



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Becoming a Hispanic-Including Institution

**An Interim Report on Pursuing
Hispanic-Serving Institution Eligibility and Funding**

**Produced by the
Strategic Planning Committee
May, 2022**

I. Background

In the fall of 2021, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) started investigating the process for pursuing official eligibility as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) from the U.S. Department of Education--and therefore qualification to apply for competitive Department of Education (DOE) Title III, V, and VII HSI grants--which was a tactic identified in the 2021-26 Tactical Plan. To ensure that our work would be informed by past and current diversity and inclusion efforts, we included Melissa Byrnes from the Diversity Enrichment Committee (DEC) in all of our meetings as a liaison between SPC and DEC.

In our initial discussions with people who had already researched HSI, particularly Tom Delahunt (Vice President Strategic Recruitment and Enrollment), Sonya Robinson (Senior Director of Foundation Relations), and Natasha Williams (Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and SPC member), we learned that because of a 2-year lag in Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data reporting, we would not qualify to apply for HSI eligibility until Spring 2023 at the earliest.

Once we realized that SPC's original purpose and timeline regarding HSI had changed, we stepped back a bit to ask why we were seeking the DOE HSI designation in the first place, and to what end. Are we doing this to expand funding, to better serve our existing students, or for recruitment? And if we do get the DOE designation, will we be competitive for funding given that the number of HSIs almost doubled in the last decade while the amount of available DOE funding has stayed roughly the same?

Recalling that Tactic 3.3 of the Tactical Plan identifies seeking HSI as a tactic for achieving some of the many initiatives that focus on diversity, inclusion, belonging, and equity (DIBE), we then decided to shift our own tactics from preparing to apply for DOE HSI eligibility in Spring 2022 to a broader project of strengthening our programs and services focused on Hispanic/Latinx students. That entailed learning more about what the institution is now doing and could be doing better in the short term and long term to serve our Hispanic/Latinx students as well as students of color more broadly. We thus spent the Spring 2022 semester engaging stakeholders, gathering survey data, and doing an environmental scan of other exemplary undergraduate programs designed to serve Hispanic/Latinx students.

As our academic year ends and we prepare for personnel changes on SPC because of term rotations, we have produced this Interim Report to represent what we have learned so far and to provide President Trombley and Senior Staff a framework for next steps to take in the coming year. SPC advocates adopting the Report's Guiding Principles and investigating and/or initiating the Recommendations in the coming year, starting by addressing short-term goals and goals that do not require significant additional resources first, as achieving them will help us be a more credible applicant if we do indeed decide to pursue DOE HSI designation in Spring 2023 or thereafter. Most important, SPC advocates that all of us think of these efforts not as ends in themselves, but as ways of building a sustainable culture of diversity, inclusion, belonging, and equity at Southwestern.

II. Where We Are Now

In our research on other universities who have been successful at serving Hispanic/Latinx students, specifically those who achieved the coveted [Seal of Excelencia](#) from the Excelencia in Education organization, we discovered a useful distinction between being a "Hispanic-Enrolling institution" and a "Hispanic-Serving institution." Although Southwestern is now technically considered a Hispanic-Serving Institution because of our demographics, and we should be proudly publicizing our membership in the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\)](#), we are more accurately a Hispanic-Enrolling Institution than a Hispanic Serving Institution.

In terms of the DOE HSI "[Eligibility Matrix](#)," there are three measures of eligibility: 1) at least 25% of students identify as Hispanic/Latinx; 2) a significant number of "Needy Students" are served by the institution (primarily measured by percentages of Pell grant recipients); and 3) the proportion of "Core Expenses" expended per student is lower than the average for similar institutions. Based on current measures and trends, Southwestern has met the 25% demographic requirement for two years now after hovering just below 25% for several years before that, and we expect to meet this threshold going forward. We also consistently have met the "Core Expenses" requirement because our core expenses are lower than the average for our institution type (this academic year, our core expenses per FTE are \$34,547, well below the \$42,211 national average for 4-year private universities). Unless our institutional focus and mission shift considerably, however, we will not meet the "Needy Students" requirement

because our percentage of Pell recipients is lower than the average for our institution type (this academic year, 25% of our students receive Pell Grants, well below the 37% national average for 4-year private universities).

No institution is qualified to apply for HSI eligibility without the initial demographic measure of 25% Hispanic/Latinx students. To become qualified to apply for HSI eligibility, there is a standard process for applying for a waiver of one of the other two thresholds. Therefore, if we are to apply for DOE HSI eligibility, we would need to apply for a waiver for the Needy Student requirement. And the most likely pathway for a waiver for the Needy Students requirement happens to be what we should be doing anyway: being able to demonstrate that we have substantially increased student programming and resources focusing on students of color, especially Hispanic/Latinx students.

Currently, Southwestern has a number of programs and services that serve Hispanic/Latinx students. Within these programs/services, we have identified several programs/services that are specifically focused on Hispanic/Latinx students, and a number of additional programs/services that are focused on students of color and/or first-generation students more generally that serve Hispanic/Latinx students alongside other students of color. In our process of working on this project, we did not perform a review of any of these programs to determine whether they are working or whether some work better than others. At this stage in the process, we simply produced an inventory of established programs and/or services and sorted them by type of program/service, which is outlined here:

Recruitment and Access Programs

Davis (New Mexico) Scholars program
Dixon Scholars program
IDEA Schools pipeline partnership
NSF S-STEM Scholarship program
Upward Bound

Cohort-Building/Mentoring Programs

Captain's Academy
Daily Revision Advances Further Thinking (DRAFT)
Embracing Quantitative Understanding and the Inquiry Process (EQUIP)

High-Impact Experience (HIE) Programs

Internships Cultivating Occupational Readiness and Professionalism at Southwestern (I-CORPS)
Subsidized/funded Internships
Study abroad programs to heritage nations in Spain, Latin America
HIE funding initiatives (McMichael, Community Chest, Mosaic Mini-grants)
Gilman Scholarship (external)
Frederick Douglass Fellowship for Study Abroad (external)
Snodgrass Fellowship program for Study Abroad in Spain and Latin America (external)

Student Services/Support/Programming

Career & Professional Development (CCPD) Career Closet
CCPD Identities in the Workplace
CCPD Skills, Opportunities, Action, Results (SOAR) Summit
MLK Dream Week
Mosaic Active Bystander Training
Pirate Connect affinity groups
Students of Color Support Group

Student Life Organizations

Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA)
Amigas (currently inactive)
Asian Student Association (ASA)
Coalition for Diversity & Social Justice (CDSJ)
Empowering Blacks and Others to Never Yield (EBONY)
Establishing Men Promoting Intelligence, Respect, and Efficacy (EMPIRE)
Hispanics and Latinx Organization (HALO)
JOLT Texas (currently inactive)
Kappa Delta Chi (KDX)
Latinos Unidos
Muslims and Allies (MAA)
Pirates for Pride (P4P)
SU Native

Academic Programs (with associated Cultural Programming)

Community-Engaged Learning courses working with Hispanics/Latinx in Georgetown
International Studies Program (esp. Latin American Concentration)
Feminist Studies (FST) Department
Latin American And Border Studies (LABS) Program
LABS Borderlands Symposium
LABS Hispanic Heritage Month
Latina History Project
Office of Diversity Education (ODE) modules in FYS/AES
Race and Ethnicity Studies (RES) Program
Race & Ethnicity Symposium
Spanish Department courses with Community-Engaged Learning Projects
Spanish Department's Day of the Dead altar
Spanish Department's emphasis on connecting especially native or heritage Spanish speakers to their diverse Hispanic/Latinx cultural identities and heritage, including Afro-Latinidad
Spanish Department's Faculty-Student Research Projects with Hispanic/Latinx students
Social Justice requirement in the curriculum

University Governance Committees/Task Forces

Diversity Enrichment Committee (DEC)

Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging & Equity (DIBE) Task Force

External Partnerships

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

Liberal Arts College Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA)

Universities Studying Slavery (USS) Consortium

As is clear from this inventory, people at Southwestern are already doing a lot of different things to serve Hispanic/Latinx students. What may be less clear from this inventory is the fact that there is no over-arching institutional strategy for coordinating, staffing, funding, and evaluating these many different programs and services--nothing that would build synergies across them or make them anything more than the sum of the parts. And what is also not clear from this inventory is the fact that many of these programs are barely kept alive by the labor of a small number of students, faculty, and staff—labor which is often uncompensated.

Evidence of that issue became clear when we engaged with student, staff, faculty, and alumni stakeholders, who could name, celebrate, and critique existing programs but who also recognized that something is missing in our approach. That points us back to the fact that the main issue the University needs to address is not pursuing eligibility or even securing the funding that can come with it, but being clearer about building sustainable structures and practices that promote inclusion and belonging among Hispanic/Latinx students, many of whom currently do not feel like they form a recognizable, valued, and supported community within the community of Southwestern. As we saw in the results of our survey of stakeholders, many Hispanic/Latinx students and the staff and faculty who work most directly with them feel that although Hispanic/Latinx students make up 25% of the student population, they do not feel their presence, significance, and recognition on campus as being equivalent to their numbers. More troubling, like other students of color, many Hispanic/Latinx students feel marginalized personally and culturally from the dominant culture of Southwestern as a predominantly white institution, with some (like other students of color, and like many faculty and staff of color as well) also feeling directly exploited by the University in its attempts to leverage their participation in recruiting and mentoring of more students of color. If we continue as we are now without establishing our purpose, those dynamics likely will only become compounded.

III. Where We Need to Be

Competition among HSIs is becoming more and more intense. For instance, according to a [recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*](#), between 2010 and 2021, the number of HSIs nearly doubled (from 311 to 592), while the amount of DOE funding increased only from \$255.3 Million to \$315.3 Million in the same period. In our research, we also found that several scholars studying HSI outcomes are now advocating for tightened eligibility requirements and more robust documentation that HSI funding is actually benefiting Hispanic/Latinx students, with some even advocating for giving funding priority to [“Super HSIs”](#) that have proven track records of serving Hispanic/Latinx students and generally have a much larger percentage of

Hispanic/Latinx students than 25%. The point is that HSI eligibility and funding is a scarce resource and it will not make us a truly inclusive institution. We should look at DOE funding as something that would allow us to increase our capacity to serve Hispanic/Latinx students, not as the means for allowing us to do that in the first place.

Even if all we are doing is preparing to apply for DOE HSI eligibility and asking for a waiver of the Needy Students requirement, we need to be able to credibly demonstrate that we have substantially increased student programming and resources focusing on students of color, especially Hispanic/Latinx students, and that we have done so within a larger strategic planning process. But our goal should be more ambitious than that. SPC visualizes a culture at Southwestern that is welcoming and inclusive for all students of color, but especially centered on Hispanic/Latinx students because of their proportion of our whole student body.

Right now, 25% of our students identify as Hispanic/Latinx. Even if that number did not grow, that's a significant proportion of students that need specific, culturally-sensitive attention. Given our location in Texas, that percentage will probably grow organically if we do nothing more than we are doing now, but if we initiate an institutional effort at building a Hispanic-Serving Institution, that percentage could grow significantly, exacerbating cultural problems we are experiencing now. Similarly, Southwestern's student body is currently over 40% students of color. As that surpasses 50%, and we become a majority-minority community, the need to re-center our institutional identity away from our roots as a predominantly white institution and towards a multicultural institution will become even more necessary and urgent.

Ultimately, this is about more than numbers and labels; this is a question of institutional culture. In trying to make that vision more concrete, we drew inspiration from the University of California at Berkeley, who, in their recently adopted roadmap for becoming an HIS, identified their goal as becoming a [Hispanic-Thriving Institution](#), not just a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Similarly here at Southwestern, we need to aim higher than claiming to serve Hispanic/Latinx students. We need to become a *Hispanic-Including* Institution.

If we are to become a Hispanic-Including Institution, we all need to do a better job of engaging with Hispanic/Latinx culture, communities, families, students, faculty, and staff and making that work more central to our identity, structures, and practices as an institution. Given our location in Texas, this is something that is within our means to do but also something we *must* do to thrive as a multicultural liberal arts institution with ambitions of being a national liberal arts institution.

Finally, in keeping with that, we need to keep clear about our Core Values and our overall strategic direction and vision as an institution that is both academically selective and culturally inclusive. Committing to becoming a Hispanic-Including Institution and building it into our larger identity as a liberal arts university would further distinguish us as an institution. We want to be one of the top choices of motivated and talented Hispanic/Latinx prospective students in Texas and beyond who value what we are doing academically and culturally and are prepared to succeed in our intensive educational environment, but may not have the resources to attend or

may not believe that we are a place where they will belong. And once we enroll those students, we need to do everything we can to ensure their success.

IV. How to Get from Where We Are to Where We Need to Be

Fully including Hispanic/Latinx students will require a comprehensive and coordinated institutional effort focused on strengthening our existing programs and services, designing and implementing new programs and services, and better coordinating all of them with the aim of creating a sustainable culture of inclusion and belonging for Hispanic/Latinx students that also strengthens our overall culture of inclusion and belonging for all students.

Our first set of actions should focus on strengthening our existing programs and services for Hispanic/Latinx students and designing and implementing new programs and services that are within our means to achieve now while we actively and intentionally work to develop longer-term resource-intensive initiatives. One important point here is that none of this work will be effective without a significant commitment to high-level and structurally clear coordination. We currently have multiple programs that have been initiated by different students, faculty, and staff at different times for different purposes. Without an intentional strategy to build in structures and practices of coordination, it is possible to imagine that we might be in this same situation 5 years from now, maybe with different programs, but just as unclear in terms of overall strategic purpose. To avoid that, we need to start working on this at both the micro and macro levels simultaneously.

As we pursue this overall strategy, we need to focus on two concrete benchmarks and one more intangible benchmark. The two concrete benchmarks we should establish now are receiving the Seal of Excelencia and receiving DOE eligibility as an HSI. Both will require not only extensive intentional action on our part but also extensive documentation to demonstrate measurable outcomes. In our environmental scan of other successful HSI programs and services that have earned the Seal of Excelencia, we were heartened to see that many were recognized for programs and services similar to the ones Southwestern currently has in place. Therefore, we believe that a sustained effort at strengthening and better coordinating our existing programs and services focused on Hispanic/Latinx students while working to create opportunities to develop new programs and services will make us more credible to Excelencia in Education in the near future. Even as we articulate this benchmark, it is important to say that only a few schools receive the Seal every year and none so far have been small liberal arts colleges. If we do get their Seal, we should leverage that to apply for more grants from nongovernmental agencies to continue to increase our capacity to serve Hispanic/Latinx students. The same is true of the DOE HSI designation as well.

The less tangible benchmark is harder to measure but no less crucial for our future as an institution: we are not simply seeking a label or even the funding that comes along with it; we are seeking to change the culture of the institution to better serve our Hispanic/Latinx students and students of color more broadly as part of our commitments in the Tactical Plan and beyond.

That larger goal is hard to achieve because it is harder to measure, but we can define and measure deliberate actions toward achieving it. The ultimate outcome of this effort needs to be a sustained, coordinated, coherent, and measurable institutional focus on recruiting and supporting Hispanic/Latinx students and students of color more broadly, one evident not only in any metrics we establish but also in the look and feel of the campus community.

V. Guiding Principles

In our work on Hispanic/Latinx inclusion, SPC has established the following Guiding Principles:

- Existing programs focused on Hispanic/Latinx students should be reviewed to determine that they are effectively contributing to Hispanic/Latinx inclusion
- Existing successful programs focused on Hispanic/Latinx inclusion should be made sustainable through long-term funding and staffing.
- Existing successful programs focused on inclusion of students of color more broadly should be made sustainable through long-term funding and staffing and should include an intentional focus on serving Hispanic/Latinx students within them.
- Capacity should be built into existing programs before initiating new ones.
- New programs and services should be piloted and measured before instituting them; if they are promising, they should be made sustainable through long-term funding and staffing.
- All existing and new programs focused on Hispanic/Latinx inclusion need to be coordinated at the highest levels of the administration while also empowering those closest to the programs and services to implement them creatively and nimbly.
- Each new action focused on Hispanic/Latinx inclusion should also reinforce (and be framed within) objectives already established in active Southwestern planning documents, especially objectives in the Tactical Plan around student success/retention and DIBE.

VI. Recommendations

Now that we have articulated the macro-level strategy, intended benchmarks, and guiding principles, we will end this Report with a set of concrete actions that SPC recommends the President and Senior Staff actively investigate and/or initiate in the coming academic/fiscal year. Some of these recommendations entail strengthening existing popular programs, and some will require developing new programs/services. All of them will require developing structures and practices to better coordinate all current and future programs/services. SPC recognizes that the budget for 2022-2023 is already set, so we have sorted our recommendations into three broad categories: 1) Actions that could likely be achieved within current budget constraints, and thus should be initiated this year (2022-2023); 2) Actions that could likely be achieved with small-scale fundraising or budget prioritization in the short term and thus should be

investigated and planned toward this year so they can be budgeted as soon as the following year (2023-2024); and 3) Actions that would likely require a significant new source of longer-term revenue, and might likely only happen if we are able to reach one of the two tangible benchmarks (Seal of Excelencia and/or DOE HSI eligibility) and thus must be planned for and actively built towards beginning this year.

Please note that SPC has not done actual budget projections on the Recommendations included here, so even actions that we have coded as likely to be achieved within existing budget constraints may not be budget-neutral. Finally, even those actions that are budget-neutral will require labor from students, staff, and faculty who are already stretched thin, so every new initiative needs to be framed with a clear and urgent sense of purpose and be institutionally recognized to not be perceived as simply being additional invisible labor.

1. Actions that could be achieved within current budget constraints

Develop a coherent and culturally sensitive outreach strategy for Hispanic/Latinx families. For the University to be truly inclusive, it needs to move towards students of color, not only welcome them once they move towards us. Within that, we need to develop more cultural competency working with students from different marginalized groups and their families. Many of the successful HSI programs we saw in our research included culturally-sensitive bilingual outreach efforts focused on Hispanic/Latinx families. As a first step, we would better serve parents of Hispanic/Latinx students, particularly of first-generation bilingual students, if we had materials in Spanish and provided the option of speaking with bilingual admissions and financial aid staff.

Build a webpage and a social media strategy as part of our media resources devoted to DIBE that features our current and planned efforts towards becoming a Hispanic-Including Institution. In researching for this project, we found that it took a lot of digging through the Southwestern website to identify all the resources we have in place for Hispanic/Latinx students. In faculty and staff trainings with LACRELA this year, we also have learned just how crucial it is to have robust web resources outlining our commitments, programs, and services focused on DIBE. As we continue to develop those more general resources, we should also create a webpage devoted specifically to how we work with Hispanic/Latinx students and their families to ensure student success.

Ensure that Spanish-language names are correctly spelled (including accents and diacritical marks) when they appear on campus media platforms and publications. There may be actual programming constraints on some platforms such as WebAdvisor, but wherever possible, we should avoid Anglicizing Spanish words, especially people's names, as it is clearly a practice of cultural exclusion.

Build identity affiliation into criteria for assigning professional advisors. Currently, professional advisors are assigned according to student interest area. We saw several successful HSI programs that intentionally matched Hispanic/Latinx students with either advisors who were people of color or advisors extensively trained to be culturally sensitive to the experience and needs of particular students of color.

Support the Spanish Department's programs to engage native and heritage Spanish speakers.

The Spanish Department has done a lot of work in recent years to engage Hispanic/Latinx students who are native Spanish-speaking in the classroom and through cultural programming while also helping heritage speakers connect to their cultural and linguistic roots. The Department has also introduced many non-Hispanic/Latinx students to the diversity of Hispanic/Latinx cultures while also building sustained community-engaged learning projects that connect Southwestern students to the Hispanic/Latinx community in Central Texas. All of these programs should be recognized, encouraged to grow, and built into our larger HSI efforts.

2. Actions that could be achieved with small-scale fundraising or budget prioritization

Secure more permanent funding/staffing for popular but precarious programs. Instead of continuously re-inventing new programs or chasing grants, we should do a better job as an institution of supporting successful programs when they have proven their worth. Programs that were originally either grant-funded or were short-term initiatives, such as I-CORPS, Career Closet, EQUIP, DRAFT, and SOAR that are popular with students of color, especially Hispanic/Latinx students, will disappear or become anemic without permanent staffing and financial support.

Continue and reinforce existing DIBE initiatives in relation to faculty hiring/retention.

Students of color, including Hispanic/Latinx students, consistently advocate for hiring more faculty of color both because they want to be taught by people who "look like them," and because it helps them see that they, too, could grow into similar positions of authority and professional prestige. While we have a number of faculty hiring and retention initiatives that have raised our percentage of faculty of color in recent years, we need to continue to support those initiatives while we also better define our goals in this endeavor and continue to train search committees in the importance of internalized biases that might get in the way of achieving those goals. Within that, we need to establish a clear institutional message about the importance specifically of hiring and retaining Hispanic/Latinx faculty, and even more specifically Mexican-American/Chicanx faculty, given the numbers of Mexican-American/Chicanx students at Southwestern.

Hire and retain more Hispanic/Latinx professional student support staff. Hispanic/Latinx students consistently say that they would feel more included, understood, and supported if more of their professional advisors and mental health counselors were also people of color.

Wherever possible, we should be systematically hiring more people of color in these important student-facing professional staff roles.

Strengthen existing academic-readiness programming and develop more. In our research on other HSIs, we saw many programs that emphasized academic-readiness programs that focused on supporting incoming students and/or retaining students. The most intriguing of these was at Florida International University, whose [Gateway Project](#) focused on classes with the highest enrollments and failure rates and built community among faculty teaching them to create a shared interdisciplinary commitment to student success. Something similar might be done here at Southwestern, along the lines of the community-building that happens among FYS/AES faculty.

Develop more job-readiness programming focused on Hispanic/Latinx students. In our research on other HSIs, we were particularly intrigued by a program at [UT-Rio Grande Valley](#) that converted all of their student worker jobs to internships to make them more explicitly job-readiness professional development opportunities. That often meant that students were getting paid, getting academic credit, and getting professionalized as they did on-campus jobs. We are not sure that something like that would work here, but we think we need to research it.

Create more institutionally supported community-building programs focused on Hispanic/Latinx students. A consistent message we hear from Hispanic/Latinx students is that they want more ways to feel connected to each other, first to recognize each other and feel the magnitude of their numbers together, but also to build connections to one another and feel a sense of belonging together. To this end, we should establish more geographic and/or situation-specific student support groups akin to the Students of Color Support Group but more tightly focused, such as a Hispanic/Latinx Students Support Group, a Rio Grande Valley Students Support Group, etc. Another way we can build community among Hispanic/Latinx students is by establishing (and funding) retreats, field trips to cultural sites, and designing Spring Breakaway type programs focused on Hispanic/Latinx students.

Strengthen the Latin American and Border Studies (LABS) Program. Not all Hispanic/Latinx students will be drawn to majoring or minoring in LABS or even taking classes about Hispanic/Latinx history and culture, and many non-Hispanic/Latinx students also take LABS courses, but the LABS program is an important way that Southwestern demonstrates our commitment to including Hispanic/Latinx people and culture. Moreover, cultural programming done by LABS in conjunction with the Spanish Department, such as the Borderlands Symposium, Hispanic Heritage Month, and the Day of the Dead altar provide Hispanic/Latinx students with important opportunities to learn about and share their culture with others. The LABS program has historically been precarious, with no dedicated faculty or staff and a minimal budget. Throwing money and/or positions at the program will not necessarily strengthen it without a careful review of the program, strong leadership, and sustained creative effort. As with our other recommendations here, our recommendation is to determine what is working well and what is not as we find a way to build on this as an existing program that could be central to becoming a Hispanic-Including Institution.

Expand cohort-building programs and build a specific focus within them for Hispanic/Latinx students. A guiding principle we kept coming back to in our work is that wherever possible, we should leverage the success of existing programs to make them even stronger and more targeted before creating all-new programs from scratch. In our research on other HSIs, we saw many cohort-building programs focused on integrating first-generation students or students of color more generally into the institution that were also significantly focused on Hispanic/Latinx students. We recommend doing that here with EQUIP, DRAFT, and especially Captain's Academy, which, with its reference to pirate culture, is already specifically branded as a distinctive Southwestern program.

Establish pipeline programs with area community colleges. We learned of several successful HSI programs at selective universities that focused on building pipelines of students from local community colleges. One reason for this is that many Hispanic/Latinx students start out at community colleges instead of 4-year colleges, partially for financial reasons and partially to stay close to home because of family ties and/or family care obligations. When such students are successful at a community college--especially at Austin Community College (ACC), but also community colleges in places in driving distance such as Houston, DFW, and San Antonio--and are looking to transfer to a 4-year college, we need to be an attractive and financially viable option for them.

Build/designate more spaces of belonging for students of color on campus. In discussing this, we recognized the conflict of values between creating dedicated spaces for marginalized students to feel like they matter and are deliberately included and creating flexible spaces for multiple uses now and for the future. We advocate balancing these values wherever possible.

3. Actions that would require a significant new source of longer-term revenue

Increase financial access/persistence for Hispanic/Latinx students, first-generation students, and all students of color. Students of color consistently point to economic concerns as a significant challenge to enrolling and continuing at Southwestern. We assume that this is also the case for the many students of color who either do not choose Southwestern if they are admitted or do not even apply because we are out of reach financially. Understanding that there are legal restrictions on so-called "race-based" student aid, we should still work to find creative ways to increase the pool of funds available to enable access for Hispanic/Latinx students, with a strong emphasis on scholarships and work-study instead of loans. Several HSIs we studied have full-pay scholarships specifically for high achieving Hispanic/Latinx students with very low family annual income who would never be able to go to Southwestern without such support (for instance, the household income threshold is \$40,000 at [the University of Florida](#)). In engaging stakeholders, we learned that CDSJ has initiated its own scholarship program for students of color, which is something we could strengthen and institute. We also need to continue our recent initiatives to provide bridge funding to cover tuition increases once

students are here. Additionally, several successful HSIs have tuition remission programs for Hispanic/Latinx students who complete their programming; we should look into this as another option for relieving the financial burden of accessing a Southwestern education that is also a retention strategy. Just as important is increasing the number of qualified Hispanic/Latinx students who apply to Southwestern in the first place by strengthening our existing outreach programs to prospective Hispanic/Latinx students (and their high school counselors) about the actual costs of attending Southwestern compared to the “sticker price,” which is something students and families with high social capital take for granted.

Develop a sustainable, multi-level mentoring program for Hispanic/Latinx students and other students of color. One feature we saw in most successful HSIs is a robust mentoring program, with some of the most appealing models including a multi-level approach featuring both peer-mentoring (juniors and senior Hispanic/Latinx students mentoring first-years) and “near-peer” mentoring (undergraduate Hispanic/Latinx students mentoring middle school and high school students and/or alumni mentoring undergraduate students). Some programs are gender-specific. Other programs emphasize faculty-to-student mentoring among Hispanic/Latinx students and faculty as well. The benefits to everyone involved in such a system can be significant in terms of creating a shared culture of inclusion and belonging. Of course, for this not to translate into additional invisible labor, the undergraduate mentors would need to be compensated with wages and/or academic credit for a course in mentoring, and the faculty would need to be compensated with stipends and/or a mentoring certification program that is structurally recognized towards tenure/promotion. The Office of Student Inclusion and Diversity will be piloting a peer mentoring program this coming academic year. If it is successful as conceived now, we should institute it and look into whether we can expand it into near-peer mentoring among alumni and/or younger students. If it is not successful, we should find another model for doing it, as a sustainable mentoring program is a central feature of almost all of the successful HSI programs we researched.

Create a distinctive, over-arching program name and brand. In our research on successful HSIs, we noticed that almost all of them were not single-focus programs or services, but part of a larger coordinated institutional effort with clear attempts at branding. Many have acronyms and/or names that are meant to resonate with Hispanic/Latinx culture, such as the [Promesa program](#) at Ferris State and the [PASO program](#) at Cal State-San Marcos.

Create a dedicated Office of Hispanic/Latinx Inclusion. One reason why our efforts to serve Hispanic/Latinx students and other students of color feel disjointed is that there is not one person or office responsible for coordinating and evaluating them. This is what was happening with retention before we created the Office of Advising and Retention, and something that would be happening with High-Impact Experiences if we did not have a Center for Integrative Learning. For those with longer memories, it was what was happening with diversity more generally before we created the Office of Diversity Education. The other reason is that the work of serving Hispanic/Latinx students cuts across our organizational structure, especially Academic Affairs, Student Life, and University Relations. We expect that this Office would have similar challenges until we have a cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer (see below).

Accelerate the process of building towards a cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer. Those of us who served on the Tactical Planning Task Force know that we seriously considered recommending that the University hire a Chief Diversity Officer before we decided to focus first on building a portfolio of three middle-level administrators focusing on DIBE, one located in HR, one in Student Life, and one in Academic Affairs. Partially because we have been slow to fill those positions, we have no evidence to confirm that this short-term tactic is working yet. Once these positions are filled, as an interim measure, the three Senior Staff they report to should establish a structure for regular collaboration across these intermediary positions so that each of the three main DIBE administrators can share information and coordinate their efforts. Beyond that, we should continue actively moving towards a model where we have a cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer whose role would be to ensure that large-scale DIBE efforts like the ones we are outlining in this Report, which cut across our organizational structure, are coordinated and evaluated at the highest levels of the administration.