the next five years.

- Strategy 2: Promote internships and cultural encounters through the Office of International Studies to increase international student enrollment

Objective 2: Increase student retention over the next five years.

- Strategy 1: Engage nationally recognized retention experts and apply their best- practices to ensure 60% or better freshman cohort retention.
- Strategy 5: Increase number of high-impact retention practices, e.g. club participation, extra-curricular activities, participatory sports, athletics, and entertainment.

Objective 3: Increase overall student graduation rates over the next five years.

- Strategy 3: Rollout a university-wide, universally applied degree planning tool such as DegreeWorks that guarantees all students and their advisors are working with a current and viable degree or certification plan.

Goal 3: Strengthen a Sustainable & Diversified Financial Base while Ensuring Affordable Access

Objective 4: Maintain the university's relative affordability while providing a "Private education experience at a state education price."

- Strategy 2: Target financial resources on improving programs and services that impact the perceived quality and affordability of the university.
- Strategy 4: Methodically invest in faculty and staff to have the right resource in the right place to improve educational quality and positively impact enrollment and retention.

Goal 4: Recruit, Retain & Develop Faculty, Staff, and Student Employees

Objective 2: Create an environment that promotes development, training and job satisfaction for faculty, staff, and student employees.

- Strategy 1: Implement in-depth orientation for new faculty, staff and student employees.
- Strategy 2: Design and implement professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including SRSU course work applicable to employees' current work assignments.
- Strategy 3: Institute a leadership program that recognizes academic and administrative excellence in current and developing campus leaders
- Strategy 5: Promote and articulate job and organizational expectations and local environmental characteristics to prospective employees

Goal 5: Unify and Enhance the Image and Visibility of Sul Ross

Objective 1: Increase awareness of and advocacy for the university by showcasing Sul Ross's teaching, learning, research, athletics and artistic endeavors.

Objective 2: Maintain a visually unified, aesthetically pleasing campus that showcases our status of quality and regional leadership in higher education.

Objective 4: Broaden and deepen constituent engagement, developing more meaningful relationships with alumni, friends and students.

D. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (QEP)—COMPASS: NAVIGATING EXCELLENCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Key Observations:
Based on the expressed goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in the strategic plan, this report indicates the following as areas in which diversity and inclusion initiatives and programming on campus can enhance outcomes of the strategic plan. This will be expanded upon further in sections VI. Strategic Goals and Recommendations for Diversity and Inclusion, and VII. Institutional Outcomes for Sul Ross State University:

Institutional Support: The new quality enhancement plan focuses on increasing our opportunities for students to engage in effective communication and to understand the nuances involved in such skills. These opportunities will come from classroom strategies, faculty innovation, pedagogy, scholarship, and presentations. As part of our commitment to excellence in our academic programs, each of our colleges identified specific courses that will infuse communication skills as part of their ongoing instructional methods…our QEP known as, Compass: Navigating Excellence through Effective Communication opens doors to meaningful interactions across our campus so that the culture of the university grows into a community where the art of communication holds significant value…. Our expectation for Compass at SRSU is that our students will develop richer communication skills that guide their academic career as well as their future professional experiences. We value the ability to reach across cultures and actively engage in important discussions and activities that will enhance relationships across our university campuses and world.

Executive Summary: Successfully implementing Compass will increase opportunities for SRSU students to demonstrate competency in written, oral, and visual communication, and will enhance the capacity of SRSU educators to teach communication skills through increased professional development opportunities. Accordingly, our objective with Compass is two-fold: not only to enhance student communication skills, but also to become more effective teachers of speaking, writing, and visual communication. We believe these objectives will improve our students' ability to contribute to a learned society…. The following QEP-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) will be assessed in all SRSU's communication-infused courses:

1. The student will demonstrate effective development and expression of ideas in writing.

2. The student will exhibit skill in prepared, purposeful oral communication of material or concepts.

3. The student will create and deliver visual works that facilitate audience understanding of a central message or purpose.

Pedagogy: In their analysis of 99 communication articles, commentaries, and publications spanning 1955 to 1999, Morreale, Osborn, and Pearson (2000) identify five themes that emerge. Four of these themes support the claim that teaching communication is important. They are as follows:

- The development of the whole person (17 references). This theme suggests that communication education plays an important role in student development by enhancing self-awareness and improving one's relationships with others and society as a whole.
- The improvement of the educational enterprise (seven references). This theme suggests that all instruction is improved or enhanced through the inclusion of communication education, regardless of the subject taught.
- Being a responsible participant in the world, both socially and culturally (eight references). This theme suggests that communication education enhances the development of sensitivities and skills that shape our social and political lives, help society's positive continuance, and erase cultural boundaries.
- Succeeding in one's career and in the business enterprise (50 references). This theme suggests that communication is vital to career success and social mobility in multiple professions.
- The need for communication specialists to provide communication education (15 references). Their review of 93 additional journal and newspaper articles, reports, and surveys further reinforced the presence of the above four themes, thereby supporting the claim that communication instruction continues to be critical to students' personal and professional success into the 21st century.

Communication Teaching Guides: The modern profession of the professoriate is multifaceted with many demands for faculty time. To make faculty development more accessible and less time-consuming, SRSU will compile and develop teaching materials that are brief in structure yet thoroughly rooted in pedagogical best-practices.

Compass Professional Development: Compass will provide professional development opportunities about teaching visual, oral, and written communication best practices for each of the QEP's five years. The Professional Development Subcommittee will plan at least two professional development opportunities at each campus each year with the form created by the QEP Executive Committee (see Appendix D). The Professional Development Subcommittee has developed criteria for screening webinars, speakers and proposed workshops to ensure the focus remains on teaching communication, and they will develop a schedule for professional development each year. A workshop or professional development topic list will be distributed as early as possible in the semester each year and will be added to the SRSU activities calendars.

In Person Workshops: Faculty Guides and the Professional Development Subcommittee design the opportunities to learn more about written, oral, and visual communication. In-person workshops are offered at least once per semester and at both Alpine and RGC campuses, and each will be filmed and archived on our QEP website so that all have a chance to view. The workshops will be a combination of SRSU faculty developed and led and guest trainer-led.

E. UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVES:

Creating and nurturing a caring, collaborative, and inclusive working, living, and learning environment is an important part of a successful campus community. Measuring campus climate will help institutions ensure that their environment displays these characteristics. The committee is charged with developing recommendations related to diversity and inclusion issues, including developing appropriate institutional responses to specific diversity and inclusion issues and:

1. Develop and implement introductory and ongoing cultural competency training for all students, faculty, and staff
2. Bridge the University with the Alpine, greater Big Bend, and Trans-Pecos communities to promote community-engaged scholarship by fostering education, outreach, and awareness
3. Assess, evaluate, and advocate for cultural inclusivity and diversity initiatives on campus, including the provision of a regular open forum for students, faculty, and staff
4. Review institutional communications, policies, and procedures actively promoting diversity and inclusion using best practices
5. Ensure a safe, welcoming community climate that values a culture of inclusivity including, but not limited to, ability, age, national origin, religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, gender, social economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Key Observations:

Although the University Diversity and Inclusion Committee's expressed charge is to make recommendations related to diversity and inclusion issues and institutional responses to matters pertaining to diversity and inclusion, few, if any, of the committee's recommendations to members of the executive council and program directors have been implemented, even when the committee has ensured that such recommendations will not require any financial obligation or reallocation of resources in the form of labor. Such reluctance to implement these recommendations—even small changes that have the potential to improve the campus climate and have positive effects on enrollment, retention, and graduation rates—demonstrates that individuals across the university are reluctant to greenlight diversity initiatives that have the potential to improve retention and success of students, staff, and faculty, thereby promoting the success of the entire university. The executive council and administrators should encourage innovation that seeks, and has the potential, to improve the campus climate and rates of success of the entire Sul Ross family.

Some Examples:
1. Spanish language resources for students, prospective students, and their parents—The committee corresponded with Mary Beth Marks regarding the lack of Spanish-language resources at recruitment events and challenges that Pack Leaders, recruiters, tour guides, and Resident Assistants face due to a lack of information available to students and/or their families whose first language is Spanish. It was emphasized that recruiters and student employees, as well as staff in offices across campus, have struggled to

communicate with Spanish-speaking students, prospective students, and their family members, and that these employees often have to walk students, prospective students, and their families to various offices across campus to find someone who can translate information into Spanish.

- o The Diversity and Inclusion Committee recommended that Mary Beth Marks authorize recruitment information to be translated into Spanish by a volunteer (chosen by the Committee) so that it would not cost enrollment and retention offices labor or financial resources. The Committee also encouraged Ms. Marks to authorize the translation of important recruitment and institutional information, such as the "About Us" and "Contact Us" pages of the university website, into Spanish (again, with the time and labor provided through the Committee). However, the Committee's recommendations and offers were continuously denied.
- o This problem is not only inefficient but costs the university time and, as a result, money by forcing students and staff to take time away from their designated work and tasks to translate information. This can also have a negative effect on recruitment and retention, as students who do not feel that the university recognized their unique cultures, backgrounds, and identities, and does not send a message to students and their families that Sul Ross has the proper support systems in place to ensure the student feels a sense of belonging and support. Colleges and universities that have promoted language accessibility initiatives have seen positive correlations with recruitment and enrollment, retention, and student success.

2. ESL Student Many of our domestic students struggle with English language proficiency, as English is not the first language spoken in many homes and several school districts in the West Texas and surrounding region teach classes in Spanish, rather than English. This means that we have many native-Texan students whose English language skills are underdeveloped when they arrive at the university. Furthermore, these students are often unidentified, as they do not have to take the TOEFL and their TSI scores, though they may indicate that a student is struggling with reading and writing in English, do not tell the university if a student is struggling with English language proficiency due to a lack of understanding or preparation or if their difficulties stem from English being a second language. Many faculty have expressed feeling unprepared to help these students, and many faculty may not even notice or care to address the issues, meaning that these students are "at-risk" and will struggle to remain enrolled.

- o The Committee corresponded with orientation directors about using orientation as a way to identify ESL students early, before or soon after their arrival at Sul Ross State University. Allowing students to check a box when they apply for orientation would provide an opportunity for ESL students to be paired with Spanish-speaking Pack Leaders and be part of an ESL group at orientation, giving them the opportunity to form relationships with peers and mentors who can help them navigate adjusting to and succeeding in the university. This would help the students feel seen and supported and, as a result, more connected to Sul Ross. These students could then be approached by Pack Leaders, faculty, staff, and student mentors to encourage them to utilize the ESL tutors on campus and give

them information regarding which individuals and offices they could contact for support. Such support systems would help maintain and grow enrollment, retention, and graduation rates across the university system.

- o Although orientation coordinators valued these recommendations and were willing to implement them, the Committee was informed that the lack of willingness in the office of Mary Beth Marks to make changes to assist ESL students caused them to steer away from the Committee's recommendations due to a lack of support from the administration. However, implementation of ESL support services through orientation and the development of a peer-mentor system for students considered particularly "at-risk" has been proven effective in increasing student success at Minority Serving Institutions and Hispanic Serving Institutions across the country.

IV. RECOMMENDED GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING DIVERSITY

To create a truly diverse culture, schools need to develop a campus-wide infrastructure that affects all areas of the institution. The College Board has issued an updated manual for strategic diversity planning. The publication, "Diversity in Higher Education: A Strategic Planning and Policy Manual Regarding Federal Law in Admissions, Financial Aid, and Outreach," works from the premise that "**racial or ethnic diversity is not an end in itself, but is, rather, a means to broader educational goals**." Reviewing the status of the diversity question on a college campus may lead institutions to consider operational goals through long- or short-range planning activities.

With this in mind, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of Sul Ross State University recommends the following five goals, with proposed objectives and strategies for implementation, for the consideration and approval of the University Executive Council:

A. INSTITUTIONAL

GOAL 1: INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIZATION—Prioritize the commitment to diversity and inclusion through leadership and action across all levels of the institutions.

RATIONALE AND INTENDED IMPACT

Prioritizing diversity and inclusion requires committed leadership and expertise to achieve shared goals. Establishing new infrastructure in various areas of the institution which focus on different facets of culture change will assist with sustaining successful diversity and inclusion efforts. Equipping leaders across all campus units including Trustees, President, Vice Presidents, Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans, and Directors with training and resources needed to reach those goals, will be essential to the long-term success of our efforts. A key to providing high quality professional development is the complementary effort to collect and analyze comprehensive data—through departments, colleges, HR, and/or through the Diversity and Inclusion Committee—on an on-going basis from all constituents of the campus community. Data and analysis in the form of reports, regular campus "snapshots," and assessment will inform professional development opportunities as well as the work of trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff in goal setting and monitoring of progress. Professional development opportunities for staff must develop simultaneously through existing programs, offices, and services on campus.

OBJECTIVES
1. Create a structure that reflects its vision of diversity as a fundamental institutional value supported and realized through shared leadership and responsibility.
2. Recruit and promote the success of diverse student, faculty, and staff populations.
3. Create a climate of equity and inclusion in which individual students, faculty, and staff feel welcomed in their identities, valued for their contributions, and feel their identities can be openly expressed.

4. *Engage diverse communities within Alpine and the Big Bend and West Texas regions as partners and intellectual resources.*
5. Identify ways that the institution can influence quality, effect change, and promote community through inclusive practices, keeping in mind that diversity and inclusion require the participation of all members of the campus community.
6. *Become a leader in higher education through application and dissemination of knowledge gained from experience, scholarship, and innovative approaches to diversity.*

STRATEGIES

1. By the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, the university should work to update the Sul Ross website to include language of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.
   - The university administration should support the translation of important information, including but not limited to the university "About Us," "Contact Us," and "FAQ's," into Spanish for prospective and current students and their families.
   - Encourage offices and departments across the university, such as Student Life, Residential Living, and Financial Aid, to translate important information into Spanish on their websites.

2. Beginning in Fall 2018, university communications and events should include language that promotes diversity and cultivates a campus climate of inclusion to ensure that students, staff, and faculty of all cultures, identities, and experiences feel valued and accepted.

By the completion of the 2018-2019 academic year, all university, college, and departmental policies and procedures should reflect the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion and protect all students, staff, and faculty from discrimination, including, but not limited, procedures and policies related to official and/or unofficial complaints against individuals that do not protect whistleblowers or victims of abuse or discrimination.

B. INFRASTRUCTURAL

GOAL 2: CLIMATE—Develop and implement programs, services, and physical spaces that cultivate a welcoming campus.

RATIONALE AND INTENDED IMPACT

One of the highest priorities for diversity and inclusion as identified by institutions of higher learning is "to create a diverse multicultural campus environment." Both quantitative and qualitative data show that it is critical to consider the physical campus environment in the process of attending to the goal of a diverse and multicultural environment. Climate also takes into account numerous communities and identities and strengthening campus resources that will enable campus community members to find the support they need to be successful. Additional emphasis will be placed on designing a campus climate that supports student success with the critical goal of increasing four to six-year graduation rates. The Climate initiative will also be instrumental in achieving Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the strategic plan.

OBJECTIVES

1. Create the opportunity for dialogue and the exchange of ideas regarding the next phases of diversity and inclusion initiatives, with an understanding that it is critical to seek input from all members of the community.
2. Attention to Sul Ross's existing physical environment, including buildings, facilities, restrooms, and even the artwork, images, and ideologies represented is essential to creating an inclusive campus climate.
3. Strategically offer cultural competence, social justice, and equity workshops and training to educate and inform university members of their responsibility to advance and actualize the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion; this is necessary to change individual attitudes and behaviors while transforming institutional policies, practices, and overall campus culture.
4. Link diversity initiatives to key university outcome measures included in the university strategic plan, academic plans, fundraising and grant-writing goals, budgetary plans, accreditation, and the academic and institutional mission.

STRATEGIES

1. Support opportunity hires to ensure a diverse faculty moving forward.

2. Ensure participation of underrepresented faculty and staff in academic administration.

3. Students at MSIs suggest that universities should offer more cultural spaces. The university should continue to develop infrastructure that supports diversity and inclusion initiatives through the establishment of an "International and Cultural Studies Center," which will open in October of 2018 and should:
   o Promote understanding of the value of cultural diversity and connect diverse assets to find creative solutions for common challenges

- o Provide support to specific populations on campus as well as opportunities for intercultural engagement among students, faculty, staff, and local and regional communities.
- o Foster international and cultural exchange programs to foster collaboration and advanced learning with other institutions of higher learning.
- o Host lectures, activities, and interactive discussions and trainings designed to heighten awareness of issues pertaining to diversity and inclusion of minority and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to: gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, and disability.
- o Demonstrate Sul Ross's commitment to social change grounded in the principles of equity, access, and inclusion.

4. Support visual representations of our diverse campus community to ensure that current and prospective students, staff, faculty are represented, valued, and celebrated. This support should be ongoing, with the following examples implemented by 2022-2023 academic year.
   - o For example, the buildings that house cultural programs, including but not limited to, the Mexican-American Studies program could be filled with colorful murals and cultural artifacts to make students, staff, and faculty feel validated. Administrative buildings and the University Center should consider similar improvements. This could also provide students in programs such as the Arts with opportunity to complete service learning projects.

5. Inclusive, diverse, and equitable higher education institutions usually seek out chief diversity officers (CDOs) to provide leadership on campus and in the external community, as well as provide strategic vision, leadership, coordination, and planning to further strengthen diversity and inclusion as core institutional values. Sul Ross should seriously consider creating such a position, with a review of the possibility of such an office being created by the end of the 2020 calendar year.

C. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 3: RECRUITMENT—Strengthen equity and access in recruitment of students, staff, and faculty who compose a diverse and inclusive campus.

RATIONALE AND INTENDED IMPACT

Interactions across different identities, viewpoints, and perspectives are a key component for creating global citizens. Students thrive when they see themselves represented in the experiences, interests, and identities of the faculty and staff with whom they interact. Students of difference are more likely to be successful in college when they can find faculty role models, like them, to advise and mentor them. Faculty flourish in collegial environments where their contributions, expertise, identities, and experiences are valued. Equally important, the caliber, differing perspectives and scholarship, and faculty of difference impact the quality of a comprehensive education offered to our students. Consequently, it is important to provide peer-to-peer education to current faculty on how to increase diversity among the candidate pool considered during faculty searches. In an effort to attract and enroll a diverse population of students it is important to simultaneously diversify the faculty. Increasing available scholarships, training, and staffing will support these efforts. Diversity initiatives in recruitment and retention of staff, faculty, and students will also assist the university in realizing Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Strategic Plan.

OBJECTIVES
1. Help all faculty members adjust to the cultural needs of diverse students.
2. Familiarize employees with the concept of implicit bias or hidden discrimination is among the most important parts of any diversity program.
3. Improve employee trainings and orientations to reflect the university's non-discrimination policy and ensure employee awareness and compliance.
4. Create faculty and staff development initiatives on diversity, learning styles, and teaching as important tools to fulfilling goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

STRATEGIES
1. Include diversity goals in requests for hires.

2. Enhance and coordinate mentoring efforts of faculty across career stages and create cross-unit programming for underrepresented faculty. This voluntary mentor program can be coordinated through HR and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee with target implementation by the 2019-2020 academic year.

3. Recognize and reward faculty who mentor underrepresented students and engage with underrepresented communities and/or who promote diversity and equity initiatives in teaching, scholarship, and research. Colleges and departments across campus are encouraged to consider diversity in teaching, scholarship, and service for faculty tenure applications.

4. Before the Fall 2019 semester, all Human Resources employee orientations, trainings, and mandatory EEO trainings should be updated to reflect the university's entire non-discrimination policy, including, but not limited to, implicit bias, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, and expression to ensure employee awareness and compliance. Require diversity training for faculty search committees.

5. Host workshops, presentations, and speakers to provide intense intercultural faculty and staff education to promote the development of programs and the infusion of strategies into the classroom, especially in relation to awareness and diverse teaching and learning processes. Faculty members are also encouraged to participate to keep up-to-date on trends and best practices in intercultural education, including technological advancements, to improve retention.

D. Curriculum, Co-Curriculum, and Learning Outcomes

GOAL 4: CURRICULUM—Expand diversity and inclusion in academic curricula and student learning outcomes.

Rationale and Intended Impact

Offering courses and programs in diversity-related fields sends a signal to both internal and external constituencies that Sul Ross State University values difference. Service-learning opportunities have been shown to improve student academic outcomes, motivation, retention, graduation rates, and application of learning. Sending students into the local community to work and learn alongside Sul Ross's neighbors will strengthen the global citizen skillsets our students need to effectively navigate the challenges they will face in the workplace after graduation. Further, diverse course offerings have been shown to have an impact on retention and success of students of difference when they see their identities reflected in the curriculum. Thus, the Curriculum diversity initiative supports Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the strategic plan.

Objectives

1. Faculty and administrators will be encouraged to expand existing course offerings in terms of diversity content over the next four (4) years. Disciplines will draw on diverse perspectives to challenge traditional, established values that determine and direct curricular content, teaching methods, knowledge-making, and scholarship.
2. Encourage innovation that will promote diversity in the form of new courses, programming, research and scholarship, service learning, and university service. In order to provide faculty with the tools necessary to infuse diversity into the classroom through content and teaching strategies, professional development offerings should be provided, which can be made possible through the QEP, TLC, SSS, Title V, and other offices and programs across campus. Directors of these programs should work with departments and colleges to host professional development seminars and opportunities on campus.
3. Expand current programs that will provide more expansive and inclusive studies, enrich the educational experience for students, and contribute positively to student success. Mentorship and programming connected to these minors will be developed to further support students interested in these fields.
4. Create new programs that will provide more worldly and inclusive scholarship and professional engagement, enrich the educational experience for students, and contribute positively to student success.

Strategies

1. **Increase support to diversity research and programs and promote opportunities for academic distinction, global internships, and other high-impact experiences.**

2. **Curriculum Development**—Departments, colleges, and professional development offices and programs such as QEP should encourage, or even require, interdisciplinary

and multicultural engagement in the form of collaborative, co-taught, and team-taught courses and High Impact Practices (HIPs) as one means of increasing diversity, inclusion, and equity in freshman and sophomore general education courses.[67]

- o By implementing HIPs for Faculty Success—first-year seminars and writing partners—in Fall 2017, Sacramento State:
    - i. reduced the equity gap for six-year graduation rates for Hispanic students and for white students by seven (7) percentage points the first year.
    - ii. For four-year graduation rates, the equity gap was reduced by five (5) percentage points the first year.
    - iii. Successful completion of 15 or more credit hours by freshmen in their first semester improved significantly between Fall 2016 and Fall 2017:
        1. White: 36.4% → 49.6%
        2. Hispanic: 29% → 41.3%
        3. Asian: 35.1% → 42.6%
        4. African American: 19.2% → 34.3%
- o In Fall 2015, 30% of faculty at Morgan State University implemented HIPs in freshman and second year general education courses. With institutional encouragement and implementation of HIPs across curricula, 50% of faculty had implemented HIPs in courses by Fall 2017, with an estimated 70% of faculty-implemented HIPs in these courses by Fall 2018:
    - i. Course Success Rates for Freshman Composition I and II:
    - ii. Composition I, Fall 2015 (baseline)
        1. Males: 75%
        2. Females: 73%
        3. Total: 74%
    - iii. Composition I, Spring 2016 (first semester of HIPs implementation)
        1. Males: 59%
        2. Females: 86%
        3. Total: 73%
    - iv. Composition II, Spring 2016 (first semester of HIPs implementation)
        1. Males: 81%
        2. Females: 77%
        3. Total: 79%[68]

3. **Curricula and Program Expansions**—Between 2018 and 2020, colleges and departments should consider expanding existing programs and course offerings to be more inclusive and highlight the intersectionality of subject-matter.
    - o Women's Studies should highlight the intersectionality of gender and sexuality to become more inclusive as Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

---

[67] High Impact Practices (HIPs) include: learning communities, collaborative assignments and projects, research, diversity/global learning, undergraduate research and capstone projects, service learning, community-based learning. George D. Kuh, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008); Follow-up study: Jayne E. Brownell and Lynn E. Swaner, *Five High-Impact Practices: Research on Learning outcomes, Completion, and Quality* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010).

[68] Success rates are the number of students with the grades of A, B, and C in each category.

- Mexican-American Studies should be expanded to include more of the Hispanic and/or Latinx World in the increasingly global 21st century.
- International Studies should be promoted and allowed to expand in order to enrich students' educational experiences and opportunities.

4. **Diversity Training**—Program directors should encourage faculty, whose courses may fulfill the requirement of a program pertaining to issues of diversity (including but not limited to Criminal Justice, Psychology, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Women's Studies, Mexican-American Studies, and Diversity Studies), to complete diversity training(s) in order to ensure competency in language, ideas, and facilitating conversations related to topics related to diversity and inclusion. Training should be required for faculty instructors in these programs by Fall 2019 and should be maintained every two to three years.

5. **Service and Community Involvement**—The populations served by the institution should feel a social responsibility to engage with other students and, in doing so, provide students with the opportunity to have their point of views questioned. The university should provide a wide range of culturally relevant service-learning opportunities that are built into academic courses or co-curricular projects. Work-study opportunities could offer unique experiences embedded in community needs, and educators should make efforts to ensure that opportunities to engage in undergraduate research projects are culturally relevant. This would also contribute to the university's efforts to increase the visibility and improve the image of Sul Ross State University in the region.

E. STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND SUCCESS

GOAL 5: COMMUNITY—Develop and sustain meaningful outreach programs and partnerships with our diverse local communities.

RATIONALE AND INTENDED IMPACT

On-campus programs, off-campus programs, and civic engagement efforts that link Sul Ross students, staff, and faculty with our diverse local communities are vital to building stronger, more meaningful relationships with our local communities. The Community goal is closely connected to the goals of Curriculum, through service learning, and Recruitment, all of which are part of Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the university's strategic plan. Building stronger relationships with neighbors requires collaborative efforts and relevant art, cultural, performance, and educational activities that are hosted within our local communities as well as those hosted at Sul Ross.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote strategies and practices that will increase recruitment and improve student retention and graduation rates.
2. Promote the unique cultural backgrounds, identities, and experiences of our students to ensure a sense of acceptance and belonging.
3. Encourage students to utilize existing support services, with the understanding that some services may need increased resources.
4. Foster an environment in which students and their families feel accepted, valued, and supported to ensure continued enrollment and academic success.
5. Encourage communication (and work to break down communication barriers) between students, staff, and faculty to ensure an environment that promotes student success.
6. Improve the visibility and image of the university.

STRATEGIES

1. Per the Alpine TFEI Final Recommendations (see recommendation 3: Streamlining Enrollment Management), and to promote clear organization and communication and ensure that support services are as effective as possible, the university should seriously consider reorganization of Lobo Den as the Office of Undergraduate Services, which would report to the Provost and consist of:
   o Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)
   o TSI Advising
   o New Student Programs (orientation, SOAR, FYS, etc.)
   o Expanded SSS model that serves all students
   o Reactivated PASS summer bridge program

2. Over the course of the 2018-2019 academic year, examine ways to improve upon the existing Early Alert System to notify the proper officer of "at-risk" students and behaviors. The current early alert system is not widely used or promoted, in part because

most university members are unaware of the system entirely or are unaware of how to access it. Under the current system, it falls to faculty to attempt to contact students regarding poor attendance, low course grades, and behavioral changes. Many faculty may not contact the student or may not continue to pursue an issue over the course of a semester, and students may perceive the faculty's attempts to contact them in a manner that makes them feel that they are being shamed or reprimanded. This means that many "at-risk" students do not receive the support that they need to complete their coursework, remain enrolled, and graduate.

- o Sul Ross should consider implementing a program like EAB's Student Success Collaborative platform, which can be made easily available and accessible through Banner. Under such a system, faculty, staff, and students are able to issue different types of early alerts for a student, based on different perceived risks. The person issuing an alert could choose from a number of risks and would have the ability to write an additional message explaining their concerns. The alert would then be sent to the appropriate individuals and/or offices on campus, and the alert will remain active in the student's digital file until the student has been spoken to and university authorities are assured that matter has been resolved. For example:
    - i. Behavioral/Medical/Family Concerns could issue an alert to the student's advisor and Counseling Services, both of whom would then reach out to the student to express concern and encourage the student to utilize support services currently in place.
    - ii. Not Attending/Poor Participation alerts would notify the student's advisor and SSS, who could then work to determine the cause and encourage the student to contact their professors, tutoring services, and to resume attendance.
    - iii. Poor Performance on Exams/Assignment alerts would notify the student's advisor and the tutoring center, who would then reach out to the student and encourage them to seek help on assignments through their instructors, tutoring services, peers, and mentors.
- o Student Success Collaborative is an effective tool in alerting appropriate individuals and offices of "at-risk" students, deploying support services that would reduce the likelihood of students falling through the cracks. The platform has also led to improvements in six areas at colleges and universities where the platform is in place: **graduation, retention, and persistence; academic progress and performance; special populations; staff productivity; student experience; and tuition revenue.**
- o An Improved Early Alert system would assure students that the university cares for its students' wellbeing, which is key to student success. This service would be a valuable tool to students, staff, and faculty who wish to support university students in a manner that expresses concern, rather than one that instills shame or guilt, and put "at-risk" students on the radar of multiple offices on campus.

3. Peer Mentor Programs—A proven strategy in increasing enrollment and retention and ensuring greater student success outcomes is the use of peer mentor programs.

- Sul Ross should consider existing programs that would allow for such support service, such as the Pack Leader program, to be expanded or possibly reorganized by 2019.
- The university should also consider the creation of a faculty mentor program for first-generation students through a partnership with Lobo Den and SSS.

4. Bilingual Support Services—A study of best practices to increase enrollment at HSIs stressed the importance of providing bilingual support services for Latinx students and their parents, both in the recruitment process and in order to retain students. For many of the institutions in this study these services were provided through a bilingual website where students and parents can access the information in Spanish. Sul Ross should expand existing support services to include Spanish-speaking students and their families. Possible areas of support include:
   - Ensuring that important information on the University website is available in Spanish. The Diversity and Inclusion committee can secure volunteers to translate this information.
   - Providing recruiters with materials in Spanish.
   - Providing students with optional tours in Spanish, making it easy for them and their families to feel at home and get the information in their own language.
   - Offering a bilingual session at orientations where university representatives are able to explain to both students and parents the expectations and challenges that may affect students' college experiences and what support services Sul Ross provides to help students and their families face those challenges.
   - Having graduation ceremonies translated into Spanish via subtitles during broadcasts to allow students, their friends, and relatives to participate in the ceremony and celebration.

5. Work to promote and destigmatize existing support services, including the tutoring center, the library, ESL resources, and counseling services to encourage students to utilize these services without the stigma of shame or embarrassment. Faculty, staff, and student mentors should be encouraged by the administration, deans, and department chairs to promote the use of these services continuously in their interactions with students both in and out of the classroom.

V. CONCLUSIONS: ACHIEVING INSTITUTIONAL GOALS OF SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

As the face of America changes, so does the population of applicants trying to access college. Providing diverse students with access to college is only the first step. Sul Ross must work to create a campus climate that is hospitable to change and differences, allows for students to question and think for themselves, supports students and their families, staff, and faculty from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities, and fosters an environment that celebrates diversity as a valuable asset to individual and institutional success. Although Diversity and Inclusiveness are listed as key values at Sul Ross State University, prospective and current students, staff, and faculty may struggle to see those values reflected in day-to-day experiences.

As an institution with a minority-serving identity, Sul Ross should sustain and elevate the cultures of minority and underrepresented students, staff, and faculty while enhancing their campus experience. To support identity development, Sul Ross can create dedicated multicultural spaces, hire more diverse faculty and staff, and offer courses in topics and fields that foster inter- and intra-cultural learning and discourse.

Working together as a campus and as a community is key to increasing recruitment efforts and improving the image and visibility of the university. Most importantly, Sul Ross need to ensure that we have a clear vision for diversity initiatives and we are communicating those goals effectively with current and prospective students and their families, staff, and faculty to ensure equity in access to information, opportunity, growth, and success. Furthermore, creating a campus climate in which all members feel recognized and important to the institution's success is vital to improving and maintaining morale, which has significant impact on retention and productivity.

A commitment to diversity and equity initiatives—Institutional Prioritization, Climate, Recruitment, Curriculum, and Community—can help Sul Ross achieve each of the five goals to which we has expressed commitment through our strategic plan: promoting growth in academic, research, and artistic excellence; targeting recruitment, maximizing retention, and increasing graduation; strengthening the university as a sustainable and diversified financial base while ensuring affordable access; recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty, staff, and student employees; and unifying and enhancing the image and visibility of Sul Ross.

When every member of the Pack is recognized, valued, and supported, all Lobos succeed. These diversity and inclusion objectives and strategies for student, professional, and institutional success will ensure that Sul Ross State University will accomplish its goals and continue its mission of providing accessible, comprehensive, and life changing education through high quality teaching, research, cultural awareness, creativity, and service.
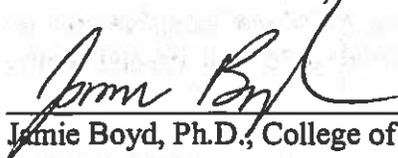

Let's Back the Pack!

VI. ENDORSEMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE
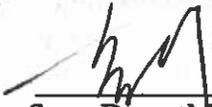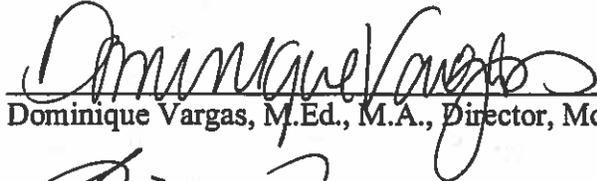
Members:
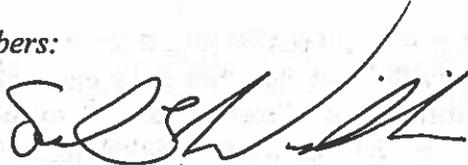
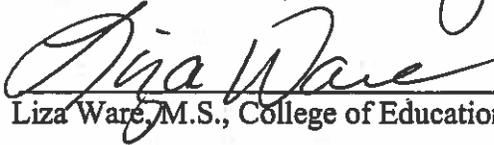Savannah L. Williamson, Ph.D., Chair, College of Arts and Sciences

Jamie Boyd, Ph.D., College of Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
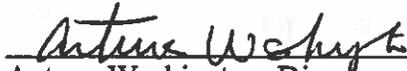
Suyu Dong, M.L.S., Systems and Discovery Services Librarian

Dominique Vargas, M.Ed., M.A., Director, McNair Scholars Program

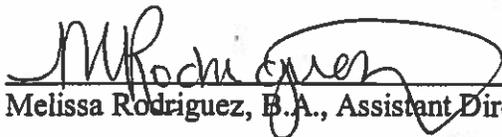Liza Ware, M.S., College of Education and Professional Studies
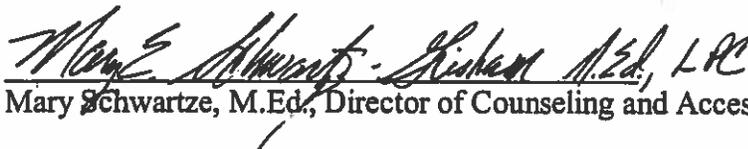
Antuan Washington, Director of Recreational Sports

Valeria Chavira, B.S., Student Representative

Ex-Officio Members:

Melissa Rodriguez, B.A., Assistant Director of Development for Residential Living

Mary Schwartze, M.Ed., Director of Counseling and Accessibility Services