

Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)

Introduction

Latinx students are the fastest growing group of students at Montgomery College. Students that identify as being Hispanic/Latinx have families that have travelled from various countries in Latin America; mostly from El Salvador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, according to the Urban Institute. Our community is changing with English as a Second Language classes (ESL) increasing in local elementary schools, community centers, and at Montgomery College.

On November 4, 2019, in Dr. Pollard's President's Corner, MC2025: Looking to the Next Chapter, she stated, "Hispanic student enrollment grew an extraordinary six percent—from 18 percent of the total in 2012, to 24.5 percent in 2019." According to the College's Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, the 2014 and 2015 IPEDS student cohorts at Montgomery College reflected 16.4% and 17.4% graduation rates for Latinx students respectively, versus 23% and 22% graduation rates for the College overall. For the fall 2018 cohort, of the 1,189 Latinx students, 40.5% had a grade point average of less than 2.0: 16.4% of the group had a grade point average of 0.0.

According to the Student Success Score Card for fall 2014, overall the Latinx population, 513 students, graduated at 18.1%. In terms of radical inclusion, Montgomery College will have to create an environment where Latinx students are succeeding academically, emotionally and socially because the data clearly shows a high need for support at all levels.

According to a study done by the School of Public Health at the University of Maryland: The Promise of Latino Youth in Montgomery County, between 2000 and 2017, Montgomery County's Latino population has increased by 90%, the largest growth of any minority group. The summary of the findings of this study are alarming. The two bullets below are taken directly from the study:

- Latino youth in Montgomery County report high academic motivation, high academic expectations, and a positive outlook for the future, which diminish as they get older and/or face significant challenges.
- In actuality, Latino youth in Montgomery County are exceptionally vulnerable, facing significant barriers to success in their studies, work, and life: starting school

unprepared for kindergarten, reading below grade level throughout elementary school, experiencing the school system's highest dropout rates, struggling to earn a post-secondary credential, and experiencing high rates of adversity and psychological distress.

The Promise of Latino Youth study also found that in Montgomery County a quarter of public high school students go to Montgomery College (MC) but only 10% of Latinos earn an associate's degree within three years. Latino students require remedial math in 87% of cases and 50% require remedial English. With these additional remedial courses, students may opt for dropping out of college because of the additional financial burden. The study also found that 25% of Latinos age 25 and older in Montgomery County have a Bachelor's Degree, as compared to 71% of White residents and 43% of Black residents. The Center on Education and the Workforce states that by the year 2020, 69% of the jobs in Maryland will require a college education, leaving our Latino residents out of jobs.

According to Excelencia in Education, Latino adults have a lower degree attainment than all adults in Maryland; Latino students have a lower graduation rate compared to Whites in Maryland; and the top institution graduating Hispanics in Maryland awarded degrees to a little over 500 Hispanics. Below are the findings.

Enrolling: Top Institutions (Hispanic Undergraduates) in Maryland, 2015-2016

RANK	INSTITUTION	SECTOR	GRAND TOTAL	HISPANIC TOTAL
1	Montgomery College	Public 2-year	25,517	5,440
2	University of Maryland University College	Public 4-year	35,154	3,859
3	University of Maryland College Park	Public 4-year	27,056	2,490
4	Prince Georges' Community College	Public 2-year	13,678	1,340
5	Towson University	Public 4-year	18,807	1,115

Associates Degrees: Top Institutions Awarding to Hispanics in Maryland, 2015-2016

RANK	INSTITUTION	SECTOR	GRAND TOTAL	HISPANIC TOTAL
1	Montgomery College	Public 2-year	2,662	492
2	University of Maryland University College	Public 4-year	1,095	171
3	Anne Arundel Community College	Public 2-year	1,852	110
4	The Community College of Baltimore County	Public 2-year	2,200	79
5	Howard Community College	Public 2-year	1,165	73

Montgomery College is in a unique position to offer students options on their degree attainment while allowing students to get the financial aid they need with programs such as the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship and the Maryland Dream Act. The Office of Equity and Inclusion, in the Office of the President is committed to increasing the number of Latino students at Montgomery College that have a positive college experience and with that the topic of HSIs has come to the forefront. What is an HSI and how will it benefit our Latinx student population?

Background on Hispanic Serving Institutions

According to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) is defined as an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution; and has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application.

HSIs were created by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) in 1986 which served as a leader in the process of persuading Congress to formally recognize HSIs and allow for federal appropriations. Each year the number of HSIs change because the eligibility to become one is predicated on enrollment. Although Montgomery College is on the list as an HSI by HACU we are not a certified institution under the Department of Education. According to HACU, "Title V eligibility is determined by the US Department of Education as the first step in the application process for a Title V grant. Title V of the Higher Education Act facilitates federal funds targeted to HSIs. If the College has a full-time equivalent enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 25% Hispanic students and not less than 50 percent of all students are eligible for need-based Title IV aid, it should be an eligible institution for Title V." Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 deals with student financial aid programs in the United States.

HSIs have a success track rate proven by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) which examined enrollment and outcomes of students who start college at HSIs and other minority serving institutions. They found:

- Exclusively full-- time students at public four-- year HSIs complete within six years at a rate of 74.1 percent, compared to 42.7 percent using the federal graduation rate.
- Exclusively full-- time students at private four-- year HSIs had a six-- year completion rate of 77.9 percent, compared to the federal rate of 49.1 percent.
- Exclusively full-- time students at two-- year public HSIs had a four--year completion rate of 40.3 percent compared to the federal four-- year completion rate of 25.5 percent.

There are 3 discretionary grants to support HSIs that are offered by the U.S. Department of Education:

Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) Program provides grants to assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of Hispanic students. These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality and institutional stability. The purpose is to:

- To expand educational opportunities for; and improve the academic attainment of Hispanic students; and
- Expand and enhance the academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability of the colleges and universities that educate the majority of Hispanic students.

Hispanic Serving Institutions Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (HSI STEM) and Articulation Program - The purpose of the Hispanic Serving Institutions Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (HSI STEM) and Articulation Programs is to:

- Increase the number of Hispanic and other low-- income students attaining degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics; and
- To develop model transfer and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year institutions in such fields.

Promoting Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) Program provides grants to:

- Expand post-baccalaureate educational opportunities for, and improve the academic attainment of Hispanic students; and
- Expand the post-baccalaureate academic offerings as well as enhance the program quality in the institutions of higher education that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic and low income students complete postsecondary degrees.

Process of Becoming an HSI

Becoming an HSI requires a cadre of MC professionals at different levels of the College that will help make up a task force focused on preparing MC to better support Latinx students. This task force creation was a recommendation of Dr. Gina Garcia, a well-known HSI consultant. The task force's main function will be to help lead our school with data, and a vision towards HSI status under the Department of Education in order to have access to federal grants that will provide technical assistance to our students.

A proposed timeline of this process:

- November 2019 – January 2020 – Check in with the Department of Education website to find out eligibility for grants. There is a matrix that they follow which helps determine eligibility for different grants.
- January – March 2020 – recruit task force members that will lead the preparation efforts of ‘Becoming an HSI for Montgomery College’.
- March – May 2020 -- creation of official task force at Montgomery College which must include an academic department that will participate in the grant-- writing process, and staff person from the Grants office department.
- May 2020 – October 2020 – receive technical assistance from the Department of Education on grants that we qualify for and consult with SALT on next steps.

Conclusion

Starting the conversation on ‘Becoming an HSI’ is a critical first step in helping to support our Latinx students which currently lag behind other student groups in regards to educational attainment. If we successfully become an HSI, the coveted title will help increase our numbers and academic achievement success rates of Latinx students.

We still have a long road ahead as we create the HSI task force at the College and officially begin the process. The grants under HSIs are very competitive with only about 180 from about 500 HSIs getting grant money, according to Beatriz Ceja, HSI division director. This becomes especially important with the current political climate that many would view as anti-immigrant, anti-diversity, and anti-inclusion.

Montgomery College as an HSI will enable Latinx students to become educated and active members in the community and workforce.

Resources

“The Promise of Latino Youth in Montgomery County,” University of Maryland School of Public Health, Department of Family Science, October 2018.

“A Closer Look at Hispanic-- Serving Institutions.” Higher Education Today, a blog by American Council on Education, September 2017.

“White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics,” U.S. Department of Education.

“HSI Origin Timeline,” Excelencia in Education Research and Data.

“State of Latinos in the District of Columbia,” Urban Institute, August 2010.

Data from Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness and the President’s Corner, Montgomery College.