



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

UNC as HSI: A Pathway to Student Success

Summary of Campus Conversations Fall 2020



UNC as HSI: A Pathway to Student Success

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Executive Summary

Overview

The following report provides a summary of the findings from a series of facilitated conversations with participants from the university community. Vice President Katrina Rodriguez and Student Affairs Organization Development Specialist, Sherri Frye, worked with a team of faculty and staff to lead the campus conversations with a series of questions designed to spark discussion around the University of Northern Colorado's (UNC) plan on becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Six campus conversations were held between October 27, 2020 and November 10, 2020. The HSI conversations were designed to gather perspectives from undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni leaders to gain a baseline opinion about how the UNC campus community views the institution becoming an HSI.

Facilitated questions asked during the conversations were as follows:

What inspired you to join the conversation today?

Based on the provided HSI introduction, what resonated with you?

What do you think are the benefits to UNC of being an HSI? Challenges?

In what ways might non-Latinx students benefit from UNC becoming an HSI?

If you could wave a magic wand and produce a successful HSI At UNC, what does your magic wand create?

To be an HSI, in what ways does UNC need to enhance relationships with community partners?

Is there anything you would like us to convey to the President's Cabinet, Board of Trustees and campus?

Participant demographic information was not collected. HSI Conversation dates were provided to campus members and participants signed up for a date and time. The total number of participants was 130.

Facilitation Team

The following staff, faculty and students served as facilitators and provided feedback on findings and themes:

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Faculty, Hispanic Studies, Chicana/o & Latinx Studies

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Success Coach and Advisor, Humanities and Social Sciences

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Director, Campus Recreation Center

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Director, Center for Women & Gender Equity

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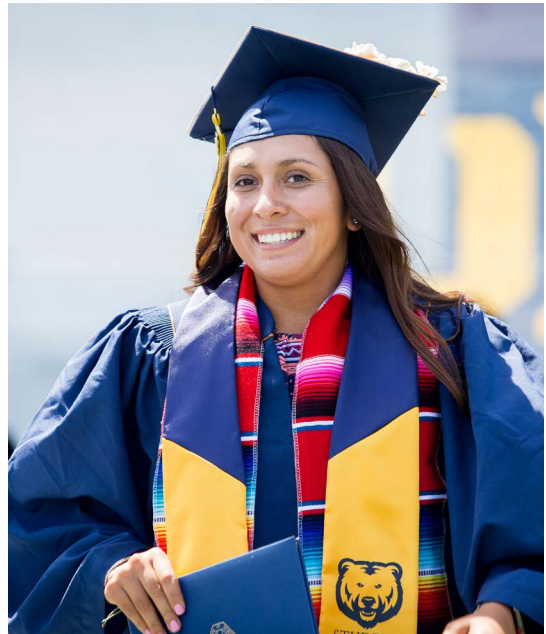
Rodolfo Vargas

Coordinator, DREAMer Engagement Program & Undocumented Student Services

Themes

Seven themes were derived from recorded transcripts and facilitator notes during the HSI campus conversations conducted on Zoom. Participant quotes were categorized into themes and then confirmed by facilitators. Each theme consists of participant quotes representative of the theme.

1. UNC as HSI – Finally!
2. Deliver on HSI Promise – Do It Right!
 - DEI - Antiracism Initiatives
 - Representation
3. Student Success Mindset
 - Recruitment
 - Growth mindset for all students
4. Resources
 - Funding
5. Setting Ourselves Apart
 - Possible Stigma
6. Greeley Community
 - Pipeline from District 6 & Aims
7. Leadership Commitment & Strategy
 - Trust
 - Process Imperatives



HSI...Finally!

Participants described their excitement that UNC is finally considering an HSI designation. Some noted their awareness that the HSI topic was started and stopped over the years.

“Becoming an HSI can spark and inspire a cultural renaissance at UNC.”

“This is an absolute slam dunk for UNC. Our mission, the communities that we serve and the communities that we want to serve.”

“Having the designation forces us to continue to challenge and grow, and not just talk about it.”

“It challenges us to be accountable and make important steps for implementation.”

“It has been frustrating over the past decade or so to hear the conversation kind of come up and then change.”

“HSI is recognition of our journey. It certainly isn’t the end. It’s only a guidepost along our journey to really recognize the value and importance of our Latinx community at UNC.”

“As a student who identifies as Latinx, it’s important to work on this as soon as possible.”



Deliver on HSI Promise – Do It Right!

In every group conversation, participants noted the necessity of pursuing HSI status for the sake of students and not for the funding UNC might receive. They also acknowledged that the enrollment of 25% Latinx students is going to happen naturally at UNC based on current student enrollment trends. Specifically, UNC must deliver on the promise to be a student's-first HSI.

“It’s a commitment, not just a designation.”

“We have to be careful not to do it for the extra dollars. This needs to be approached as service to students, not for monetary gain, especially if you want buy-in from campus constituents.”

“The university needs to undergo considerable transformation. Campus and community (including alumni/donors) needs understanding of how we can become an effective HSI: what an HSI is and what an HSI is not; how to effectively serve our students within this designation; and how we will work differently to support all students, including higher Latinx population.”

“It’s not just the percentage or the numbers, or even the label, but it’s really the infrastructure that is going to guarantee that those students are being served.”

“This is more than just saying we welcome Latinx students. We need to provide support and say they don’t just need to come to UNC, but thrive.”

“I think another way to say it is, if we’re just looking at saying well, we have 25% Hispanic enrollment. Technically we can say, yeah, we’re an HSI, but if we still have equity gaps in terms of student outcomes, then we’re not really serving those students.”

“UNC can and should capitalize fully on these positive steps and respond to the needs of a changing student body.”

DEI & Antiracism Initiatives

Delivering on the promise to “do it right” includes the need for UNC to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in ways that have not occurred in the past to effectively implement strategies around the HSI designation. Participants indicated that UNC’s designation as an HSI will help to advance campus discussions around white privilege, the need for systemic change, and antiracist practices.

“It is crucial to ask tough questions to serve our students better, inside and outside of the classroom.”

“UNC doesn’t have a strong history of maintaining DEI values.”

“For workforce diversity efforts and just to see what kind of support we have for those students if we bring them in because of course numbers are one thing, but you have to change the environment and the culture of the University and the school in order to keep those students here and to successfully graduate them.”

“Walk the walk of diversity and inclusion.”

“DEI is a vision element. What can come out of this to serve all communities of color? How do we serve students who we recruit? We talk about recruitment of diversity, but we don’t always provide the kind of support on the back end after students get to campus.”

“As an HSI, we must rethink admission procedures to graduate programs, diversify faculty, and create a more inclusive pedagogy and curriculum.”

“Equity and access are crucial to the institutional transformation.”

“Systematic change is pivotal to be more inclusive, eliminate the equity gap, and not marginalize Latinx students.”

“The more I know about other cultures, serving other cultures, our students and our university, the better I can be at being an antiracist and can serve all my students.”

Representation

To effectively serve students as a designated HSI, participants specified the need for diverse staff and faculty representation across the university. Participants voiced the critical need for Latinx faculty and staff at all levels of the university, including more Spanish-speaking personnel.

“Latinx students need to see themselves represented in staff and faculty positions.”

“Recruitment and retention of Latinx faculty and staff need to be a priority. Investigate why “UNC is not recruiting and retaining faculty of color (Latinx and other groups).”

“Along with the more diverse faculty and staff making sure that they are also supported, and they’re not having to shoulder the burden of education of their white peers.”

“From a faculty/teaching perspective, it will be extremely important for us to diversify the faculty to be more reflective of student populations, what is taught and how it’s taught (inclusive teaching).”

“Representation is really important. Doesn’t need to just be in MAS but should be in every department.”

“In a conversation: There are no faculty or staff of color. Response: well the custodians are.”

“How are new hires going to help Latinx students at UNC?”



Student Success Mindset

In the second theme, respondents spoke passionately about the intentionality of embedding student success strategies into our framework in becoming an HSI. Many spoke about the means by which we address equity gaps, persistence and graduation outcomes, and resources and services for Latinx students and non-Latinx students indicating “rising tides raise all boats.”

“Best way to achieve better outcomes for students is to meet students where they are. If we do it right – we’re increasing retention, graduation, and just becoming better servers. If that becomes our goal, and we get some funding, then everyone is gaining.”

“Idea of retention and how we can build foundation to retain students of color specifically Latinx students.”

“Latinx students will be leaders, but they need the education first and to nourish their goals, dreams, and career aspirations.”

“Will serve to benefit all students by serving specific populations.”

“If we help our LatinX students, we are helping everyone. All students will benefit from improved services and support strategies implemented by the university.”

“UNC’s designation as an HSI institution will offer opportunities to use effective teaching and advising models with Latinx and non-Latinx students.”

“We can work across cultures and communities. This could be an integral part of every students’ experience.”

“It is Hispanic Serving Institution —being able to say: I go to a University that cares.”

“We must add support for parents and support people. HSI status will make it crucial to involve the family and our current office supporting family, parents, and support people is vastly understaffed.”

“Institution as a whole, and alumni and donor community have to be part of it, in order to support the institution and challenge this equity gap.”

“Greater access doesn’t necessarily mean greater graduation rates or attrition – Identify ways to bridge gaps.”



Recruitment

Student success mindset included brief, but important, discussion about recruitment and enrollment.

“As an HSI - must rethink admission procedures to graduate programs, diversify faculty, create a more inclusive pedagogy and curriculum.”

“As an HSI institution, we need to develop more inclusive recruitment and retention efforts (consider culture, language, etc.)”



Growth Mindset for All Students

Many participants illuminated the learning opportunities available to all students regardless of their backgrounds and identities. For most, this theme relates to ways students can gain insight, increase their knowledge, and access inclusive experiences to better engage in a diverse society.

“This is a tide that lift all boats – seeing challenges and opportunities in a multicultural society.”

“Having conversation is a significant step in moving towards creating an equitable environment.”

“Taking it further. Embracing identity.”

“Provides support that enables all students to meet their educational goals.”

“Having cross pollination and exposure helps to make everyone stronger.”

“Prepares students for global society and more locally in working with fastest growing population (Latinx).”

“Relating it back to the student experience, we want to create a community where folks interact with others who are different from them. This also helps with building social capital by interacting with folks different than them, and some conversations that are easy, but help them grow.”

“As workforce becomes more diverse, people need to know how to be in a multicultural society.”

Resources

Significant questions and comments about resources included: personnel needs, alumni and donor engagement, and overall infrastructure needs to ensure proper implementation focused on student success.

“How does it interface with current resources?”

“Support structures – real investment to support structures – re-evaluating – course offerings, supportive of them with everyday realities.”



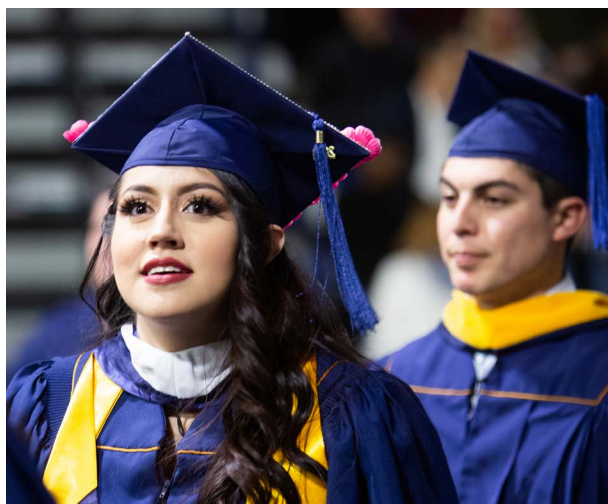
Funding

Participants articulated concerns ranging from institutional budget cuts, budget transparency, potential HSI grant funding, challenges in successfully applying for funding, and equity in the distribution of funding to appropriate programs and services. They also highlighted the opportunity that could come with additional funding.

“Opportunities for UNC to secure additional funding to support the university. Funding is not guaranteed, so intentionality and structures/resources to support students must be in place, and then going after the institutional and faculty specific funding.”

“We don’t have the money to become an HSI. UNC just lost R2 status, we need to get that back and be a research university once again.”

“HSI designation allows access to additional federal funding, grants, supports academic research, increases enrollments and revenue to sustain UNC future.”



“UNC just had to make budget cuts recently, not sure if we are in a position to develop new services.”

“Funding is competitive, will need to utilize grant opportunities.”

“Making sure funds are given to places that will help marginalized students.”

“Transparency – Who gets to decide where funds are spent and how will student voices be included.”

Setting Ourselves Apart

Participants had excitement thinking about UNC brand possibilities, validation of the UNC institutional identity and the opportunity to further differentiate ourselves from other Colorado institutions.

“Spark a place where people want to come and be different than various other campuses.”

“UNC gets to brand itself in a way that fits its actual student body and beyond.”

“Will help us embrace and acknowledge who we are and where we are.”

“Strikes me that despite all the things happening HSI just validates what we already are. Even though there are others in this state, there are not others that are exactly like UNC and what we need to do as an institution is take all the unique attributes that we have.”

“Differentiate ourselves from other schools in the state of Colorado. Sense of belonging.”

“Maintaining our HSI status afterwards and building the image of UNC to reflect how we support our students.”

“Utilize our vast alumni network, particularly in schools, to communicate pathways and success strategies for students of color/Latinx students.”

Possible Stigma

In addition to the excitement about the UNC brand, participants were also concerned about possible stigma the university might encounter if it were to become an HSI. Concerns arose as to whether non-Latinx students would be less inclined to attend UNC, and how the institution would proactively dispell those concerns.

“Would the designation make the school seem less marketable to other students of other backgrounds?”

“Earning this designation means we will provide support based on identity.”

“Are there stigmas attached to the HSI status? White fear? White fragility?”

“Will other SOC (students of color) not want to come to UNC due to focus on Latinx.”

“How will PWI (predominantly white institution) adjust to more students of color? What upheaval will it bring?”



Greeley-Evans Community

When asked to comment on considerations for UNC as HSI and the Greeley community, participant perspectives ranged widely. Thoughts included embracing “town-gown” collaboration opportunities, the historic and current marginalization of the growing Latinx community in Greeley-Evans area, and the concern that diversity and inclusivity is supported on campus but not in the city or county.

“I think it’s important that our student body reflects our own communities in not only Greeley and Weld County but also Colorado.”

“The opportunity for UNC to be an HSI makes sense as it mirrors our community and reflects our population.”

“These could be very long-lasting ties. It behooves us to initiate these collaborations. This will also make the community more aware of their options and that UNC is a viable option.”

“Latinx community is large in Greeley, but it is very segregated, and it is the same on campus.”

“UNC is a liberal bubble. Weld County is not and is not supportive of diverse students. It could be a challenge for us to get the support of the community if they see UNC as an HSI.”

“Weld County is a challenge for recruitment of diverse faculty/staff. There is a strong divide outside off campus and on campus.”

“Over 50% of staff and faculty do not live in the [Greeley] area.”



“Bring the community to UNC and UNC out into the community. Students will come here from the community if they are guided here.”

Pipeline from District 6 & Aims

Participants were optimistic that the HSI designation could create and foster additional pathways for students attending schools in the Greeley-Evans area given the large Latinx student body in District 6 and Aims.

“Aims is an HSI – One of our largest transfer partners.”

“Pathways for students who start at Aims and come to UNC.”

“Develop similar programs with other community colleges: Fort Morgan2UNC & Front Range2UNC.”

“Pipeline for District 6. As there is no stigma for UNC from local high school students. Stigma from non-local students coming to UNC.”

“There is 70% percent diversity in District 6. Use resources in the backyard to attract local students, but do it right, so that students do not end up with large bills.”

“Develop a more rigorous pipeline - students of color should be encouraged to take AP, IB courses, raise expectations to go to college.”

“Develop more robust connections with District 6 and develop strong partnerships with other organizations that are having similar conversations. Greeley District 6: suggestions for District 6 free app days at UNC (in addition to the general Colorado free app days).”



Leadership Commitment & Strategy

In this section, participants stated the need for demonstrated commitment from campus leadership and institutional integration to attain the designation. Process and strategy necessities were also top of mind.

“Trust in leadership that this will be an integral part of UNC, and our values, and not just another committee/task force that doesn’t have campus wide integration – will need strong commitment.”

“Important for leaders to walk the talk. Change in behaviors is needed to build a trust.”

“Every professor, office, college, and department needs to assess itself and its processes and make changes to become more equitable in practice and be as inclusive as possible.”

“Create formal ways to involve people in the whole planning process. Make sure that the pieces are coordinated.”

“Entire campus needs to on board. Be sure we are not adding more to faculty and staff plates and not addressing current issues.”

“What does the HSI designation mean, and what does it not mean? Clarification for EVERYONE.”

“Elevating a group does not mean affecting other groups, including current staff who are not bi-lingual. There will be people who wonder, what about me?”

Process Imperatives

Participants indicated the importance of assessment, timeline, and ensuring responsibility across all campus units.

“Make sure there is intentionality and purpose throughout the process.”

“The process forces us to question our processes, and help our students attain graduation. What we know is that students are coming here, and then leave. We have to change the way that we support them. This will help all of our students do better.”

“Need clear explanation of how rising tides lift all boats.”

“How are we going to assess that we are or are not meeting our students needs and honoring this designation?”

“In the planning stage and throughout the process we should be assessing the services we [already] have and their effectiveness.”

“How are we measuring the successes? Rather than just making it.”

“Systemized educational efforts will be important part of equipping UNC to support designation.”

“Concern with current pandemic and knowing have to be at and maintain the 25% Latinx population. Is that something that UNC can guarantee? With declines in enrollment, etc.”

“Should be a holistic approach, across all levels including curriculum, office services, messaging, and campaigns. These efforts should be the responsibility of everyone, not relying solely on certain areas.”



UNC as Hispanic Serving Institution: *A Pathway for Student Success*

Phase 1: Exploration

Fall 2020

BASELINE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- Statistics & demographic
- Literature
- Campus conversations

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS & PHASE 2 PLANNING

- Present to Cabinet, PLC & Board of Trustees
- Share with campus

WRITTEN REPORT PROVIDED TO CAMPUS

- January 2020

Phase 2: Discovery

January 2021–June 2022

Aligns with Vision 2030, Students First, Key Action 1

LAUNCH HSI TASK FORCE

- Draft goals and pre-implementation strategies using Phase 1 data
- Facilitate conversations to gain feedback on goals and strategies: students, faculty & staff; community partners; alumni; family/student supports; trustees & external stakeholders
- Interview exemplar emerging HSIs and HSIs for strategies, pitfalls and insights
- Create strategy metrics
- Identify budget & resource needs for strategies

Phase 3: Pre-Implementation

July 2022–June 2024

- Initiate pre-implementation strategies with specific metrics
- Assess metrics and create feedback loops to refine strategies
- Apply for federal HSI designation
- Investigate HSI grant funding opportunities
- Develop rigorous marketing & communication strategies

*Note: Strategy assessment will occur throughout Phase 3

Phase 4: Assessment

July 2024–June 2025

- Assess metrics & outcomes for strategic alignment, effectiveness & efficiency
- Apply for HSI grant funding
- Launch marketing & communication strategies

Phase 5: Implementation

Fall 2025

- Celebration
- Project accomplishment
- Adjustments & course corrections occurred
- Delivery of resources, e.g., personnel, financial, organizational design