

HSI Implementation Task Force

Annual Report



Despite the difficulties imposed by the pandemic, particularly in terms of holding in-person events and strategy sessions, from November 2020 to June 2021, the Hispanic Serving Institution Phase 2 Implementation Task Force took up the challenge of advancing the goals of the 2019 report, Investing in Rising Scholars and Serving the State of California: What It Means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution, produced by the original task force.

Task force members successfully transitioned from a group that issued the report to one that advanced some of its most important recommendations. Four implementation subcommittees—Recruitment, Retention and Persistence, Communications, and Grants—undertook specific projects that together embraced the report’s main themes in terms of supporting Rising Scholars, strengthening the academic pipeline, and creating a culture of belonging. The two co-Chairs oversaw the development of a “hot sheet” to help track our progress and inform everyone involved of the work that is being done. In addition, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion forged a closer relationship with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) by sponsoring the attendance of task force members to their annual conference and annual capitol forum.

The consequences of the global health crisis clearly demonstrates the urgency of this work. Although Latinx/Chicanx students have made tremendous strides in closing the college enrollment gap with their White peers over the last several decades—Hispanic student enrollment has increased from 4% in 1976 to 19% in 2017 according to the the National Center for Education Statistics—Covid-19 appears to have caused a troubling reversal of that progress. As the Chronicle of Higher Education reported recently, as a result of the families of Latinx students “disproportionately devastated by Covid-19 related sickness and job losses, the number of Latino first-time freshmen tumbled by 20 percent, according to a recent report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.” Deborah Santiago, the co-founder and CEO of Excelencia in Education, a leading organization conducting research and advocating for informed educational policies to ensure the success of Latinx college students, shared her concern with the Chronicle about the impact of the pandemic upon Latinx scholars. “It costs more to educate us. We might need more financial aid and more academic support because many are the first in our families to attend college.” That reality is one that U.C. Davis must confront and overcome if we are to realize our HSI aspirations

Although several task force members expressed concerns regarding the impact of the budget crisis upon HSI work, the academic year concluded on a high note: the campus authorized the hiring of a full-time HSI Director.

Near the end of 2020, Chancellor May renewed his commitment to the university's HSI aspirations by issuing a new charge letter forming the "HSI Phase 2 Implementation Task Force." The first HSI Task Force, he explained, was created to define what success meant for a research intensive, public land-grant, Hispanic Serving Institution in California. That goal was met. Investing in Rising Scholars and Serving the State of California: What It Means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution adopted an asset-oriented view of "Rising Scholars" and presented the vision of UC Davis as a culturally responsive learning community that closes the equity gap in higher education.

Above all, the report defined the HSI initiative as one of institutional transformation. Toward that end, it outlined 54 comprehensive recommendations, grouped into four main goals and "Eleven High Priority Activities," and articulated four key values to guide implementation.

Charged "with developing subcommittees to implement specific recommendations, particularly in regard to recruitment, retention/persistence, communications, and funding," the two co-Chairs of the Task Force Committee, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Diversity, Lorena Oropeza, and Chief of Staff Mark A. López, began with these recommendations, goals, and values to guide the work of the implementation task force.

A Renewed Charge



HSI Implementation Values and Goals

What is a Rising Scholar?

It is increasingly evident that minority, low-income, and first-generation students possess experiences and characteristics that make them prime candidates for what a 21st-century college student needs to be. In an increasingly diverse, urbanized world, many of these students have firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by the majority of people...Often, driven by their own experiences, they bring a keen sensitivity and insight to issues of equity and justice, which are sorely needed at a time when seemingly intractable disparities within society are straining social and economic structures. –White, “Beyond a Deficit View

First, HSI institutional transformation is foremost an equity project.

It defines advancing equity as essential to our UC Davis identity and sustainability as an institution.

Second, HSI institutional transformation means recognizing and serving “Rising Scholars.”

Coined by Byron P. White, the term “rising scholars” jettisons a deficit framework in favor of an asset-oriented view of all students, including minorities, low income, and first-generation.

Third, HSI institutional transformation depends upon creating a culture of belonging.

The report refers to several studies that show a direct connection between students feeling socially connected, supported, and respected and retention rates.

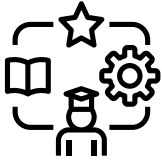
Fourth, HSI institutional transformation is inseparable from the land-grant mission of the university to serve all of California’s residents.

It recognizes the university as an engine of social mobility, particularly for first-generation college-goers, children of immigrants, and the economically disadvantaged.

The 2019 report takes a comprehensive look at what it means for UC Davis to be a Hispanic Serving Institution, how we arrived at the cusp of achieving this designation and our goals for moving into the future. It argues that as a land-grant university, UC Davis has a responsibility to offer an accessible and meaningful education to all California residents. Fulfilling the premise and promise of higher education, in turn, means providing opportunities for individuals who have been marginalized to elevate themselves, their families, and communities.

HSI Implementation Values and Goals

The 2019 report grouped all of its recommendations into four main goals:



GOAL 1

Prepare and attract a broad profile of Rising Scholars to UC Davis.



GOAL 2

Ensure that Rising Scholars have the opportunity to learn, succeed, graduate and thrive.



GOAL 3

Fulfill our Hispanic Serving mission by elevating students to industries with critical workforce needs and by preparing and educating all students to serve a multicultural society.



GOAL 4

Harness the University of California collective strengths as a system to transform public higher education.

Since November 2020, members of the HSI implementation task force have pursued innovation projects specifically aligned with these goals and infused with these core values.

Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Renetta Tull, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion granted the HSI Task Force \$25,000 to pursue its implementation charge. That money was matched by the creativity and persistence of task force members to engage in HSI institutional transformation despite the difficulties imposed by the pandemic.

Task force members first joined one of four implementation subcommittees: recruitment, retention and persistence, communications, and grant-funding. Members within these subcommittees then applied for \$5,000-\$6,000 “innovation grants” in support of specific projects. Highlights of these projects appear below. In addition, the lists of subcommittee members as well as their end-of-year reports appear as appendices to this report.

HSI Implementation Projects



Strategies to Recruit Rising Scholars

> **The development and implementation of interactive and engaging bilingual webinars and student ambassador events made prospective students feel that UC Davis would be a welcoming place. This approach should continue for both the recruitment and yield phases of admissions.**

In 2008, the campus set as its goal to become a Hispanic Serving Institution by 2018. According to the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the campus has not yet reached that goal because it does not have 25% Latinx undergraduate enrollment. The campus has waged a two-year campaign to prompt ED to reconsider its methodology which, the campus argues, unfairly recognizes the race/ethnicity of some students but not others (see below under “Challenges”).

To move the campus closer to that 25% threshold, several members of the task force, representing Strategic Diversity Recruitment Initiatives and Transfer Programs, the School of Education, the Center for Student Involvement, and the Chicana/o Studies Department, came together in 2018 to assess culturally and linguistically relevant recruitment strategies developed by strategic recruitment initiatives and transfer programs staff [1]. Subsequent events such as the Salinas Experience, which brought admits and their families from Watsonville and Salinas to campus for Freshmen Decision Day, were a resounding success based on the number of SIRs (Student Intent to Register forms) that resulted [2].

In accord with the academic literature, this partnership aimed to foster a sense of community. Education research has shown that successful outreach to first-generation students, and for the retention of these students once they arrive on campus, is dependent upon feeling like they belong. Students who feel “socially connected, supported, and respected” gain a “greater sense of fit at school [3].”

During Covid-19 times, new strategies were needed. Members of the Recruitment Implementation Subcommittee, including Marcela Cuellar (Associate Professor, School of Education), Natalia Deeb-Sossa (Professor, Chicana/o Studies), and Joseph Martinez (Center for Student Involvement, Student Expression & Activities Coordinator), received an innovation grant to determine the effectiveness of three new yield activities that targeted Latinx admits during the pandemic. They hired a Graduate Student Researcher, Mayra Nuñez Martinez, to study these three events:

1) a phone-banking effort in which student ambassadors, after receiving specialized training, called admits to congratulate them, to offer answers to their questions when possible, and to encourage them to attend Aggie Experience Live Events (Zoom webinars that covered various topics including housing, meals, deadlines, and classes).

2) a bilingual webinar for students and their families over Zoom with 135 registrants and their families participating.

Strategies to Recruit Rising Scholars

3) two virtual meet-and-greet events, called Diversity Inclusion Networking Events (DINE), to foster student-to-student connections, one for freshmen and the second for transfers. Three-hundred and eighty-five admits took the opportunity to meet via a virtual platform campus groups that included ethnic/cultural/identity-based organizations as well as arts/performance, academic/professional, advocacy/community service ones, and “Ask an Aggie.”

In each case, an emphasis on cultural and linguistic relevance enhanced outreach efforts. A subset of student ambassadors proficient in Spanish, for example, decided to switch to that language in order to address the concerns of the families of students, who worried—according to the collected interviews—about their child moving far away from their home, about who their professors would be, and about students' health and well-being.

The bilingual seminar meanwhile offered an overview regarding deadlines, course requirements, and financial matters, twice, once in English and once in Spanish. One fortuitous consequence, this format featured a built-in review for most audience members. In addition, the staff and a guest speaker that participated in the webinar shared in Spanish their personal experiences navigating college as first-generation students with the participants. They stressed the importance of community and support available for Latinx students on campus, an important consideration for students and parents alike.

Interviews with DINE attendees made clear that they thought that UC Davis had taken a step beyond its sister UCs in terms of making new students feel welcome and to reassure them that UC Davis was a place where they could flourish. In fact, UCD shone brightly compared to other UCs. In a follow-up interview, one transfer student explained that one had not reached out after hearing about this student's admission and another only had pre-recorded videos that were not engaging or interactive. While a third did provide a conference to connect with faculty, the student thought it felt like a one-sided conversation.



Mural project on the back wall of the Woodland High School's theater building. The project was directed by Artist, and Professor, Malaquias Montoya, and completed by UC Davis Art Studio students.

Strategies to Recruit Rising Scholars

Of the 54 participants who completed a post-DINE survey, 96% “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they were able to engage with current students in a meaningful way. Despite the obstacles posed by the inability to meet in person, 89% of the respondents also “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that after the event they could find a sense of community at UC Davis.

Based on the data, members of the task force believe that these type of innovative and culturally and linguistically relevant strategies provide the key for meeting the 25% Latinx enrollment threshold that would make UC Davis a federally designated HSI according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Recovering the Past to Forge Belonging

> Undergraduates in CHI-141: Community-Based Participatory Research conducted oral interviews with UC Davis alumni, staff, and faculty to document the efforts of the “pioneros” that brought UC Davis within reach of our HSI aspirations. Documenting this history will give our Latinx/Chicanx students a sense of belonging as they see themselves as part of a larger struggle and legacy.

During spring quarter 2021, Natalia Deeb-Sossa (Professor, Chicana/o Studies) and Lina Mendez (Associate Director, Center for Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success), trained 18 students in Deeb-Sossa’s undergraduate course, CHI 141—Community-Based Participatory Research, on oral history methodology, including best practices, ethics training, and technology tools. Members of the communications subcommittee conceived of using this course to start capturing the Latinx experience at UC Davis.

The 2019 HSI Task Force Report mandated just such historical discovery. The authors of the 2019 report made clear that their vision of HSI institutional transformation built upon the contributions of those they called “pioneros,” Latinx students, staff, and administrators, who have advocated for inclusion over the preceding decades. As one of its “Eleven High Priority Action Items,” the report challenged the campus community to “document and acknowledge our journey to HSI status and to tell the stories of our students, staff, faculty, and community members.”

The students in CHI 141 met that challenge by interviewing three different groups on campus. The first group conducted oral history interviews with the primary goal to record the dates, key moments, and stories from Latinx alumni and holders of institutional knowledge of UC Davis. A total of 14 interviews and transcriptions were conducted with these UC Davis alumni, staff, and faculty: Sam Blanco, Cirilo Cortez, Mayra Llamas, Lina Mendez, Manuel Barajas, Griselda Castro, Joaquin Galvan, Caroline Cabias, Taty Aguilera, Blas Guerrero, Patricia Gandara, Gloria Rodriguez, Maria Saldana, and Julie Lopez Figueroa.

The students also conducted 14 oral history interviews of the AB540 and Undocumented Student Center founders, scholars, and affiliates to provide a rich historical record of their existence as the first center of its kind in the nation. Additionally, students conducted 19 oral history interviews with local farmworkers to understand their experiences during the pandemic.

On a strictly pedagogical level, the students gained skills in networking, outreach, research and will help with the analysis of the transcripts. Not only did these students have the ability and opportunity to gain valuable mentorship but they also learned how to utilize their networks.

Recovering the Past to Forge Belonging

On an emotional level, the students gained a powerful sense of belonging on campus because they saw themselves as part of a larger struggle as a result of learning about people who had endured and overcome circumstances that were often completely unfamiliar with them. Because the student population is constantly changing, many learned for the first time of the pepper-spray incident, and of incidents of racism at fraternities, and how alone and isolated students in years past have felt.

These empowered students, moreover, shared that their participation and engagement in this research project inspired them to learn other forms of research methodologies that are more aligned with their culture and interests. Many met with campus librarian Robert Delgado to continue their scholarly journey as researchers and to match events mentioned during the oral history interviews with relevant primary sources.

Detail from Malaquias Montoya mural project on the back wall of the Woodland High School's theater building. The project was directed by Artist and Professor, Malaquias Montoya, and completed in six weeks by the UC Davis Art Studio students



Elevating the Work and Urgency of HSI Institutional Transformation

> A team of communicators from across campus collaborated on a comprehensive and coherent three-year plan to help the campus community understand the meaning and benefits of our HSI aspirations. This plan will facilitate more engagement with the campus through social media, answer questions about our progress to becoming an HSI, and contribute to an inclusive climate and culture by amplifying the histories and ideas of Latinx/Chicanx voices on campus.

The 2019 HSI Task Force Report was itself a major vehicle of communication. It catalogued on-going efforts across campus, envisioned what the future might hold as a Research 1 HSI, and articulated important values and recommendations to guide institutional transformation. Two years later, it remains one of the most detailed and comprehensive HSI documents ever issued by a UC campus and serves as a model for institutions of higher learning across the nation as they explore their identity as an HSI or emerging HSI.

The major task before the communications subcommittee is to ensure that the vision of HSI institutional transformation championed by the report remains vigorous and progress toward that change is noted. Toward that end, members of the communications subcommittee spent the months since November drafting a three-year communications plan that builds on and enhances existing campus endeavors including [several high-quality news articles](#) from the university's Strategic Communications office. In addition, [the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's website](#) has a number of pages devoted to the [2019 report](#): one provides a comprehensive list of organizations and units on campus responsible for much of UC Davis' progress in serving Rising Scholars and becoming an HSI; another collects thoughts from members of the original task force, students, staff, faculty, and community members regarding the future of UC Davis as HSI; and a third that links to HSI-related resources beyond campus (Links here: [Pioneros](#), [Testimonios](#), and [Resources](#).)

Like the other subcommittees, the communications subcommittee brought together experts on this particular topic, including Molly Bechtel, the Assistant Director of Communications and Culture, College of Engineering and the Chair of the Staff Assembly; Caroline Cabias, Chicanx Latinx Alumni Association (CLAA); Christopher Macias, a speechwriter in Strategic Communications; Jeanette B. Ruiz, an Assistant Professor of Teaching in Communications; and Tom O'Donnell, a policy analyst in the Office of Academic Diversity

Elevating the Work and Urgency of HSI Institutional Transformation

The subcommittee first developed a communications vision. What did the campus and stakeholders beyond the campus need to know about UC Davis's commitment to become not only a federally-designated Hispanic Serving Institution but a truly Hispanic Thriving Institution? How might they become engaged in this process and understand its relevance for them? With these questions in mind, the subcommittee developed the following communication vision:

- Keep our campus and surrounding community informed about the progress toward our HSI designation
- Raise the profile and significance of UC Davis HSI efforts
- Contribute to a UC-wide inclusive climate and culture through amplifying and archiving the histories, voices, and ideas of our Latinx students, staff, faculty, alumni, and surrounding community members (the student interviews in CHI-141 represented Phase 1 of this objective)
- Educate and inspire the UC Davis community to help realize the vision imagined in the 2019 HSI Task Force Report



Edith Munguia, a landscape architecture major during the painting of the mural in the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility in Woodside, CA. This is the work of a single quarter of students from Chicano Studies Mural Workshop.

Subcommittee members also quickly determined that the current state of UC Davis' HSI initiative on-line, while informative, leaves tremendous room for improvement. Not particularly engaging, it lacks clear messaging and intentionality, has little-to-no social media presence, and is not measured for reach or effectiveness. In response, the subcommittee, in consultation with other task force members, drafted a communication plan that centers clear and intentional messaging to reach defined audiences; aims to disseminate strategically planned content through appropriate and diverse media channels in collaboration with our campus and community partners; and intends to regularly analyze its messaging for effectiveness via available metrics.

Elevating the Work and Urgency of HSI Institutional Transformation

Additionally, the plan outlined an ambitious set of goals for the next academic year.

- Raise awareness about what it means to be an R1 HSI, especially to highlight the opportunities and benefits of becoming a HSI and dispel misperceptions about what it means to be a HSI
- Collect and promote personal stories ("testimonios") related to the future of UC Davis as a HSI
- Build and deploy creative storytelling formats to engage our community and national audiences with the impact and value of our HSI aspirations
- Identify "milestones" to anchor the communication strategy through multiple and ongoing communication campaigns; record and promote historical moments in UC Davis' journey to HSI (recognition of the twentieth anniversary of AB540, for example, will begin to roll out in the fall 2021)
- Foster a strong community of HSI supporters who are engaged and sharing on social media and other communication channels
- Coach and empower HSI communicators to amplify our messaging (because funding is limited for traditional communication campaigns, we must rely on campus and community members to help share and amplify our messaging rather than boosting our messaging through paid communications)

Indeed, precisely because funding is limited, part of the work of the communication teams is to bring attention to the existing campus entities that already support HSI institutional transformation. In addition, to the AB540 and Undocumented Student Center and the Center for Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success, the Student Farm has contributed to creating a culture of belonging for Latinx undergraduates.

Finding Common Ground at the Student Farm

> Staff and students of the Student Farm helped produce a bilingual video about the Farm that honors its history and the experiential learning opportunities it provides students today. The video is designed to foster a sense of belonging for our Latinx/Chicanx students by recognizing their cultural roots and the land-based knowledge shared by many.

Emerging from the retention and persistence subcommittee, this project brought together UC Davis' land-grant mission, and its agricultural history with the desire to make the campus a more welcoming place for Latinx students.

Specifically, this project strengthened outreach to Latinx students through the production of a five-minute bilingual video about the 23-acre Student Farm. The Student Farm honors both UC Davis's origins in 1908 as the University Farm of UC Berkeley, and its land-grant mission, to serve the state of California through teaching and research. Today, it provides multifaceted experiential learning for undergraduates. The video employed the talents of Hector Amezcua (videographer, communications, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences) to reach out to Latinx undergraduates by recognizing their cultural roots and the land-based knowledge shared by many.

Currently in post-production, the video captured interview footage of Natalia Deeb-Sossa (Professor, Chicana/o Studies); Melissa Moreno, (Professor, Ethnic Studies, Woodland Community College); Carol Hillhouse (Director, Student Farm, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences); and Katharina Ullmann, (Director, Student Farm), as well as that of two students—Yissel Martinez and Franklin Cartagena—who were interviewed in mid-June to speak about their experiences at the Student Farm and their interest in agriculture careers more generally.

This project recognized that achieving federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution is void of meaning without sustained efforts made on behalf of serving those enrolled at UC Davis and preventing the hard work of recruiting them from becoming lost through attrition.



Hector Amezcua, Videographer; Katharina Ullmann, Director of the Student Farm; Carol Hillhouse, Associate Director of the Student Farm, Natalia Deeb-Sossa, Professor of Chicana/o Studies; and Melissa Moreno, Professor of Ethnic Studies at Woodland Community College.

Challenges

Following verification of the final enrollment numbers for the 2020-21 academic year, we remained short of achieving the necessary enrollment threshold to be designated a HSI by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The first challenge confronting the campus in terms of HSI institutional transformation is the elusive nature of official HSI status because, minus this ED-approved designation, the ability to apply for HSI-targeted funding, which stands to benefit all Rising Scholars regardless of race or ethnicity, is severely limited.

U.C. Davis Undergraduate Enrollment Categories 2017-2020				
	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Fulltime (FT) Undergraduates	29,284	29,967	30,171	30,186
Parttime (PT) Undergraduates	782	751	811	976
Total Undergraduates	30,066	30,718	30,982	31,162
Less Nonresident Aliens (NRA)				
Fulltime	4,619	5,179	5,091	4,998
Parttime	93	77	102	130
Total NRA Undergraduates	4,712	5,256	5,193	5,128
Hispanic/Latino FT	6,301	6,735	7,010	7,270
Hispanic/Latino PT	148	150	171	219
Total Hispanic/Latino	6,449	6,885	7,181	7,489
Fulltime Undergraduates	29,284	29,967	30,171	30,186
Adjusted PT Undergraduates	316	303	327	394
Undergraduate Fulltime Equivalent (FTE)	29,600	30,270	30,498	30,580
Hispanic/Latino FTE	6,361	6,796	7,079	7,358
% Hispanic/Latino	21.5%	22.4%	23.2%	24.1%
Fulltime Undergraduates Less NRA	24,665	24,788	25,080	25,188
Adjusted PT Undergraduates Less NRA	278	272	286	341
Undergraduate FTE Less NRA	24,943	25,060	25,366	25,529
Hispanic/Latino FTE	6,361	6,796	7,079	7,358
% Hispanic/Latino Less NRA	25.5%	27.1%	27.9%	28.8%

Source: UC Davis, Budget and Institutional Analysis (BIA)

Ironically, the sustained and admirable outreach by UC Davis to students from Spanish-speaking origins domestically and across the globe actually undercuts our ability to reach the 25% Latinx undergraduate enrollment threshold as determined by the Department of Education. When the race/ethnicity of all domestic students, regardless of citizenship is counted, UC Davis reached more than 25% Latinx enrollment in 2017. ED methodology, however, disallows international students from being counted as Latinx and undocumented students from being counted at all. When international student students contribute to the overall campus population but not all Latinx undergraduates contribute to Latinx enrollment, the result (larger denominator, smaller numerator) is disappointing. According to ED's calculations, the Davis campus had 23.2% Latinx enrollment in 2019 and 24.1% in 2020. The figures for 2021 are still unknown.

Nevertheless, given its size and location, UC Davis already enrolls more Latinx students than nearly 90% of formally-designated HSIs. Task force members recognize, moreover, that the campus commitment toward true HSI institutional transformation must continue apart from any particular percentage. Ensuring that UC Davis as a campus provides the resources to ensure the academic success of Rising Scholars is the second challenge articulated by task force members.

Challenges

<i>Annual Sources for Chicanx/Latinx Students & Rising Scholars</i>				
Unit Description	Type	ORG	19-20 Total Annual Sources	20-21 Estimated Annual Sources
<i>College of Letters & Science</i>				
Chicana/Chicano Studies	Department			
Operating budget		CHID	\$ 2,273,000	\$ 2,286,000
Faculty/PI Accounts		CHIF	\$ 76,000	\$ 70,000
Taller Arte del Nuevo Amanecer (TANA)	Program	CTAL	\$ 218,000	\$ 220,000
<i>Student Affairs</i>				
El Centro - Center for Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success	Center	CLR1	\$ 306,000	\$ 345,000
AB 540	Center	USRC	\$ 457,000	\$ 524,000
TOTAL			\$ 3,330,000	\$ 3,445,000

A quick calculation reveals that UC Davis already spends close to \$4.5 million on non-DEI campus endeavors that support the goal of HSI institutional transformation in whole or in part. The sum tallies the budget of Chicana/Chicano Studies, TANA (Taller Arte de Nuevo Amanecer), the AB540 and Undocumented Student Center, the Center for Chicanx and Latinx Academic Student Success, the Center for Educational Effectiveness, and the Student Farm.

The concern articulated by several task force members is whether this funding has kept pace with increasing need. In recent years, the “Introduction to Chicana/o Studies” course typically enrolls as many as 400 students whereas a 2004 version of this course enrolled 150 [4]. The AB540 and Undocumented Student Center has the same number of full-time staff (2) as 6 years ago while the number of undocumented students at UC Davis – who are predominantly Latinx – has nearly quadrupled in the same window of time. In addition, members of the task force worry that vacant staff positions on campus, particularly positions that include community outreach that they consider critical in advancing HSI institutional transformation, have not and may not be replaced. Compounding these concerns is the fact that the 2019 report lists its “Eleven High Priority Items” as action items for 2020. That the 2021 task force made progress on most of them (see “HSI Hot Sheet” in the appendix), does not dispel concerns regarding stagnation.

Ultimately, all of these concerns might be alleviated by dramatically increasing funding, which is exactly what the 2019 report advocated. Yet this scenario seems unlikely given the campus budget situation in the wake of the pandemic. Across campus, positions are not being filled and almost none are being added. One position that was added, however, was that of a new HSI Director.

Triumphs

In a year beset by a pandemic, these triumphs are particularly sweet:

1

HSI Director

In mid-July, the application period for our new HSI Director will close and task force members will move one step closer to hiring an experienced and visionary leader to help realize HSI institutional transformation. The HSI Director will connect individual efforts and elevate what is happening across campus to magnify those efforts such that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We believe, in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, that the goals of our work should be embedded in every unit across campus, and we maintain a similar expectation for our HSI aspirations.

2

Creativity and persistence of task force members

Task force members are deeply committed to UC Davis becoming a first-class R1 HSI that serves Rising Scholars. They are intimately familiar with the workings of this university and they have remained unwavering for what is now three years of task force service. Their tenacity and creativity has kept the HSI initiative moving forward and benefited the campus overall.

3

HACU as a resource

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion played an instrumental role in forging a closer relationship to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the organization that originated the idea of Hispanic Serving Institutions as a means of advancing educational equity. DEI paid for 50 attendees, most of them task force members, to participate in the organization's virtual national conference in October that was organized across several key categories from grants and fundraising opportunities to how to further academic success for Hispanic students. Attendees heard the latest research on these topics and learned of best practices at other HSIs and emerging HSIs. In addition, in April 2021, members of the task force met with congressional representatives during HACU's Capitol Forum. These relationships are critical as the campus keeps exploring ways to prompt the Department of Education to recognize UC Davis as a HSI.

Triumphs

4

Non-ED Grants. Absent the Department of Education formally designating UC Davis an HSI, the campus nevertheless secured three other HSI-related funding opportunities, two from the federal government, and one from the UC Office of the President (UCOP).

- In 2020, UC Davis Professor Karen McDonald (Chemical Engineering) and Dr. Denneal Jamison-McClung (Biotechnology Program Director) became PIs on a UC-HSI Doctoral Diversity Initiative grant, “Advancing Diversity by Educating the Professors of Tomorrow” (ADEPT) to build an academic pipeline from Sacramento State University to UC Davis for students interested in biotechnology and related STEM fields. To encourage pathways to the professoriate, the UC-HSI-DDI program allows UC campuses that are not yet formally HSIs to partner with California State University campuses that are. In this case, the grant funded the establishment of a broad multi-campus mentor network between the two campuses, summer research awards and job shadows, monthly workshops during the academic year and an annual ADEPT Leadership Workshop & Symposium.
- In 2020, Dr. Damon Tull of the Graduate School of Management received National Science Foundation (NSF) funding for a HSI “Strategic Innovation Summit for Advanced Research and Instruction in Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Information Sciences.” On June 21, 2021, in the first installment of this video summit series, Dr. Tull hosted a one-day Zoom conference that convened computing faculty, including UC Davis mathematics professor Naoki Saito, and institutional leaders to exchange ideas and foster partnerships across three areas: curriculum, research, and broadening participation. A similar summit on Quantum Science will occur later this summer. The purpose of both is to enhance HSI participation in the latest AI and QIS initiatives.
- In 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) established a \$75,000 fund with the Student Farm at UC Davis to advertise career opportunities with the NRCS and recruit students for their Hispanic Workforce Development Program. Through workshops and field trips (pre-Covid), and zoom seminars (during the pandemic), a group of students learned about job opportunities at the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Conclusion

With the worst of the pandemic, we all hope, behind us, the members of the Implementation Task Force look forward to an ambitious and productive year, starting this summer.

Seeking funding from non-ED sources remains a priority. A number of grant funding agencies and calls for proposal align with the goal of HSI institutional transformation. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, an agency that task force member Josephine Moreno (Graduate Studies) has built a decades-long relationship with through her work including the Alliance for Multi-campus, Inclusive Graduate Admissions (AMIGA) grant, is looking for proposals that center social justice.

UC-wide, conversations among members of the UC HSI advisory board and the Chicax/Latinx Advisory Council to the UC Office of the President (CLAC) continue about how to leverage a ten-campus system to move forward on HSI institutional transformation at each campus. Closer to home, on-going discussions between the Office of Academic Diversity and local stakeholders center on the possibility of forging regional partnerships with nearby HSIs, including community colleges, as well as local K-12 districts, to strengthen and lengthen the academic pipeline.

The task of HSI institutional transformation also raises questions regarding next steps. Campus task force members are heavily weighted toward the Social Sciences and Humanities. How might this task of HSI institutional transformation converge with STEM disciplines? Any HSI initiative, by definition, is geared toward serving undergraduates. But if UC Davis wants to be a R1 HSI, how might the initiative expand to include graduate students and a greater focus on research in all fields? Add in grant-seeking, relationship-building with regional and national partners, and the numerous goals articulated in the 2019 report that remain unmet, the new HSI Director will face a long list of “to-dos.” The first task will be to decide, in consultation with task force members, what items to prioritize given budget constraints.

We must position UC Davis as a leader among the very few but growing number of R1 HSI universities. UC Davis plays a vital role as an engine of social mobility, educating first-generation college-goers, children of immigrants and the economically disadvantaged. In moving beyond access, our HSI aspirations will enable Rising Scholars to tap into the college-going experience and professional networks that often accompany social mobility, while bringing into those environments their own personal and cultural assets that will move society forward through real cultural and social integration.

End Notes

1. Natalia Deeb-Sossa email to Lorena Oropeza, June 17, 2021.
2. Investing in Rising Scholars and Serving the State of California: What It Means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution, 72.
3. Romero, C. (2015, July). "What we know about belonging from scientific research." Mindset Scholars Network.
4. Miroslava Chávez Garcia e-mail communication with Lorena Oropeza, July 9, 2021.



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Appendix



HSI Phase 2 Implementation Hot Sheet			
Recommendation	Status	Next Steps	Point Person/Advisory
<p>1</p> <p>organization Facilitate task force meetings throughout academic year 2020-21</p>	Completed	Work with new (HSID) to determine scope of 2021-2022 task force meetings and participants	Mark A. López Lorena Oropeza
<p>2</p> <p>organization Create and designate Advisory Groups 1. Recruitment; 2. Retention/Persistence; 3. Communications; 4. Grant Funding [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	Completed Current roster available here	Work with new (HSID) to determine make up and responsibilities of 2021-2022 advisory groups	Mark A. López Lorena Oropeza
<p>3</p> <p>funding Apply for key HSI institutional transformation funding opportunities such as through the U.S. Department of Education or the National Science Foundation. [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	[1] UC-HSI DIDI, McDonald, Jamison-McClung, "Advancing Diversity by Educating the Professors of Tomorrow (ADEPT)"; [2] NSF, Tuill, Strategic Innovation Summit for Advanced Research and Instruction in Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Information Sciences; [3] NSF, Tuill, Visiting Innovative Scholar Research Program for Institutions Orienting to National Needs (VISION); [4] Marceca Cuellar, School of Education, proposal submission, December 2020	- DEI investigating Mellon Foundation grant opportunities - DEI investigating NSF Racial Equity (STEM) grant opportunities	Lorena Oropeza Reneta Tull Mark A. López
<p>4</p> <p>communications Launch Strategic Communications and Fundraising Campaign around HSI, including a campus-wide celebration of our commitment as an HSI leader involving community, alumni, students, faculty and administration. [11 High Priority Activities]</p>		- create database of HSI efforts around campus - develop and publish "mission" statement/vision	
<p>5</p> <p>communications Build out the HSI website as a portal for resources, opportunities, partners and directors that support implementation of the HSI vision. Expand the Testimonios and Pioneers sections to document and acknowledge our journey to HSI status and to tell the stories of our students, staff, faculty and community members. [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	- Ongoing - Communications Subcommittee drafted a communications plan	- Finalize communications plan over the summer - Implement communications plan starting in fall 2021	Lorena Oropeza Thomas O'Donnell Comms Subcommittee
<p>6</p> <p>funding Launch an Innovation Grants program consisting of competitive grants for pilot projects that will advance the goals of this plan.</p>	- Three \$5,000 grants awarded to teams within the Recruitment and Retention & Persistence Subcommittees		Mark A. López Lorena Oropeza
<p>7</p> <p>communications Pursue "Seal of Excelencia"; membership with Hispanic Serving Health Professional Schools; HACU "Thriving" Emerging-HSI</p>	- Ongoing	- Pursue designation during 2021-2022 academic year	Mark A. López
<p>8</p> <p>research Begin Dialogue with UC about a system-wide R1 -HSI Research Institute [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	- Ongoing		Lorena Oropeza
<p>9</p> <p>research Write 3-5 concept papers that expand on the ideas in this plan and lay the foundation for applying for institution-level HSI grant opportunities. [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	- E. Lewis, L. Ceruti, L. Oropeza, T. O'Donnell writing three submissions for American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual conference	- Oropeza to hire summer 2021 GSR to help write "History of HSI at U.C. Davis" paper - DEI team continues to investigate other publishing topics and venues	Lorena Oropeza
<p>10</p> <p>leadership Begin Planning for a first national forum on "What It Means to be a R1 HSI." [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	- Ongoing		Lorena Oropeza
<p>11</p> <p>leadership Convene a first high level meeting with state education leaders and policy makers to start to identify aligned goals to better prepare Rising Scholars in California through the various stages of their education. [11 High Priority Activities]</p>	- Ongoing	- potential build on UCOP committee and meetings - potential overlap with NSF and PROMISE funding	Lorena Oropeza

HSI Phase 2 Implementation Project Report: Rising Scholars in Agriculture Video

In March 2021 we were awarded \$5,000 to develop a 3-5minute video to help students navigate the Student Farm, center student voices, and increase student sense of belonging at UC Davis. Our goal was to increase Rising Scholars' sense of belonging by creating a bilingual video that introduces the Student Farm and celebrates Rising Scholars' experience, cultural roots and land-based learning.

We do not yet have a final video to share, but expect to have a draft by the end of the month and the final product before the end of the summer. Scheduling interviews for Spring Quarter was especially challenging given COVID and many students finishing their degrees. As a result, we do not have any metrics to share.

Over the past two and half months we set up an agreement with Hector Amezcua (videographer, communications, CA&ES) to create the video, worked with project partners and students to outline the video, and captured interview footage of *Natalia Deeb-Sossa*, Professor, Chicana/o Studies, CL&S; *Melissa Moreno*, Professor, Ethnic Studies, Woodland Community College; *Carol Hillhouse* Director, Student Farm, CA&ES, and *Katharina Ullmann*, Director, Student Farm, CA&ES (see images below). Two students will be interviewed on June 16 th – Yissel Martinez (SAFS '2021) and Franklin Cartagena (IAD '2022)— who will be speaking about their experiences at the Student Farm and their interest in agriculture careers more generally. An IAD graduate student Monica Quezada ('21) is also interested in sharing her perspective, but had to reschedule her interview due to being sick.

BUDGET: Of the \$5,000, to date \$0 has been spent – Hector will not submit the invoice until the project is completed and we are still onboarding our paid intern. We request an extension until the end of Fall Quarter 2021 to publish the video, track the number of video views, when possible track the number of partners that use the video, and evaluate student response to the video and its impact on Rising Scholars' sense of belonging through a focus group of Rising Scholars and also through an online evaluation form.

HSI Phase 2 Implementation
Project Summary
Latinx Oral Histories

During phase 1, Spring quarter 2021, we (Natalia and Lina) trained 18 students in Deeb-Sossa's CHI 141 course on oral history interviews, best practices, ethics training, and technological options. They were also introduced to the Student Services Librarian, Roberto Delgadillo as a resources.

During the second phase the students conducted oral history interviews with the primary goal to record the dates, key moments, and stories from Latinx alumni and holders of institutional knowledge of UC Davis. A total of 14 complete interviews and transcriptions including, Sam Blanco, Cirilo Cortez, Mayra Llamas, Lina Mendez, Manuel Barajas, Griselda Castro, Joaquin Galvan, Caroline Cabias, Taty Aguilera, Blas Guerrero, Patricia Gandara, Gloria Rodriguez, Maria Saldana, and Julie Lopez Figueroa. A \$25 amazon gift card was given to each participant for their time and collaboration.

We hired work-study students to help with the transcriptions and data management. The students gained skills in networking, outreach, research and will help with the analysis of the transcripts. Not only did these students have the ability and opportunity to gain valuable mentorship but they also learned how to utilize their networks. The student indicated that their participation and engagement in this research project enabled them to learn other forms of research methodologies that are more aligned with their culture and interests.

We hope that the remaining of the funds can be utilized to pay the two students to complete a draft of a timeline of events based on the information provided by the participants. Collaborating with Roberto Delgadillo to conduct library research on the key events included in the timeline, as well as the Aggie Newspaper and local Davis Enterprise.

Finally, we want to highlight that in CHI 141's course, students conducted 14 oral history interviews of the AB540 and Undocumented Student Center founders, scholars and affiliates to provide a rich historical record of their existence as the first center of its kind in the nation. Additionally, students conducted 19 oral history interviews with local farmworkers to explore what has been their experience during the pandemic.

Budget

Two work-study students working 15 hours per week for 17 weeks at \$15 an hour: \$3,895

**Recruitment Practices during COVID-19:
From Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution to a Hispanic Thriving Institution**

Mayra Nunez Martinez, Graduate Student, School of Education; Marcela Cuellar, Associate Professor, School of Education; Natalia Deeb-Sossa, Professor, Chicana/o Studies; Blas Guerrero, Director of Strategic Diversity Recruitment Initiatives and Transfer Programs; Joseph A Martinez, Student Expression and Campus Activities Coordinator

This project examined the effectiveness of strategic recruitment and outreach efforts to increase Latinx/a/o enrollment and achieve HSI designation in 2020-21 during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts included the Diversity Inclusion and Networking Event (D.I.N.E) for first-year and transfer students, a bilingual webinar for first-year Latinx/a/o students and families, and phone-banking efforts led by student ambassadors. Furthermore, this project highlights students' recommendations on how recruitment and outreach efforts can be more engaging and build a greater sense of community for admitted students and families in a virtual world. Pre-COVID-19, interviews conducted by the research team with students found that 43% of first-generation Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o students identified UC Davis' sense of community as the most important factor in their decision to come to UC Davis. As such, this project examines the extent to which virtual recruitment and outreach efforts provided a sense of community, engaged with students and parents in a meaningful and personal way, and how these events could be improved. This project advances three of the four HSI Goals, in particular the first goal (prepare and attract a broad profile of Rising Scholars to UC Davis), the second goal (ensure that rising scholars have the opportunity to learn, succeed, graduate and thrive), and the fourth goal (harness the University of California collective strengths as a system to transform public higher education).

Virtual Recruitment Efforts

The Undergraduate Admissions' Diversity Initiatives unit and the Center for Student Involvement partnered to purposefully cultivate a virtual environment that would enable newly admitted students to engage with current students and chosen departments to develop a sense of belonging at the point of admission to the university. The D.I.N.E event took place during the first week after students received their admissions notification: 3/24 for first-year students and 4/29 for transfer students. The 9,278 first-year admitted students were invited to attend the first-year event. For the transfer event, the 9,488 transfer student admits were invited. This invitation was also extended to first-year admitted students, making the total population invited 15,452 students. The D.I.N.E. events were virtual student involvement fairs through an online platform, Remo, that allowed incoming students to navigate multiple tables on several different floors. These floors included ethnic/cultural/identity-based groups and arts/performance, academic/professional, advocacy/community service, and ask an Aggie. A screenshot of the event can be found in Appendix A. Current students hosted tables representing their group or resource area. Each of the virtual tables had 1-2 current student hosts and provided an opportunity for up to 6 admitted students to join a table at a time. The hosts talked about their specific student organization and had an opportunity to share their personal story as a student, why they decided to enroll at UC Davis, and ultimately how getting involved could enhance incoming students' social, cultural, and academic performance experience as an Aggie. The target populations included admitted high school students from historically

underrepresented populations (i.e., African/African American, Chicanx/Latinx, Native American, Asian Pacific Islander) and incoming transfer students. Groups that hosted tables signed up and were asked how they could support these populations of incoming students. 50 groups participated in the March 24th event and 58 groups participated in the April 29th event. A list of student organizations that participated in the D.I.N.E event can be found in Appendix B.

The bilingual webinar was a special invitation for Spanish-speaking families of first-year student admits. The description that was sent out to students included that the information that would be presented would be both in English and Spanish. Furthermore, the information provided for students and families included academics, research opportunities, housing, and a welcoming community. The target population for this webinar was all first-year admits that self-identified as Latinx/Other Spanish or Mexican-American/Mexican/Chicanx. 6,381 first-year admitted students were invited to attend the bilingual webinar.

Furthermore, the Undergraduate Admissions' Diversity Initiatives office also led phone-banking efforts where student ambassadors made calls to admitted students to congratulate them on being admitted to UC Davis and to connect them to Aggie Experience Live Events, which included zoom webinars that covered various topics including academics, financial aid, and housing. Through these efforts, students were also able to discuss why they chose UC Davis and answer any questions that the student had. Some of the topics addressed throughout these calls included classes, orientation, housing, academic support, and retention centers. The phone-banking script used by student ambassadors can be found in Appendix C.

Methods

The effectiveness of these efforts was assessed through quantitative and qualitative methods. This included a survey sent out to incoming first-year and transfer students who participated in D.I.N.E. that asked them about their experience with the events. Of the 385 incoming students who attended the sessions, 54 of them completed the survey. The survey included Likert-scale questions that asked students the extent to which they agreed that the event provided an opportunity to engage with current students in a meaningful way, whether they were able to find a sense of community at UC Davis after attending the event, and whether students were able to hold conversations at a personal level while visiting the various clubs. Furthermore, the survey also included open-ended questions that asked for students' feedback regarding improvements for future events, recommendations for virtual engagement, and how to better promote events.

The effectiveness of these efforts was also evaluated by conducting interviews with student admits who participated in the D.I.N.E event and a focus group with student ambassadors who participated in outreach and recruitment efforts. Twelve students who participated in D.I.N.E and self-identified as Latinx/Other Spanish or Mexican-American/Mexican/Chicanx indicated they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview. We recruited four students to share their experiences with us in an interview. Of these, two students are incoming first-year students and two are incoming transfer students. A focus group was also conducted with four student ambassadors. They were asked questions about the strengths and/or weaknesses of UC Davis' outreach efforts, their experience with the phone-banking initiative, and what recommendations they had for admissions representatives and staff at other institutions who want to reach out to their Latinx/a/o admits and families in a virtual platform over the next few years.

Finally, we also examined the bilingual webinar that was offered for students and parents. From the 189 students who registered, about 71% of those registered for the bilingual webinar attended the event (n=135). To assess whether the webinar catered to students' and parents' questions about UC Davis, the pre-submitted questions from participants were analyzed and topics were identified. General topics included campus features (i.e., academics/extracurriculars available, room and board, major/career opportunities), finances (i.e., financial aid and cost), and transition and support.

Findings

The following section includes quantitative and qualitative insights that demonstrate that the outreach and recruitment efforts were overall successful in building a sense of community by increasing student engagement which positively impacted some students' decisions to come to UC Davis and connecting admitted students to current students through a virtual format. However, it is also important to note the challenges that came with these outreach efforts, including accessing and navigating an unfamiliar virtual platform and lack of outreach for parents (English speaking and monolingual Spanish speaking). As such, these findings also include recommendations from students on how to better improve these efforts to address these challenges.

Impact of Outreach Efforts on Students' College Decisions

To highlight, 56% of those who participated in the first-year event SIR'ed to UC Davis and 89.4% of students who participated in the transfer event SIR'ed to UC Davis. For students who self-identified as either Latinx/Other Spanish or Mexican-American/Mexican/Chicanx, we see similar percentages for those that SIR'ed and attended the event: 56.7% of students who participated in the first-year event and 86.9% who participated in the transfer event SIR'ed to UC Davis.

Through the open-ended survey responses and interviews, some students expressed that this opportunity validated and solidified their decision to come to UC Davis. For example, students stated: "I really enjoyed just how informative it was, and it really helped me make the decision to commit to UC Davis" and "It was truly informative and made me more confident in my choice of UC Davis." Through an interview, a student who attended the first-year event stated that they felt that UC Davis cared about making sure that their admitted students were informed and knew about all the services they provided. They stated the following:

For the most part everyone's super nice and informative and I did I did, like in deciding about Davis, I did think the event as a whole was really nice because it was like something, one of the main reasons why I chose Davis was because they've proven like, I don't know over this whole experience that they really like care about informing and like I don't know and not necessarily recruiting but, just like showing that there have all these services and like they want you, and things like this, where you like doing events where like you're trying to engage your applicants or you're admitted students was really nice where it's like Okay, they they want me to know everything that's going on, so I can make the best decision you know and and it really helped.

This student also appreciated the opportunity to obtain the contact information from student hosts at the D.I.N.E. event and student representatives from the admissions office. When the student was asked who weighed in their college decision, the student stated that they first reached out to students from the D.I.N.E. event to ask questions about UC Davis, followed by contacting student representatives from the admissions office and finally relying on their own research and personal friends to make the decision.

This shows the importance of connecting with current students, especially for students who may not be familiar with UC Davis.

While these findings demonstrate the significant impact that the D.I.N.E event had on some students' college decisions, a student also compared UC Davis' outreach efforts with those of other campuses that they were admitted to. A transfer student explained that UCSB had not reached out after hearing about their admission and UCI only had pre-recorded videos that were not engaging or interactive. While UCLA did provide a conference to connect with faculty, the student expressed that this felt like a one-sided conversation. With regards to UC Davis' outreach efforts, the student stated the following:

So I would say UC Davis did the most and the best because there's just so many, so many, different avenues to seek out the information and I, and I do feel like, once I get to Davis I'll immediately go to like the the the Transfer Center and I'll be able to recognize like the students who were in the Q & A and, like, I still remember their names or some of their names and already I feel like kind of a sense of community.

This student mentioned that students from the Transfer Center shared various research opportunities that made them feel excited and confident about continuing to do research upon enrolling in the Fall.

Importance of Connecting with UC Davis' Students

The quote above shows the importance of connecting with UC Davis students even before stepping foot on campus. When asked what students enjoyed the most about the D.I.N.E events, students emphasized the importance of connecting with currently enrolled students. When asked whether students could engage in a meaningful way with current students, 96% of students who responded to the D.I.N.E survey indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed. Furthermore, 81% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that they had conversations on a personal level. 89% of respondents also indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that, after attending the event, they could find a sense of community at UC Davis.

In the interviews, students stated that they appreciated the staff as they were knowledgeable about UC Davis and found them helpful throughout the event; however, the majority of responses in both the interviews and survey indicated that students enjoyed having the opportunity to speak directly with current students to learn more about their experiences and ask questions. A transfer student stated, "speaking with the students again it was like a first-hand like recount of like their experiences at the school and what they liked about it, what they didn't like about it, and it was very honest and very sincere." While focused on networking with student organizations, this event served as a platform for students to receive answers from the perspective of students regarding transitioning to UC Davis, housing, majors, and research opportunities. The following student quote further captures this:

Okay, this is like a place for you to speak with students and honestly, I don't know because I think, maybe before clubs, it would have been more interesting because I think what we ended up talking about wasn't about the clubs, you know it was about the student life, like academic experiences, so like I ended up talking about the major a lot. We ended up talking about like just everything about what it's like to live and go to school.

This has important implications in thinking about the types of events provided for students and the extent to which these events offer opportunities to connect directly with other students. This showed to be important for students to learn about organizations on campus and get their questions answered.

Furthermore, being able to connect with students eased students' fears and provided reassurance. One transfer student stated:

I'm actually very like scared because...I'm moving like six hours away. And like I don't know how the campus is...I don't know much about the actual campus life. I know what I've read on like online stuff, but another thing is to actually speak to students or like ask questions and students having them answered, I felt like oh okay like I'm not as anxious anymore.

Considering that many students may not have the opportunity to visit campus and/or have to move far away from home to attend UC Davis, we must consider efforts that provide this reassurance for students, especially for first-generation students and families who need this reassurance when making their college decisions.

Building Personal Connections through Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Efforts

Recruitment and outreach efforts must be cultivated with intentionality and center Latinx/a/o students' and families' needs. The bilingual webinar is an example of intentional recruitment efforts that acknowledge the importance of including parents and family in students' college decision process by using culturally and linguistically relevant practices. Overall, preliminary analyses show that the topics covered in the webinar aligned well with the pre-submitted questions from participants. A few modifications could further enhance it. A discussion on how classes and learning would occur given the COVID-19 pandemic would have addressed some of the pre-submitted questions asked by participants. Furthermore, this event was only offered for first-year students. Therefore, this event should be expanded and offered to transfer students as well as many of these students and their families may be learning about UC Davis for the first time. For many transfer students, this is the first time they may be leaving home to attend college, so providing reassurance for these students and families is critical.

Providing translated information is not enough in establishing personal connections with students and parents. In addition to providing information in Spanish, the staff and a guest speaker that participated in the webinar shared their personal experiences navigating college as first-generation students with the participants. They also stressed the importance of community and support available for Latinx/a/o students on campus. Furthermore, it is important that those doing these efforts be open to sharing their personal experiences with students, which a student ambassador identified as being essential to connecting with students on a personal level and building trust. They state:

I had to share a lot about me that I didn't, that I didn't know that I was going to have to. So there's a lot of boundaries that you have to, you have to be you have to be comfortable with breaking down because if you want to reach that population, they're also going to be really guarded and so like you have to share, you have to make it personal to the students...in order to trust you, you're going to have to give up a little bit of yourself.

This student also emphasized the importance of being aware of the Latinx/a/o culture. Another student ambassador shared similar sentiments when they described the importance of being able to relate to students through shared experiences, such as being a first-generation, low-income student of color. This emphasizes the importance of being intentional in who is at the forefront of these outreach and recruitment efforts as connecting with students and families on a personal level requires individuals to be open and willing to share about themselves to build and cultivate these relationships effectively.

When asked about their views on UC Davis' recruitment and outreach efforts, one of the student ambassadors stated:

I think one of the bigger strengths, is that...outreach seems to be more personal, I don't know about, like other cultures, but specifically with Latinx/a/o populations, I feel like it's really tailored towards our culture in like what happens in our culture and the ways that are, or how we view college, and so I think that that has really helped out.

This further emphasizes the importance of being culturally and linguistically aware when reaching out to students and families. A student ambassador identified using inclusive language as an important part of these efforts through their phone-banking efforts. While a script was provided for students to use during the phone calls to students, a student ambassador expressed their surprise when a student's family would pick up the phone. They admitted that they felt unprepared when speaking to Spanish-speaking families. As a response, the student ambassador translated their script and made sure that the language that was being translated was inclusive and translated properly into Spanish. This was important as the student expressed that families asked questions regarding housing, meals, deadlines, and classes. Furthermore, parents also expressed concerns about their students having to move far away from their home, who their professors would be, and students not eating. Being able to connect with both students and families is essential. For example, had the student not known Spanish, this could have been a missed opportunity to connect to parents and offer them some reassurance about their student coming to UC Davis.

Student Recommendations

Overall, these findings show that these events had a positive impact on students' college decisions, connecting with other students on a personal level and in a meaningful way, and finding a sense of community. However, there are some challenges that students noted while engaging in these efforts. The following provides a discussion of these challenges and student recommendations to address these challenges and improve these efforts.

Increasing student and parent engagement

Access to the event and not knowing how to navigate the platform played a role in students' engagement. When students were asked what they least liked about the event, some students expressed having a hard time connecting to the platform and navigating it once they were there. After resolving computer issues with the platform and accessing the platform, one student expressed that going into the event made them feel unprepared and anxious when they were automatically placed at a random table. They state:

I was like, oh I don't even know who you are. I don't know what table I'm at. I don't know how the controls work. So it took me a while like they would be like hello hello, I would be like, I'm like I couldn't communicate with them that I was struggling trying to find how the system worked itself.

To improve this, students who attended both the first-year and transfer event recommended clearer instructions and support in how to navigate the platform, having a tutorial or how-to video that explained how to use the platform and what to expect, and providing a list of clubs that would be attending the event. While D.I.N.E provided various time slots for students to sign up to join the event, students who participated in the transfer event were more likely to recommend that the event be held at different times due to schedule conflicts than those that participated in the first-year event.

An important part of increasing student engagement in these activities is understanding how to increase student participation, especially as a small subset of those invited to the event registered and attended the event. In the survey, one student noted that they believed that the online format might have

been why there was limited student participation. One of the student ambassadors expressed this same concern when thinking about the phone banking efforts. They mentioned that they felt there was a higher level of disconnect when connecting with students via phone compared to connecting with them in person. When asked how to improve participation, students who attended the first-year and transfer events emphasized the importance of promoting the event to ensure students were aware of the event. They recommended that the event should be advertised more and identified emails and social media as the best way to market the event. Some of the recommendations to better promote the event included adding pictures and students' feedback about the event to the event email and explaining what students would get out of the event if they attended. Through an interview, an incoming first-year student also expressed some confusion when first seeing the name of the D.I.N.E. event, especially as they did not know who they would be networking with or what they would be expected to do. This is important to consider, as, for many students, networking is something new and unfamiliar.

Increasing engagement also requires understanding how to improve student interactions while engaging in these events. While one student expressed the importance of asking questions, they stated that table hosts should be provided with prompts to help support the conversation if students did not have questions. For example, the student said that some hosts would simply ask whether students had any questions about the club rather than welcoming and engaging in a conversation with students who joined their tables. This is also very important when thinking about students who would like to learn more about the university and may not know what questions to ask but may still be seeking information about the campus.

Parent engagement is also crucial in outreach efforts, yet students who were interviewed indicated that they felt a lack of parent outreach in these efforts. Students emphasized the importance of recruitment and outreach efforts for parents in the interviews and focus group, especially for immigrant parents and for parents whose students are first-generation. A transfer student stated:

My parents again they're not fully on board, yet, but I think that if there were more programs like that cater to them, they'd probably be more at ease, because...UCI is the only UC that we've ever been exposed to because of my aunt and that's why we're all very much, inclined to that school and Davis is new and different, and I think newness and differentness is scary, especially in the in an immigrant family.

Some of the recommended activities to increase student and parent engagement emphasize the importance of in-person efforts for increasing engagement such as providing opportunities for parents and admitted students to stay on campus and holding parent conferences at high schools where parents are provided information about UC Davis and reassurance of students' safety on campus. However, a student also expressed the importance of keeping some of the outreach efforts online due to distance and accessibility for those located farther away or out of state. A student also highlighted the importance of considering parents' availability and what this could mean for future events through an interview. They explained that parents in their community often work at various times, including the night shift, which may prevent parents from participating in events. They recommended that the events be offered at various times for parents to increase participation. Language is also an important consideration, not only for parents but students as well. When asked how to improve future events, a student who attended the transfer D.I.N.E. stated the following: "Maybe have people bilingue. There is many people who are still learning English and they always give a great information and it will be better for us to understand everything." This further validates the importance of using culturally and linguistically relevant efforts to increase student and parent engagement.

Building a sense of community

When asked to rank why students wanted to get involved in student organizations, finding a sense of community ranked the most overall compared to other reasons, followed by getting involved on campus, getting academic support, and networking with other students. This further validates the importance of developing future events that focus on building a sense of community. When asked how we can better build a greater sense of community, a student emphasized the need to reach out to parents. Through the interview, the student stated that student panels were great and that a similar event should be held for parents, particularly that parents whose students were admitted the previous year should serve as panelists for parents of recently admitted students as this would be validating and provide reassurance for parents. Furthermore, another student stressed the importance of in-person efforts such as increasing more high school visitations where recruiters can provide information about UC Davis to students. The importance of this is supported by the following comment from one of the student ambassadors:

There's like a really big gap between when we first do outreach like oh come to UC Davis, like I don't think that there's enough outreach for like, apply to UC Davis, and this is how you can apply, rather than like okay you've applied now come join us, I think that there's kind of a big gap there.

This suggests that recruitment and outreach efforts should not only be focused on targeting admitted students but should also include providing support for students in their application process, including providing more information about UC Davis to make that a possibility for students who may not be exposed to UC Davis. Furthermore, a student indicated that to build a greater sense of community, events should first provide opportunities to speak to students about any questions they may have such as student life and academic experiences even before they provide events to learn about clubs and organizations on campus. They emphasized the importance of continuing these efforts even after the acceptance deadline. Overall, students agreed that UC Davis was doing a great job with outreach efforts, especially emphasizing the opportunity to speak and connect with students, which was shown to support building a sense of community for students.

Conclusion

While centering innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic in UC Davis' recruitment and outreach efforts has positively impacted students, it is important to note the many challenges that students highlighted that come with these efforts. Comparing the number of students who were invited to those that registered and attended suggests that there may be additional challenges that may have prevented students and families from engaging in these efforts. Some of the challenges may include the digital divide, language barriers, and access to events due to schedule conflicts. Therefore, doing virtual recruitment should always be a second option. It is important to further examine why participants may not have decided to register and/or attend, especially considering how accessible and culturally relevant these events are. It is also important to further evaluate whether personal connections can be made virtually, some of the challenges in making these personal connections, and what may be lost while engaging in outreach efforts remotely. Students' emphasis on connecting with students and the importance of students sharing similar backgrounds to make these connections calls for more direct involvement of students in the recruitment and outreach process and compensating them for their time to engage in these efforts.

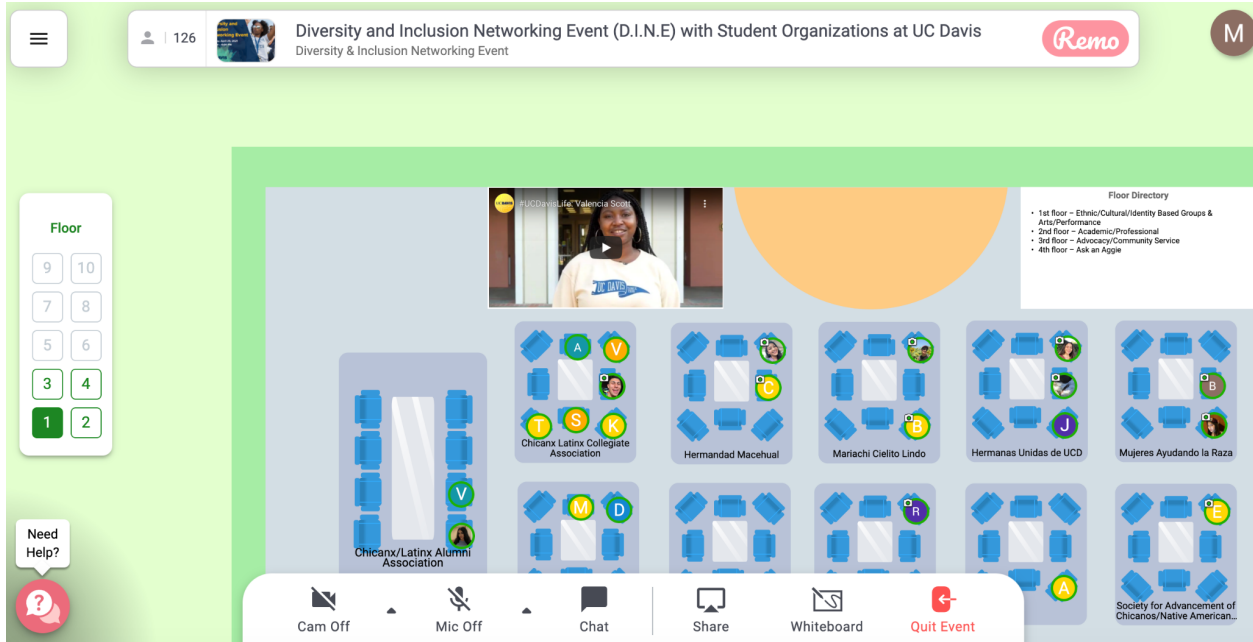
An important limitation of the feedback obtained from the student interviews is that the perspectives captured reflect students who have committed to UC Davis. To better understand why

students may not be deciding to come to UC Davis, future work should capture the perspectives of students who attended these events and decided to enroll elsewhere, especially considering that the feedback for these events was overall positive. Due to time constraints, a deeper analysis of students' responses using disaggregated data was not possible. However, a deeper dive is necessary to understand the nuances that influence students' college decisions. This could be done through cross-referencing individual students' responses throughout the whole process to better understand what things mattered for them in their decision and how these could be incorporated into future recruitment and outreach efforts.

Overall, students highlighted the importance of speaking directly with students and increasing parent engagement through in-person activities, especially for immigrant parents and parents of first-generation students. This includes activities being accessible, culturally and linguistically relevant, and intentional. This intentionality extends beyond virtual recruitment strategies and includes going directly into the communities to make these connections. Students must see themselves at these institutions. This might be difficult given the loss of Latinx/a/o staff, especially in key roles of outreach and recruitment, which makes the following questions crucial to this work: What is being done to make this work sustainable? What kind of support and resources is the university providing for Latinx/a/o staff to envision and carry out recruitment and outreach efforts that support the HSI initiatives? Without institutional support and resources, the priorities and recommendations set forth in the 2019 HSI Taskforce Report will not be achieved.

Appendix A

Screenshot of the D.I.N.E event after logging in to Remo



Appendix B

List of student organizations that participated in the D.I.N.E event

<p>Afghan Student Association Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Asian American Association at UC Davis Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs at UC Davis Ask An Aggie - College of Biological Science Ask An Aggie - College of Letters and Science Ask An Aggie - Involvement on Campus AvenueE Campus Recreation Center for Chicax and Latinx Academic Student Success Center for Leadership Learning Chicax Latinx Alumni Association Chicax Latinx Collegiate Association Climate Reality Project Campus Corps at UC Davis Club Finance Council Colleges Against Cancer Davis College Democrats Davis Newman Catholic Center Food Tech Club Guitar Club Hermanas Unidas de UCD Hermandad Macehual ICC/Native Nest Kendo Club at UC Davis Leaders of Achievement in Biological Sciences (LABS) , promoting Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program (BUSP) Let's Talk about Downtown Davis Living Learning Communities Malaysian Student Organization Mariachi Cielito Lindo</p>	<p>Mechanism Press Morning Sign Out Mujeres Ayudando la Raza My State of Mind National Association for Music Education at UC Davis National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences Net Impact Davis Nishkam Sewa at UC Davis Period at Davis Project Catalyst Prep Medico Recognizing Illnesses Very Early and Responding Slavic Association So K-Pop Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Native Americans and Native Americans in Science The Justice Initiative at UC Davis Transfer Edge Transfer Research Society Transfers Engaging in Aggie Mentorship Tzu Chi Collegiate Association at UC Davis UC Davis Club Triathlon Practice UC Davis Fencing Club Vietnamese Cancer Awareness Research and Education Society Virtual Youth Buddies at UC Davis Women in Computer Science Women In Science Society at UC Davis Yoga Club at UC Davis Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated. Zeta Nu Chapter</p>
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Appendix C

Script for UC Davis 2021 Yield Phone Banking

Hello, I am an Ambassador with Undergraduate Admissions my name is _____ and I am a FR, SO, JR or SR at UC Davis and I am trying to reach _____. **Wait for the student to confirm or come to the phone.** I am calling to ask if you had any questions about UC Davis and also remind you that there are still many other events you can take part in by going to our Beyond Aggie Experience website.

Beyond Aggie Experience: <https://ua.ucdavis.edu/portal/fael-beyond>

Remind them SIR Deadline is May 1st and they can only SIR to one UC.

Have you ever visited UC Davis before? Can I answer any questions for you?

NOTE: Do not answer any Financial Aid question, we are not financial aid and don't want to give wrong information. We also don't want to answer any questions about grade changes, send those to the UA Admissions "Ask an Advisor". For more FAQ look at the document in the drive.

If you come across any Native American students, please mention the following:

- April Coffee Talk on April 14th, to participate they can text 530-219-9735 and they will receive a "snack pack"; podcast link and the time for the event.
 - Text their full name and "April Coffee Talk"

For any of our African American Students please promote the:

- African Continuum Event, April 15th at 4:00pm

If student doesn't answer leave a voicemail:

Hi this message is for _____. My name is _____ and I am a current UC Davis student and a Ambassador with UC Davis Undergraduate Admissions and I am calling to encourage you to sign up for our Aggie Experience Live events this week and our California Meet and Greet starting on April 5th ! You can find more information on our website admissions.ucdavis.edu. During Aggie Experience Live you will have a chance to learn more about UC Davis and all the cool virtual events that will be taking place over the next few weeks. We hope to see you online!

TOPIC TO DISCUSS:

- **Classes**
 - 80% of classes will be offered virtually
 - Limited impact on first-year
 - 20% may require attendance but with limited exposure to other students (i.e. smaller class sizes)
 - If it is in person it will be very flexible and professors have to give them the option

- Reach out to professors directly if there is still no location
- **Orientation – Make sure you attend your Orientation. Have you already attended? Have you signed up for a session? Any questions about Orientation?**
 - All Orientations will be “virtual” this summer
 - Contact an Advisor for questions or concerns. Email communication will probably work best (orientation@ucdavis.edu)
- **Housing:**
 - Majority of residence halls will be doubles and singles
 - Questions about their housing contract, deposits, roommates, dorm assignment – they should contact housing via email ASAP (studenthousing@ucdavis.edu)
- **Academic Support**
 - Strongly encourage students to utilize the Academic Support Center
 - Tutoring available online
 - Great place to get help with coursework and papers
- **Retention Centers -**
 - Will all be providing services this fall in person and/or virtual, strongly encouraging the students to review the Center Website to take advantage of all the support services.
 - Center for African Diaspora Student Success (CADSS)
 - Center for Chicanx Latinx Student Success (El Centro)
 - Native American Student Success Center (The Nest)