



Defining Servingness:

A Critical Evaluation of the Extent to which Texas Tech University Serves Latinx Students

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Acknowledgments

Sebastian Contreras, Jr.

I didn't know it when I started college at the University of Iowa in 1992, but my first steps on that campus as a son of immigrant parents, the ninth of 10 children, and a low-income, first-generation college student would be the beginning of this doctoral degree journey. While this accomplishment has taken me 31 years, the experiences that have gotten me here have been well worth it.

First, I need to acknowledge, celebrate, honor, and name my late father, Sebastian Contreras, and my mom, Rosa Contreras. Decades ago, with just an understanding of hard work, commitment to family, selflessness, and desires to give their children a better life than what they had, they made the courageous decision to leave everything and everybody they knew to move hundreds of miles away to a strange land called Illinois. But by the grace of God and the brave, tenacious spirits of my parents, I am here and able to call myself Dr. Contreras, Jr. Estoy bien orgulloso de ustedes y la vida que construyeron. Por todos los sacrificios, los consejos, la confianza en mí, el apoyo, los abrazos, y la inspiración, estoy eternamente agradecido. Los quiero con todo mi corazón y te extraño tanto papá.

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Valerie Yvonne Law

I have spent the last eight years working in the secondary education sector, all of which have been in a high-performing public school district. While the district is one of the fastest growing in my home state, Black and Latinx students comprise the smallest student populations, 11% and 12%, respectively. Conversely, the district's Black and Latinx populations maintain the most significant deficit in standardized test scores. Driven by a desire to assuage the missed-educational opportunities for those marginalized, I joined various diversity committees focused on the issues that challenge the district's diverse demographics. Unfortunately, the results of these committee meetings habitually focused on the students and their engagement or lack thereof. In addition, upon returning to a "new normal" and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a notable change in students' behaviors. These changes coincided with a shift in student demographics. My campus' nonwhite and non-Asian populations increased by about 4 percent collectively. And it was this demographic change that teachers and staff lamented as the cause of negative student behaviors. Unfortunately, the difference in student behaviors across the campus confirmed bias and assumptions made by the campus' predominately white staff and stagnated any gains made through DEI initiatives.

As a Black woman whose educational experiences mirror the struggles and demographics of my current career setting, my background informs my understanding of the challenges students, educators, and leaders encounter when faced with poignant racial inequities. At the same time, as a Black woman whose educational experiences mirror the struggles and demographics of my current career setting, I responded by making myself smaller—sometimes quieter to assimilate into environments that never looked like me. However, I was recently wounded by the need for the Black Lives Matter movement. I was left wondering how much of my complacency—acceptance—silence enabled the devaluing of Black lives. And now, as a liaison between my white counterparts—who do not see me as Black enough to be insulted by their racist rhetoric—and Black students, who “are not smart enough” for my AP classes and/ or who are not quite sure if I am Black enough to understand their struggles, I refuse to be small or quiet. This capstone and the choice of topic Sebastian and I explored, in effect, is the beginning of my commitment to being a voice for those without one, so that my experiences do not continue to be the norm.

My goal throughout this project was not only to assist Texas Tech leaders in doing the hard work of exploring organizational change, but I also wanted to learn the discourse used at and accepted by predominately white institutions. I want to understand how they excel or fail to cultivate a social justice climate for diverse learners. Once understood, I hope to leverage that knowledge, speak up, and speak in to spaces, like my current district, that are predominantly white but must make space for changing demographic landscapes.

Nevertheless, when I think back on this endeavor, I know in my heart that I am deeply indebted to my incredible family for their endless support and patience. To my wonderful husband, DeRan, for providing space and encouragement to get this done; my two beautiful and fearless daughters, Jadon Elise and Morgan Michelle, for being my motivation and unknowing thinking partners-- even when what I was saying made little sense for their worlds; and to my perfect and steadfast mom, Yvonne, for giving me her time, her wisdom, and advice. Thank you. You are my blessing! Thank you to the host of professors and colleagues who challenged me yet motivated me to keep going, specifically sj Miller and my capstone advisor Michael Neel. And a special thank you to Sebastian, I believe you and I were destined to be together for this journey from the beginning—I appreciate your consistently being a space for me to grow and think. I appreciate your candor, laughter, and, most importantly, your friendship—you inspire me daily.

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“When you learn, teach. When you get, give.” Maya Angelou

Abstract

Texas Tech University (TTU), the largest comprehensive higher education institution in the western two-thirds of the state, opened its doors in 1925 and boasts a rich history of research programs designed to enrich lives and increase the work capacity of its student body. While TTU once served a majority white student body (over 90%), the campus' Latinx undergraduate enrollment reached 27.8% in 2017. With these numbers, TTU surpassed the US Department of Education's 25% Hispanic undergraduate enrollment requirement for a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) designation. In 2019, TTU applied for, gained recognition as, and received over \$8 million as an HSI.

However, like many historically and predominately white institutions with a new HSI designation, Texas Tech deals with various organizational dilemmas associated with constructing an HSI identity. Therefore, we partnered with TTU's HSI student success subcommittee and utilized a critical evaluation research approach to (1) define *serviingness* for Latinx students at TTU; (2) clarify student-level success outcomes for Latinx students at TTU; and (3) analyze HSI and subcommittee documents to set the foundation for the HSI student success subcommittee's action plan.

Historically, researchers focusing on organizational identity and transformational changes maintain a race-neutral stance that neglects how race and ethnicities influence policies and attitudes, and how organizations de-center and devalue racial and ethnic diversity by normalizing white, dominant standards. As such, we used the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of racialized organizations, Hispanic *serviingness*, and organizational identity. Understanding the overlaps and constraints of these frameworks facilitated our understanding of how Texas Tech's students, staff, and leadership answered the questions "Who is TTU as an HSI" and "What does it mean for TTU to be Hispanic-serving"? Additionally, the abovementioned conceptual frameworks facilitated the development of our research questions and the analysis of the data we collected.

Ultimately, we found that TTU has made great strides since receiving the HSI designation. The campus has students and professional staff committed to and ready to transform its organizational identity to one wholly committed to Hispanic *serviingness*. Nevertheless, the university struggles with "what to do next." We outline several recommendations to facilitate Texas Tech's organizational identity transformation, help them achieve educational outcomes, and fulfill its promise to center and serve the ethnic experiences of its Latinx students.

Key Words: Hispanic-serving institutions (HSI), racialized organizations, racialized funds, *serviingness*, organizational identity

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Organization Context

Texas Tech University (TTU) opened its doors in 1925 and now boasts a rich history of research programs in agriculture, engineering, technology, and liberal arts disciplines, all uniquely designed to enrich lives and increase the work capacity of its student body. Today TTU is the largest comprehensive higher education institution in the western two-thirds of the state. Located in Lubbock, the south plains of West Texas, TTU offers 150 undergraduate degrees, 100 graduate degrees, and 50 doctoral degrees. In addition, TTU possesses a Carnegie classification of R1, which signifies extensive research activity, and enrolls 33,256 undergraduate and 7,410 graduate and law students.

From an enrollment perspective, TTU has set records for the last 13 years and continues to be one of the fastest-growing higher education institutions in the United States. Although white student enrollment percentages reached over 90 percent in the 1970s and 1980s (Texas Tech University, n.d.), TTU found its student demographics shifting in the early 2000s. By the fall of 2017, Texas Tech University reported to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) a Hispanic undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment of 27.8%. As a result, Texas Tech met the minimum requirement of Hispanic student enrollment to apply for status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Eventually, it gained recognition as an HSI in 2019.

Like many newly designated HSIs, Texas Tech endeared the years-long process of achieving Hispanic serving status while focusing on the opportunity to receive large amounts of

grant dollars. Moving a university from Hispanic-enrolling (the term used to describe colleges and universities whose Hispanic-*servi*ngness designation efforts stall after meeting the enrollment threshold needed for the HSI federal designation) to Hispanic-*servi*ng is challenging. Texas Tech is no exception. As the university approaches its centennial birthday, the community, staff, and students are reminded of the campus' long-established and pride-filled history of serving its community, a conservative and agricultural community. TTU's long-standing organizational identity and social-historical issues challenge the effectiveness and ease with which the university embraces change.

Nevertheless, Texas Tech made several commitments to its Latinx students and received federal funds based on a specific racial/ethnic identity. However, the university has not clarified the meaning of *servi*ngness or the particularities of student success for Latinx students at Texas Tech. Simultaneously, the university stated that programs and initiatives created by these HSI-designated funds would not be limited to one culture, race, or ethnicity (Texas Tech University, n.d).

Throughout this discourse, we will use the following terms in the following ways:

- *Hispanic*: A racialized ethnic label used to refer to Hispanic-serving institutions and specifics related to federal legislation and policies.
- *Latinx*: Latinx is a gender-neutral or non-binary term used to identify and describe individuals/students with racial and ethnic origins and roots in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.
- *white*: An intentionally uncapitalized term to describe individuals and institutions. It is uncapitalized to decenter whiteness and disempower white hegemony in higher education.

Problem of Practice

Texas Tech, like many newly designated HSIs, is dealing with a range of cultural, structural, political, and symbolic dilemmas associated with constructing an HSI institutional identity. In what follows, we examine the broader US higher education context related to Hispanic-*servingsness* and then narrow our focus and evaluation to Texas Tech University's particular area of exploration.

In the late 1980s, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), whose aim is to represent, promote, develop, and improve Hispanic students' access to postsecondary education, coined the term HSI after recognizing that Latinx students were disproportionately underrepresented in higher education (Aguilar-Smith, 2021). Additionally, HACU recognized that institutions serving the largest percentage of Hispanic students were chronically underfunded (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Hurtado & Alvarado, 2015; Valdez, 2015). In 1992, Congress created the federal designation and criteria for Hispanic serving institutions (Garcia, 2019; Valdez, 2015). According to Title V of the Higher Education Act, federal law defines HSIs as accredited, not-for-profit, and degree-granting public or private higher education institutions with Hispanic, full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment of at least 25 percent. Additionally, HSIs have a high enrollment of low-income students (i.e., students eligible for federal financial aid) and educational and general expenditures per FTE student below the average of similar institutions (Excelencia in Education, 2020; Santiago et al., 2016). However, not until Congress enacted Title V Part A, the Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions (DHSI)

Program in 1998, did HSIs become eligible for capacity-building grants (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Valdez, 2015).

While Congress does not guarantee funding through Title V, an HSI designation does qualify institutions to compete for finite, racialized funding to assist with developing institutional-level interventions that will translate into improvements in student-level outcomes and degree attainment for Latinx students (Contreras et al., 2008; Excelencia in Education, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019; Hurtado & Alvarado, 2015). Furthermore, Latinx students are entering the nation's colleges and universities at increasing rates, and the number of institutions eligible for federal HSI designation is also growing (Excelencia in Education, 2020). An estimated 67 percent of all Latinx students are enrolled at HSIs, and HSIs represent the most extensive and fastest-growing share of minority-serving institutions (Excelencia in Education, 2021). However, unlike other minority-serving institutions designed to serve underrepresented groups through their institutional missions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, women's colleges), many HSIs are predominantly white institutions (PWIs) defined only by their large concentrations of Latinx student enrollments (Contreras et al., 2008; Garcia & Dwyer, 2017; Garcia et al., 2019).

Beyond qualifying institutions meeting the 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment threshold, there are no clear indications of what it means to *serve* Latinx college students (Garcia, 2017; Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019). Nor does a designation require institutional infrastructures to center Latinx students' needs or be responsible and accountable for improving

Latinx students' academic attainment (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Garcia, 2016). Recent research focused on how HSIs utilize Title V grants indicates that many institutions commodify Latinx students to secure federal funding yet use these monies to finance wide-sweeping institutional projects with little attention to how these racialized funds are directly serving and benefiting Latinx students (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Santiago, 2007).

Recent scholarship also focuses on the challenges PWIs face when constructing an HSI organizational identity, as these institutions lack an articulated history, mission, and/or structure for serving Latinx students (Contreras et al., 2008; Garcia & Dwyer, 2017; Garcia et al., 2019). For institutions that historically serve white students and are now designated HSI, the questions of “Who are we as a Hispanic-serving institution?” and “What does it mean to have a Hispanic-serving identity?” are paramount (Contreras et al., 2008; Garcia, 2017; Garcia & Dwyer, 2017). According to Garcia et al. (2019), *servingsness* is multidimensional and should be conceptualized by indicators of serving (i.e., outcomes and experiences for both students and nonstudents) and structures for serving (i.e., internal organizational dimensions and external influences) to attend to the distinct needs of Latinx students.

In applying for an HSI designation and accepting racialized funds related to this designation, institutional leaders at TTU communicated to the university's community a Hispanic-*enrolling* essence. This identity, in the form of millions of dollars in federal grant monies, was the administration's way of signaling an institutional value associated with Latinx student enrollment numbers. Research supports the notion that “individuals interpret

organizational initiatives and practices - which are easily observable - as signals of what an organization is like, including its values, priorities, culture, and climate” (Leslie, 2019, p. 545). When the administration accepted racialized funds based on Latinx student enrollment, TTU’s identity as a predominantly white institution intersected with its new identity as a Hispanic-enrolling institution and what it means to serve Hispanic students.

For our capstone project, we are partnering with the university’s Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DDEI) to explore some of the challenges noted above. Beyond fostering and inspiring a shared, institutional commitment to inclusive communities, the DDEI coordinates the university’s HSI committee. The HSI committee (comprised of three subcommittees focused on academic engagement, student success, and research and external funding) is responsible for providing support to all students of color and first-generation students to achieve their goal of receiving a quality education; identifying current and future grants for which Texas Tech is eligible or entitled; ensuring members of the Texas Tech community understand the research, funding, and other opportunities that HSI designation brings; amplifying and optimizing the HSI designation to cement it as a fundamental part of Texas Tech's institutional practice, climate, and culture; and supporting the campus as an HSI with a *servingsness* culture (Texas Tech University, n.d).

After meeting with the co-chairs of the HSI student success subcommittee, we learned that the subcommittee has met for two years but has yet to clarify the meaning of *servingsness*, student success (i.e., academic outcomes for students), or sense of belonging (i.e., non-academic

experiences) for Latinx students at Texas Tech. The factors mentioned above are primary targets for the subcommittee and the institution as they seek to construct an HSI identity with a *servingness* culture and engagement with Latinx students that validates and positively influences their sense of belonging. Additionally, the president of Texas Tech has asked the HSI student success subcommittee to develop an action plan for amplifying Texas Tech's identity as a Hispanic-serving institution.

Therefore, the purpose of this capstone project is to partner with TTU's HSI student success subcommittee to (1) define *servingness* for Latinx students at TTU; (2) clarify student-level success outcomes for Latinx students at TTU; and (3) analyze HSI and subcommittee documents to set the foundation for the HSI student success subcommittee's action plan.

Review of Literature

Moving from *servingsness* as a concept to *servingsness* as a practice requires learning from Hispanic-serving institutions currently implementing programs and initiatives to support Hispanic students' academic success and who have transformed organizational structures to enhance Hispanic *servingsness* (Garcia & Koren, 2020). TTU's problem of practice, like many historically and predominately white institutions with newly designated Hispanic-serving designations, is answering the following questions: "Who are we as a Hispanic-serving institution" and "What does it mean to be Hispanic-*servings*?" (Contreras et al., 2008; Garcia, 2017; Garcia & Dwyer, 2017). Beyond qualifying institutions meeting the 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment threshold, there are no clear indications of what it means to *serve* Hispanic college students (Garcia, 2017; Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019). Nor does a designation require institutional infrastructures to center Hispanic students' needs or be responsible and accountable for improving Hispanic students' academic attainment (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Garcia, 2016).

To situate our understanding of TTU's current state, we ground our research in scholarship on organizational identity and Hispanic *servingsness*. To analyze Hispanic *servingsness* through an organizational context, we take up the theoretical framework of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). Ray argues that racialization is expressed through organizational practices and subsequently made legitimate through an organization's collection of values, expectations, practices, and structures. These organizational practices guide and inform the actions of organizational members and, thus, organizational identity. Informed by this

scholarship, we seek to add to the individual- and organizational-level analysis of *servingsness* as a practice by partnering with Texas Tech University's HSI student success subcommittee to (1) define *servingsness* for Latinx students at TTU; (2) clarify student-level success outcomes for Latinx students at TTU; and (3) set the foundation for the HSI student success subcommittee's action plan that will eventually be presented to the president of the university.

Racialized Organizations

Prior to the late 1990s, much of the scholarship on organizational identity formation and development maintained a race-neutral stance that neglects (1) how race and ethnicities influence the organizational formation, hierarchies, and processes and (2) how racial structures and ideologies within organizations perpetuate the social construction of race (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Nkomo et al., 2019; Ray, 2019; Vega et al., 2022). By limiting the analysis of how race and organizations intersect, contemporary frameworks fail to recognize that organizations have racial identities and can be racialized (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Wooten, 2019; Wooten & Couloute, 2015). Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations merges organizational and race theories to understand how organizations operate through racial processes influenced by racism. Racialized organizations connect the policies of the racial state and individual racial beliefs to structural racism by "(a) enhancing or diminishing the agency of racial groups, (b) legitimizing the unequal distribution of resources, (c) relying on whiteness as a credential, and (d) engaging in racialized decoupling of formal rules from practice" (Vega et al., 2022, p. 4). Seeing racialized relations as constitutive of organizations and

organizations as racial structures highlights the everyday activities organizations rely on to perpetuate racial inequities (Ray, 2019; Wooten, 2019; Wooten & Couloute, 2015).

For this paper, race is defined as an invented, multidimensional, hierarchical, and sociopolitical construction that is socially real and reenacted in everyday encounters and various situations and spaces, including organizations (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Wooten, 2019). Racism, then, is “the product of racial domination projects (e.g., colonialism, slavery, labor migration, etc.)” (Bonilla-Silva, 2015, p. 1359). These racial domination projects rely on “practices and behaviors [to] produce a racial structure - a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels” (p. 1360) - that place actors in racial categories and shape the life chances of these races. As a meso-level entity that reinforces, challenges, or alters norms and structural processes due to their recurrence and authorization in practice (Anderson, 2009), organizations are vital to the stability or change of racist ideologies, and master narratives as “individual racial attitudes and discrimination are enabled or constrained by organizational routines” (Ray, 2019, p. 30).

Researchers have not accounted for racialization and racial structures' influence on organizational formation, programs, policies, and hierarchies (House, 2017; Omi & Winant, 2014; Ray, 2019; Wooten & Couloute, 2015). According to Ray (2019), race, as a multidimensional and socially constructed concept, encodes sub- and super-ordination schemas that are activated when connected to resources. This extension of racial meaning to a previously non-racial practice, relationship, or distribution of social and material resources within

organizations is called racialization (Omi & Winant, 2014; Ray, 2019; Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022). Because racial schemas applied to resources generate patterns of interactions, these racialized routines become taken-for-granted aspects of organizational life (Ray, 2019; Ray & Purifoy, 2019). Racial structures exist in organizations when resources are intentionally or passively distributed according to racial schemas and in ways that differentially advantage racial groups (Ray, 2019; Wooten & Couloute, 2015). Once racial structures are in place, a racial ideology arises to justify the unequal distribution of resources along racial lines and an explicit defense of organizational maps that provide logic and rationales for everyday activities that empower dominant groups (i.e., white people) and disempower nondominant groups (i.e., minoritized people) (Ray, 2019; Ray & Purifoy, 2019; Vegas et al., 2022; Wooten & Couloute, 2015). According to research by Bonilla-Silva (2015) and Vega et al. (2022), without these racial ideologies that justify and maintain the current racial order, racialized societies and organizations could not exist.

Institutions of Higher Education and HSIs as Racialized Organizations

Through a historical set of actions that assign value and privilege to institutions enrolling a large percentage of white students while subjugating institutions enrolling a large percentage of racially minoritized students, postsecondary institutions have not escaped racialization (Garcia, 2019). Bonilla-Silva and Peoples (2022) argue that colleges and universities are racialized spaces in which history, demography, curriculum, climate, symbols, and traditions embody and reproduce whiteness and white supremacy (i.e., racial domination projects). Colleges and

universities also act as organizational sites of racial structures and racial ideologies that continuously shape and reshape the contours of race and inequality for minoritized people in postsecondary education and society at large (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Ray, 2019; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019; Vega et al., 2022). Furthermore, Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2019) find that “wittingly or not, the dominant racial logics of these institutions - the explicit or implicit modal conceptualizations of race and racism institutional leaders and actors abide by - inform the programs, initiatives, and everyday practices” (p. 401).

HSI advocates believe that because Hispanic-serving institutions enroll a large number of Latinx students, they are more likely to enact racial logics that prioritize the amelioration of racial inequalities by centering the needs and experiences of this minoritized student population (Garcia, 2019; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019). Vargas (2018) notes that in 2016, 37 historically white colleges or universities were newly designated as Hispanic-serving institutions and eligible to apply for multi-million dollar grants from the Department of Education. However, because HSI status is often conferred to predominantly and historically white institutions with changing demographics and surging enrollments of Latinx students (Garcia, 2019; Vargas, 2018; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019), dominant racial logic (i.e., history, demography, curriculum, and a set of symbols and traditions that embody and reproduce whiteness and normalize white spaces) is deeply embedded in institutional ways of being and doing (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019).

Servingness through HSI Funds as a Racialized Practice

For these historically and predominantly white institutions turned Hispanic-serving solely based on large concentrations of Latinx student enrollments, *servingness* is both paradoxical and multi-dimensional. Paradoxical because, on the one hand, qualifying institutions are endowed with a “Hispanic-serving” designation and receive racialized funding from the US Department of Education based on Latinx enrollment and students’ financial needs. However, and on the other hand, these federal Title V grants do not guarantee that funding directly serves Latinx students (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Burbage & Glass, 2022; Garcia, 2017). According to Title V of the Higher Education Act, as amended in 1998, federal law defines HSIs as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit higher education institutions with Hispanic, full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment of at least 25 percent (Excelencia in Education, 2020). Title V grants aim to financially support the subset of higher education institutions serving large shares of Latinx students to improve the educational attainment of these students and ameliorate educational inequalities over time (Vargas, 2018). However, in a nationwide study that focused on colleges’ and universities’ allocation of HSI funding, Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2019) found that 85 percent of grant recipients decentralized Latinx students in Title V programmatic efforts. Instead, HSIs with Title V funding organize these student services and academic programs to serve entire student populations (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019).

Consequently, Latinx students’ educational inequalities are rarely explicitly addressed

through programs and services funded by Title V grants (Boland, 2018; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Santiago, 2012). Thus, institutions capitalize on racialized funding while decentralizing fund recipients (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019). In many cases, institutions become the benefactors of student demographics instead of Latinx students experiencing the benefits of institutional-level interventions. Aguilar-Smith (2021) found that while HSIs view racialized grants as a prime opportunity to provide more services and academic programming, race and ethnicity are often overlooked. Promises to address the achievement gap by increasing retention and graduation rates among Latinx students through innovative student services, culturally relevant curriculum, and meaningful co-curricular offerings instead become broad-sweeping, race-evasive, or race-neutral approaches that legitimate unequal distribution of resources and exacerbate pre-existing patterns of racialized inequality (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Vargas, 2018; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019; Vega et al., 2022). Garcia and Natividad (2018) reinforce the notion that Latinx students have specific needs that college campuses must consider. When racialized monies are dispersed without this understanding, and HSIs decouple Title V's funds designed to serve Latinx students by designing programs that are not intentionally culturally enhancing, these organizations are allowed to maintain legitimacy and appear progressive without seriously addressing racial inequity (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Vega et al., 2022; Ray & Purifoy, 2019).

Servingness

Despite the rapid growth of HSIs since 1992 (i.e., the year Congress created the federal

designation for Hispanic serving institutions), there are no clear indications of what it means to *serve* Latinx college students at these institutions (Garcia, 2017; Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019). Beyond qualifying institutions meeting the 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment threshold, an HSI designation neither requires institutions to center Latinx students' needs nor be responsible to and accountable for improving Latinx students' academic attainment (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Boland, 2018; Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Garcia, 2016). In many ways, the HSI designation functions as a federal construct but does not guide the implementation of strategies and/or infrastructures that leverage HSI funding to serve and support Latinx students (Burbage & Glass, 2022; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Santiago, 2012).

Using institutional and cultural theories that consider the systemic, political, and historical forces that influence individual and organizational outcomes, Garcia et al. (2019) propose a multi-dimensional conceptual framework of Hispanic *servingness*. These multi-dimensional characteristics are informed by the outcomes and experiences of individuals (i.e., students, faculty, staff, and administrators) and address *indicators of servingness*. This dimension examines individuals as units of analysis. The framework also addresses the *structures for servingness* that are informed by internal and external influences on the organization. This dimension examines the organizations as units of analysis. Both indicators of and structures for *servingness* are needed to construct an ideal HSI identity (Garcia et al., 2019).

Indicators of Servingness

Overwhelmingly, when scholarship seeks to identify indicators for *servingness* at

Hispanic-serving institutions, responses point to academic outcomes that are ideal, common, and legitimized indicators of success and institutional effectiveness (Garcia, 2017; Garcia et al., 2019). These measures include enrollment; course completion; retention, persistence, and transfer rates; STEM degree and general graduation/degree completion rates; post-baccalaureate enrollment; and job placement outcomes (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019). The most recognized measures of academic success focus on student progression beyond the first year (i.e., persistence) and four- and six-year graduation rates at community colleges and baccalaureate granting institutions, respectively (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Garcia, 2019).

Additional but less studied measurable indicators of *servingsness* include academic preparedness at the primary and secondary level, dual enrollment, the success of undocumented and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students, successful progression of Latinx students through developmental (remedial) education, accelerating time to degree completion, financial commitment to actualizing an HSI identity, and investment in positions that lead HSI efforts (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Franco & Muñiz, 2022; Gonzalez et al., 2020). Garcia (2019) notes that “while Hispanic serving institutions emerged as a distinct organizational form, they [remain] susceptible to the norms and pressures of the postsecondary field, especially as organizations intentionally and unintentionally align themselves with the values and priorities of higher education” (p. 97). While quantitative measures of success help to standardize institutional effectiveness for intra- and inter-organizational comparisons, these outcome

measures do not explain how inhabitants of an HSI perceive its campus climate or experience belongingness and inclusion (Franco & Hernández, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Researchers argue that indicators of *servingness* also include non-academic outcomes such as students' academic self-concept and social agency (Cuellar, 2014), racial identity (Hurtado et al., 2012), and leadership identity (Garcia et al., 2019). These non-academic experiences include positive and validating experiences that increase students' sense of belonging and/or negative or invalidating experiences that decrease students' sense of belonging (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). Civic engagement (Garcia & Cuellar, 2018), learning communities (Kato & Marinez, 2020), student-faculty interactions (Fosnacht & Nailos, 2015; Gonzalez et al., 2020), culturally relevant advising models (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015), and programming and pedagogical approaches grounded in culturally responsive ways of knowing for Latinx students (Garcia, 2019; Martinez & Gonzales, 2015) are positive and validating campus experiences for Latinx students at HSIs.

Other experiences that validate students' racial-ethnic identities also provide a sense of cultural belonging and inclusion for Latinx students. These identity conscious- and social agency-raising experiences include mentoring and support programs (Rodriguez & Gonzales, 2020), interactions with same-ethnicity and Spanish-speaking peers, faculty, and staff (Garcia, 2016), and culturally significant art and programming such as campus artwork and murals by Latinx artists, mariachi bands, and Día de Los Muertos celebrations (Garcia, 2017; Garcia, 2019). These experiences create a welcoming and affirming college campus environment and are

essential to the academic success of Latinx students at HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011).

However, without colleges and universities' intentionality to serve Latinx students, experiences may embody negative, racialized situations that do not validate their sense of belonging. Researchers show that negative experiences with the campus racial climate, including discrimination, harassment, and racial microaggressions, are regular occurrences at Hispanic-serving institutions (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Hurtado et al., 1996; Sanchez, 2019; Serrano, 2020). Additionally, HSIs that solely use legitimized measures of success to define *servingsness* consciously and/or subconsciously adopt white hegemonic standards and reinforce white- and dominant-centered policies, procedures, artifacts, and decision-making (Garcia, 2019; Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). These adverse yet systemic organizational characteristics solidify the need for colleges and universities to ground *servingsness* in student experiences. Garcia (2019) calls this socially-conscious level of *servingsness* the "third space." The third space is "the social space within which counter-hegemonic activity or contestation of dominant discourses can occur for both students and teachers," where the "how of both social and critical theory can be implemented" (Gutierrez et al., 1995, p. 451). Non-academic outcomes are essential to an anti-racist, anti-oppressive approach to organizing HSIs (Garcia, 2019).

Considering the systemic, political, and historical forces that influence racialized organizations (as discussed earlier), both academic and nonacademic indicators of *servingsness* are needed to construct an ideal HSI identity (Garcia & Koren, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019).

Neglecting students' sense of belonging while underscoring white-dominant definitions of academic success allows historical and existing organizational identities to persist despite a Hispanic *servingness* designation (Garcia et al., 2019). Because of the high levels of ambiguity attached to the Hispanic-serving label, organizations must be intentional about clarifying and operationalizing indicators of *servingness* (Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019).

Structures for Servingness

Beyond indicators that measure and assess *servingness*, structures for serving Latinx students at HSIs are also significant aspects of the multi-dimensional framework for *servingness* (Garcia, 2019; Garcia & Koren, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019; Franco & Muñiz, 2022). These structures for serving occur at the organizational level and examine the internal and external influences on organizations and their culture (Garcia & Koren, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019). First, internal organizational influences are those factors enacted by non-students and within the institution's control (Garcia et al., 2019). These internal dimensions that influence *servingness* include institutional policies; decision-making processes; curricular and co-curricular structures and programs; compositional diversity of staff, faculty, and administrators; diversity and equity plans; and leadership practices. A critical structure for *servingness* is the leadership practice of incorporating the HSI identity in institutional mission statements (Contreras et al., 2008). As mission statements declare an institution's intent and direction, they are often the starting point in strategic and academic planning processes, remind decision-makers of institutional priorities, and guide long-term change efforts (Contreras et al., 2008; Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

Another important structure for *servingness* is culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum, and programs and services (Contreras et al., 2019). Culturally relevant curricula can signify *servingness* when curricula are ethnocentric, historic, and embedded within the normative structures of the institution (Garcia et al., 2019). Inclusive pedagogy can include training existing faculty and staff on culturally-sensitive instructional practices that center the racial and cultural ways of knowing and learning of Latinx students (Garcia et al., 2019; Garcia & Koren, 2020) and increase capacity to engage Latinx students inside and outside of the classroom (Garcia & Koren, 2020; Griffin-Fennell & Lerner, 2020). Finally, culturally relevant programs and services can include legitimizing language diversity among Latinx students by offering programs that embrace and enhance Spanish language skills, bilingualism, and Spanglish (Garcia, 2019; Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013), increasing positive feelings towards campus climate and a sense of belonging (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Hurtado et al., 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2020), enhancing racial and cultural identity experiences and personal knowledge of self (Garcia, 2019; Hurtado et al., 2012), and maximizing achievement through equitable, holistic, and inclusive advising (Hernandez, 2020; Ordaz et al., 2020). While not an exhaustive list, the aforementioned practices illustrate the complexity of enacting structures to serve Latinxs in HSIs.

Second, evaluators must situate an institution within its broader historical, political, and social contexts when evaluating an HSI's ability to effectively serve Latinx students (Garcia & Koren, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019). According to Garcia et al. (2019), these external forces include local, state, and federal policy issues and legislation, as well as decisions of state and federal

governing boards, advocacy groups, and community organizations that are beyond the control of the institution. In particular, advocacy groups such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and Excelencia in Education have a large current, historical, political, and critical influence on institutions' ability to create structures for serving Latinx students (Garcia & Koren, 2020; Garcia et al., 2019) as do efforts between HSIs and community partners (Franco et al., 2020; Ramirez & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2020). Finally, situating an institution within white supremacy and settler colonialism systems calls out the systems of oppression that regularly influence HSIs (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Garcia et al., 2019). Leaning on the race-conscious conceptualizations of HSIs as racialized organizations (Garcia, 2019; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019; Vega et al., 2022) and Title V as racialized funding (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Garcia & Natividad, 2018; Vargas, 2018), organizational structures and cultural perspectives that conform to white normative standards and uphold whiteness through their white dominant policies, procedures, and decision-making become central to how many HSIs function and structure their *serviingness* to Latinx students (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Garcia & Natividad, 2018).

Organizational Identity

The many facets of Hispanic *serviingness* (i.e., indicators and structure) in conjunction with the multidimensional characterization (i.e., purpose, value, culture) and persistence of organizational identity (i.e., tradition and racialized organizations) present challenges when determining the extent and effectiveness to which Hispanic *serviingness* is embedded within an

organization. Nevertheless, for an organization to move towards Hispanic *servingsness*, it must adopt an organizational identity that simultaneously embraces and sustains a Hispanic identity.

Organizational identity is an organization's visible and public dimensions, signaling its purpose and philosophy to the public. Organizational theorists, Albert and Whetten (1985), argue that a coherent and complete organizational identity includes three elements: purpose, value, and culture. Without clear connections between why they exist (purpose), what they offer (value), and how they operate (culture), organizations struggle (Gino & Staats, 2015). A coherent and complete organizational identity facilitates adaptability to instability and change (Gioia et al., 2000; Ran & Golden, 2011), particularly for colleges and universities, which are situated within social and historical traditions and represent some of society's most revered values (Rudolf, 1990). Understanding higher education institutions' organizational identity can mitigate present-day concerns and threats, including enrollment declines, rising costs and student debt, emerging college alternatives, political interference, and the changing demographics of college students (Gioia et al., 2000; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019). Hsu and Hannan (2005) argue that reducing ambiguity surrounding an organization's identity makes it easier to manage its external environment, including material and symbolic resources that help sustain the organization. For postsecondary institutions, organizational members must be able to develop strategies to assist the institution's effectiveness in educating, serving, and graduating students while managing internal and external issues within the organization (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). The more coherent the organizational identity is, the easier it is for internal and external audiences to evaluate the

organization, which may ultimately affect its likelihood of success (Hsu & Hannan, 2005).

Moreover, social identity theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2009) suggests that internal audiences (i.e., organizational members) tend to identify with social groups and define themselves by their connections. Clegg et al. (2007) argue that organizational identity is located within the belief system of organizations and conceived by various constituents. These belief systems are “shared assumptions that are socially constructed: they do not exist objectively in reality but are culturally, socially, and cognitively developed assumptions about reality” (Clegg et al., 2007, p. 499). As much as an organization is a business, it is simultaneously its people (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Therefore, organizational identity is better understood through conversations and narratives about its relevance and importance within various contexts (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Research supports the notion that organizations are unique social constructions of different individuals, relationships, histories, formal and informal policies and practices, routines, and configurations that create master narratives unique to their collective groups (da Silva Iddings, 2018; Holland et al., 1998).

In their study on postsecondary institutions, Gioia and Thomas (1996) found that organizational members interpret and respond to current issues based on how they understand their organizational identity. Maintaining an organizational identity affects members' interpretations of organizational goals, actions, and strategic decision-making (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). While multidimensional and multi-contextual, the organizational identity reflects institutional- and individual-level experiences of organizational

life (Hurtado et al., 2012). As such, members socially construct organizational identity in response to the question, "Who are *we* as an organization?" (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 263). Organizational members' answers to identity questions influence their judgment of and identification with their organizations (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Understanding what it means to have an organizational identity for serving Latinx students is essential, notably since HSIs are typically not founded to serve the *we* (the members) for whom the Hispanic-serving designation is constructed (Contreras et al., 2008). Researchers suggest that very few Hispanic-serving institutions actively identify with their HSI status (Garcia, 2013; Garcia et al., 2018; Garcia & Dwyer, 2018). Researchers identify further challenges for organizations and their members as there needs to be a clear indication of what it means to have a Hispanic-serving organizational identity (Garcia, 2017; Garcia et al., 2018; Garcia, 2019). In a study of nearly 500 postsecondary institutions, Garcia et al. (2018) found that the only commonalities unifying Hispanic-serving institutions are the federal designation to become HSIs, the 25% enrollment threshold, and the nonprofit status required to gain such a designation. Furthermore, because the idea of *servingsness* is elusive, understanding what it means to have a Hispanic-serving organizational identity beyond the HSI federal designation is complicated (Garcia et al., 2018). First, there is extreme institutional diversity among HSIs, ranging from 2-year to 4-year, public to private, large to small, rural to urban, and offering no baccalaureate degree options to having health science schools (Garcia et al., 2018; Núñez et al., 2016). HSI organizational identity is further complicated because HSIs lack a historical mission,

purpose, and identity for serving Latinx students (Gasman, 2008).

Unlike other minority-serving institutions designed to serve underrepresented groups through their institutional missions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities), many HSIs are historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs) defined only by their increased Latinx student enrollment. Although born out of similar struggles and periods of legal exclusion, political mobilization, and underlying racial logics that sought to alleviate racialized inequities in higher education, Hispanic-serving institutions, and their organizational identities are less well known (Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019), "racialized" (Garcia & Dwyer, 2018), "federally constructed" (Santiago, 2012), "manufactured" (Contreras et al., 2008), and therefore misunderstood.

While understanding "who we are" as an organization is important, there is also a need to understand the extent to which the organization's members identify with the organizational identity (Garcia et al., 2018). Engaging and actively identifying with an organization is essential because it affects members' satisfaction (Mael & Tetrick, 1992), sense of belonging (Ashforth, 2001), and performance (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Higher education scholars cite these factors as essential for increasing students' success in postsecondary education (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Similarly, extant research on HSIs suggests that Latinx students develop a strong sense of racial-ethnic identity, increased belonging, and positive perceptions of their academic abilities, which considerably impacts student achievement, retention, and degree attainment (Hurtado et al., 1996; Sanchez, 2019). However, scholars continue to grapple with what it means to have a

Hispanic-serving identity, concluding that this organizational identity is closeted (Contreras et al., 2008), political (Santiago, 2012), and idealistic (Garcia, 2017) but rarely embraced or advertised (Garcia et al., 2018).

Constructing an HSI Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is embedded in other organizational phenomena, such as commitment, change, culture, and competition (Clark et al., 2010). Additionally, organizations, as an extension of social identification, explicitly define themselves in terms of their membership (Garcia et al., 2018). For Hispanic-serving institutions to embrace their identity and adapt to their changing populations, they must ask, "Who are *we* as a *Latinx-serving organization*?" (Garcia et al., 2018, p.112). Recent scholarship on Hispanic-serving institutions attempts to answer this question, recognizing that constructing an HSI identity requires focusing on institutional and cultural theories (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2009) that consider the systemic, political, and historical forces that influence individual and organizational outcomes. For historically and predominately white institutions whose missions are not founded on the *servingsness* of Latinx students, constructing an HSI identity conceptually requires acknowledging entrenched organizational cultures and systemic race issues (Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019). Moving beyond theory, organizations must change their practices and actively signal and embrace institutionalized claims about who they are, as well as shared assumptions and values among members (Whetten & Mackey, 2002).

Mapping Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Institutional Identity. Garcia (2017) maps

Hispanic *servings* through institutional identity and proposes the *Typology of HSI Organizational Identity* to explore the nuances of what it means to “produce” legitimized outcomes and “to be” culturally engaging (Figure 1). The typology connects institutional and cultural theory and recognizes the “unique nature of HSIs, the students they serve, their variety, and a host of other key characteristics” (Núñez et al., 2016, p. 58). In conceptualizing organizational identities as socially constructed, Garcia (2017) acknowledges that various types of HSIs are worthy and valid within an overly stratified higher education system. The *Typology of HSI Organizational Identity* supports the multiple ways organizational members make sense of identity for serving Latinx students.

Organizational Outcomes for Latinxs	High	Latinx-Producing	Latinx-Serving
	Low	Latinx-Enrolling	Latinx-Enhancing
		Low	High
		Organizational Culture Reflects Latinxs	

Figure 1 - *Typology of HSI Organizational Identity* adopted by Garia (2017)

The typology comprises four quadrants. Quadrant one: “Latinx-enrolling,” suggests that the qualifying institution meets the 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment threshold needed for the HSI federal designation but does not produce equitable outcomes for Latinx students (Garcia, 2017). Furthermore, it may require an organizational culture that supports Latinx students.

Quadrant two: “Latinx-producing,” suggests an institution enrolls at least 25% of Latinx students

and produces positive outcomes for Latinx students (Garcia, 2017). This quadrant reflects high organizational results and low organizational culture. Here, the institution might lack a culture for supporting the success of Latinx students. Quadrant three: “Latinx-enhancing,” describes an institution that enrolls a minimum of 25% Latinx students and enacts a culture that enhances the educational and racial/ethnic experiences of Latinx students. The institution, however, may need to produce equitable outcomes for Latinx students, as legitimized by the field. The fourth quadrant: a “Latinx-serving” identity, posits that the institution enrolls 25% of Latinx students, produces equitable outcomes for Latinx students, and enacts a culture that enhances the educational and racial/ethnic experiences of Latinx students.

Servingness is a multidimensional and conceptual way to understand what it means to move from Hispanic enrolling to Hispanic-serving (Garcia et al., 2019). Transforming newly designated HSIs’ organizational identity, specifically historically and predominately white institutions, mandates the answers to “Who are we as a Hispanic-serving institution” and “What does it mean to be Hispanic-*serving*?” (Contreras et al., 2008; Garcia, 2017; Garcia & Dwyer, 2017). To respond to these questions, move from *servingness* as a concept to *servingness* as a practice, and center the needs of their Latinx populations, institutions must critically reflect on their strategies for serving Latinx students and evaluate their organizational identity.

Simultaneously, institutions must examine their identity (purpose, value, and culture) through a racialized lens. Racialization is expressed through organizational practices and subsequently made legitimate through an organization’s collection of values, expectations, practices, and

structures. These organizational practices guide and inform the actions of organizational members and, thus, an organizational identity. With this understanding, organizations, specifically Texas Tech University, can confront inequities in learning outcomes, define *servingsness* for Latinx students, and clarify student-level success outcomes for Latinx students.

Project Design

In what follows, we describe the conceptual framing, project questions, data collection procedures, and data analysis process for this capstone project.

Conceptual Framing

Using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of racialized organizations, Hispanic *servingness*, and organizational identity, we seek to understand how Texas Tech University, a historically white comprehensive public research university that gained recognition as a Hispanic-serving institution in 2019, is serving Latinx students. Figure 2 demonstrates the analytic lens we used in our investigation.

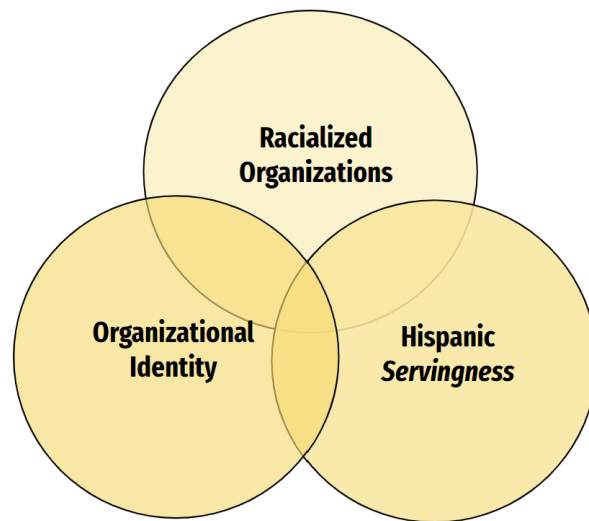


Figure 2 - Conceptual Framework

The following highlights the essential questions spurred by each theoretical and conceptual framework. Each framework, in conjunction with the essential questions, facilitated

bringing all aspects of our study together while simultaneously shaping our research design.

- **Racialized Organizations:** What are racialized organizations, and how does this concept impact HSIs (ability to serve Hispanic/Latinx students)?
- **Hispanic *Servingness*:** What are the dimensions of *servingness*?
- **Organizational Identity:** What is needed to construct an organizational identity (for/towards *servingness*)?

Historically, most of the researchers focusing on organizational leadership have maintained a race-neutral stance that neglects how race and ethnicities influence policies and attitudes and organizations de-center and de-value racial and ethnic diversity by normalizing white, dominant standards (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Nkomo et al., 2019; Ray, 2019; Vega et al., 2022). Yet, and specific to higher education, organizational identity profoundly impact underrepresented students' outcomes and sense of belonging (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016). As such, using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of racialized organizations, Hispanic *servingness*, and organizational identity, and understanding the connections, disjunctures, overlaps, tensions, and constraints of these theories within the higher education context facilitated our understanding of the extent to which Texas Tech University's students, staff, and leadership demonstrated that racial and ethnic diversity is an essential value. Moreover, how that value translated to the university's commitment to their HSI designation, Hispanic *servingness*, and learning outcomes for Latinx students.

Project Questions

We used the following questions to explore our inquiry:

- Project Question 1. In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic-*servingsness*?
 - Project Question 1a. In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?
 - Project Question 1b. In what ways do professional staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?
- Project Question 2. In what ways do organizational structures facilitate or inhibit Hispanic-*servingsness*?
- Project Question 3. In what ways does Texas Tech’s HSI designation influence how student-level success outcomes are defined for Latinx students?
 - Project Question 3a. In what ways does TTU currently measure success for Latinx students that is different from all other students?

Data Collection and Analysis

The project aims to assist Texas Tech and its HSI student success subcommittee in clarifying the meaning of *servingsness* for the institution and defining student-level success outcomes for Latinx students. The above-mentioned factors are focus areas for the subcommittee and the institution's president as they seek to center Latinx students' voices, construct an HSI identity with a *servingsness* culture, and cultivate student experiences that validate and positively

influence Latinx students.

Given their recent HSI designation, receipt of federal racialized funding in the form of a Title V grant, and the needs expressed by both TTU's president and the campus' HSI student success subcommittee, we utilized a critical evaluation research design (Rossi et al., 2019) to evaluate the university's institutional efforts as they move from identifying as a Hispanic-*enrolling* institution towards understanding what it means to be a Hispanic-*serving* institution. The analysis explores the indicators of and structures for *servingness* by reviewing institutional artifacts, conducting semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff as defined by Texas Tech's Institutional Research department (Texas Tech University, n.d.) within the Division of Student Affairs or Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and facilitating interviews with Latinx undergraduate students. We used the results of this inquiry to (1) propose next steps and recommendations for how the university should define *servingness* that is inclusive of academic outcomes and non-academic experiences for Latinx students and (2) identify institutional structures that help to amplify TTU's Hispanic *servingness* culture.

Data Collection and Methodology

The data collection plan articulated below is organized according to project questions. Our approach outlines the collected data, how it was collected, and the rationale for each. For a visual presentation of our data collection plan, see Appendix A.

Project Question 1

To answer question (1) *In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic-servingness*, we examined various institutional documents. Documents included TTU's strategic and other institutional plans (i.e., TTU's strategic plan and strategic plan rollout), TTU's Title V project narrative, TTU's HSI student success subcommittee end-of-year report, TTU's HSI *servingness* assessment results, and TTU's HSI website. See Appendix B for a detailed description of the documents listed above.

The above-mentioned documents facilitate our understanding and develop our empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009) about Texas Tech's goals and objectives for serving Latinx students. TTU's strategic plan, HSI website, HSI student success subcommittee meeting notes, and HSI student success subcommittee end-of-year report provided a deeper understanding of how campus leaders understand and/or signal Hispanic *servingness* as a central part of the institutional culture and organizational identity. TTU's Title V project narrative and the university's HSI *servingness* assessment results described the indicators of *servingness* using Title V grant funds and the outcome measures of these racialized funds.

Project Question 1a

To determine (1a) *In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students*, we conducted individual interviews with seven undergraduate Latinx students. Our Texas Tech contact sent an email inviting student members of the HSI student success subcommittee and other HSI subcommittees to participate in our interviews. Interviews were conducted through

Zoom.

We created our semi-structured interview questions based on TTU's contextualized and temporal needs (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) and our preliminary understanding of the scholarship on indicators of and structures for *servingsness*. For the sections that follow related to interviews with Latinx students, we grounded our interview questions in the conceptual framework of Hispanic *servingsness* (see Appendix C for the interview protocol/needs assessments we created to determine interview questions for students and staff).

To understand how Latinx students define success and feel supported at Texas Tech, we asked the following interview questions:

- How do you define success as a student at Texas Tech?
- In what ways, if at all, does your identity as Hispanic/Latinx impact how you define success as a student at Texas Tech?
- What kinds of support do you need to be a successful student at Texas Tech?
- In what ways, if at all, does your identity as a Hispanic/Latinx student impact the types of support you need to be a successful student at Texas Tech?
- What does belonging mean to you? And, do you feel as if you belong at Texas Tech?

To understand the importance of TTU promoting itself as a Hispanic-serving institution and to assess students' perceptions of *servingsness*, we asked Latinx students the following questions:

- In 2019, Texas Tech became a Hispanic-serving institution. From your perspective as a

Hispanic/Latinx student, what does it mean to be a Hispanic-serving institution?

- As a Hispanic/Latinx student, in what ways does Texas Tech serve you?
 - Can you name specific programs (e.g., xxxx) or services (e.g., xxxx) that Texas Tech implements to serve you as a Hispanic/Latinx student?
- What programs could Texas Tech implement to embody what you believe it means to be a Hispanic-serving institution?
- What services could Texas Tech implement to embody what you believe it means to be a Hispanic-serving institution?

Project Question 1b

To determine (1b) *In what ways do student services professional and administrative staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students*, we interviewed five student services professional and administrative staff members within the Division of Student Affairs and Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DDEI). Our Texas Tech contact invited student services professional and administrative staff members of the HSI student success subcommittee and other HSI subcommittee members to participate in semi-structured interviews: staff participants did not have to identify as Latinx. Interviews were conducted through Zoom.

We created our semi-structured interview questions based on TTU’s contextualized and temporal needs (Ravitch & Carl, 2021), the subjectivities of staff members (Ravitch & Carl, 2021), and our preliminary understanding of the scholarship in this area. For the sections that follow related to interviews with student services professional and administrative staff members,

we grounded our interview questions in the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of racialized organizations and Hispanic *serviingness* (see Appendix C for the interview protocol/needs assessments we created to determine interview questions for students and staff).

To understand how student services professional and administrative staff members perceive TTU's support of Latinx students, we asked the following interview question:

- From your perspective, how does TTU serve Latinx students?

To understand how student services professional and administrative staff members perceive TTU's promotion of Hispanic *serviingness*, we asked the following interview questions:

- From your perspective as a student services professional or administrative staff member, what does it mean to be a Hispanic-serving institution?
- When you think about Texas Tech, who are you as a Hispanic-serving institution?

Project Question 2

To determine (2) *In what ways do organizational structures facilitate or inhibit Hispanic serviingness*, we developed an interview protocol for student services professional and administrative staff to understand the real-life context around TTU's approach to *serviingness* and understand the internal organizational structures that facilitate or constrain *serviingness* as an institutional practice. For example, in what ways did student services professionals and administrative staff members understand and align their approaches to serving Latinx students based on what was written in institutional documents? Were professional and administrative staff members who work directly with students aware of how authors of TTU's Title V grant proposal

indicated institutional approaches to *servingsness*? If so, which organizational structures helped to promote or constrain these approaches?

To obtain information for this project question, we asked the following interview questions:

- From your perspective, how does TTU's designation as a Hispanic-serving institution enhance a sense of belonging for Latinx students?
- From your perspective as a staff member who works directly with students, which aspects of the institution have been most helpful in creating a Hispanic-serving institution?
- From your perspective as a staff member who works directly with students, which aspects of the institution have hindered efforts in creating a Hispanic-serving institution?
- In your opinion, has Texas Tech created a Hispanic-serving institution? Please explain your answer.

Project Questions 3 and 3a

To answer project questions (3) *In what ways does Texas Tech's HSI designation influence how student-level success outcomes are defined for Hispanic students* and (3a) *In what ways does TTU currently measure success for Latinx students that is different from all other students*, we analyzed previously collected institutional artifacts and semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff members. Collecting data from this lens facilitated our understanding of how student-level outcomes for Latinx students were collectively discussed, described, and documented by the agents in the institution.

To understand how student-level success outcomes are defined and assessed for Latinx students, we asked the following interview question:

- From your perspective, what are the metrics for measuring student success outcomes for Latinx students? How are they different since receiving the Hispanic-serving institution designation?
- From your perspective, how are student-level success outcomes for Latinx students directly related to the campus' initiatives associated with being a Hispanic-serving institution?

Data Analysis

In what follows, we describe our positionality as analysts and then outline our analysis processes respective to each document. As a reminder, we used the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of racialized organizations, Hispanic *serviingness*, and organizational identity to understand how Texas Tech University, a historically white comprehensive public research university that gained recognition as a Hispanic-serving institution in 2019, is serving Latinx students. Figure 2 demonstrates the analytic lens we used in our investigation. For a visual presentation of our data analysis plan respective to each project question, see Appendix D.

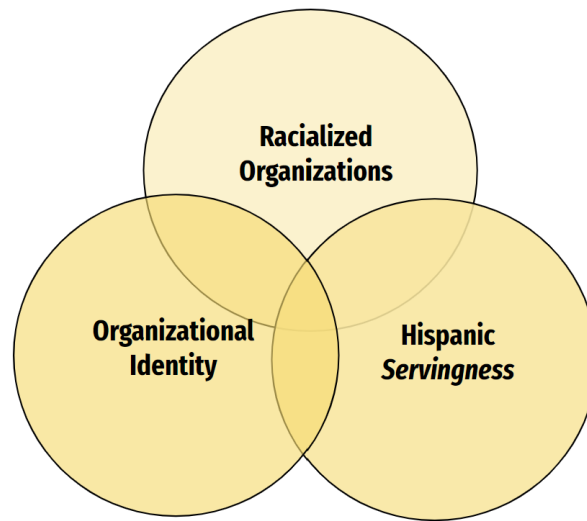


Figure 2 - Conceptual Framework

Positionality

As researchers of an improvement project bound within a specific institution of higher education, our data analysis process focused on increasing the project's criticality, trustworthiness, and validity. Because the researcher is a primary instrument in qualitative research, "[our]" positionality and social identity are central to understanding [our] role in every stage of the research process" (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, p. 10). By taking the time to dig meaningfully and determine how and what we think as we progress through this project, we position ourselves as learners, accessing and acknowledging our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge, and foreground our relationship to the project questions, participant responses, and subject matter (Brew, 2001).

First, before entering our critical evaluation study, we identified and drafted our biases, assumptions, identities, and positionalities in a positionality memo (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Second, after each data collection method (i.e., document analysis, semi-structured interviews with students, and semi-structured interviews with student services professionals and administrative staff), we revisited our positionality through structured reflexivity in our research journals. This iterative and critical examination of our personal biases, interpretations, reflections, and subjectivities helped to reaffirm our commitment to criticality by helping us identify and interrogate hegemony, dominance, and power asymmetries (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In addition, we actively resisted reinscribing deficit orientations and pathologizing of minoritized communities, and we avoided developing counternarratives to dominant cultural knowledge and normative narratives (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Positionality of Researchers

Our research is informed by our belief that any institution that receives recognition and racialized funding to build institutional capacity for Latinx students maintains a fiduciary, ethical, and socially just responsibility to cultivate a culture that emboldens the population they pledge to serve. Such a stance influenced what we chose to investigate, how our research was designed and conducted, its outcomes, and its results (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Rowe, 2014). Therefore, we sought to elevate the voices of those most impacted by TTU's HSI designation, the students, and those with the closest proximity to students and a vested interest (either by job title, committee involvement, or shared cultural identity [Latinx]) in students' success, the

university's designation, and the need for its identity transformation. We endeavored to understand the real-life context around TTU's approach to *serviingness* through the perceptions of students and student services professional and administrative staff members, and analyzing institutional practices, policies, and documents that were produced, identified, and/or discussed publicly in relation to TTU being an HSI. Our goal never wavered. We never lost sight of our desire to assist in creating an action plan to amplify Latinx students' voices and Texas Tech's identity as a Hispanic-serving institution. Additionally, our research is informed by our backgrounds.

Sebastian Contreras, Jr. As a Latinx, first-generation college student who studied and graduated from a predominately white institution (PWI) and a Latinx, first-generation white-collar administrator at a PWI, I continue to be disappointed in how institutions take advantage of minoritized students for recognition and funding purposes without impacting structural changes that support the success of these minoritized students. I came to this problem of practice with an informed, professional, and incorrect assumption that HSIs were more advanced in understanding how to serve Latinx students based on their desire to obtain this racialized designation. My engagement deepened as I reflected on my current employer's consistent enrollment of Latinx students over the past few years. Between 2017-2022, the college for whom I work has consistently enrolled between 16 and 18 percent Latinx students. These percentages put my employer in the middle of the enrollment requirements for identifying as an emerging HSI (eHSI) (i.e., institutions with undergraduate Hispanic enrollment numbers between 15 and

24.9%). Additionally, we are in a unique position to capitalize on these student enrollment trends, in-district population trends, and the launch of a new strategic plan focused on building just and thriving communities. As the community's college, we have a responsibility to expand the Latinx community's access to educational opportunities. What better way to work towards our vision of building just and thriving communities than by taking advantage of the research I am doing with Hispanic-serving institutions to set the stage for declaring Oakton an emerging HSI?

Valerie Law. As a Black woman whose educational experiences mirror the struggles and demographics of my current career setting, my background informs my understanding of the challenges students, educators, and leaders encounter when faced with poignant racial inequities. However, I have learned through preliminary research that marginalized groups share distinctive difficulties with mainstream systems. After reflecting on the "Raza experience" (Garcia & Natividad, 2018), I now understand and view our research through the unique lens of the Latinx experience. My aim remains the same; through this study, I hope to learn the discourse used by leadership at one historically and predominately white institution to cultivate a social justice climate for diverse learners. Once understood, my goal is to leverage that knowledge in other spaces. Spaces that began, like Texas Tech University, with a predominantly white identity, and because of the nature of the country's changing landscape, must transform to meet the needs of diverse populations.

Analysis of Data

The data analysis plan articulated below is organized according to project questions. Our approach outlines the analyzed data, how it was coded, and the rationale for each. For a visual presentation of our data analysis plan, see Appendix F.

Project Question 1

To answer question (1) *In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic-servingness*, we examined various institutional documents. Documents included strategic and other institutional plans (i.e., TTU's Strategic Plan and strategic plan rollout), TTU's Title V project narrative, TTU's HSI student success subcommittee end-of-year report, and TTU's HSI *servingness* assessment results.

Document Analysis. To elicit meaning, understand, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009) about Texas Tech's historical perceptions and perspectives on *servingness* and determine how *servingness* is a central part of the institutional culture and organizational identity, we independently examined institutional documents utilizing a field notes-writing process (Nespor, 2006). Through our field notes we identified patterns within and relationships among documents (Nespor, 2006) related to *servingness* and organizational identity.

We began by independently noting the title of each document; when the document was written; who wrote, researched, and/or created the document; the document's purpose; and who has access to the document. Second, we thoroughly read and examined each document (Bowen, 2009) to identify patterns and themes based on a priori codes (see Appendix F for Code Book)

and track any changes to *servingsness* and/or institutional culture and organizational identity over time. For example, because Texas Tech does not have a documented definition of *servingsness* and is in the process of understanding what it means as an organization to be Hispanic-serving, organizational artifact's discussion, and concept of *servingsness* varied. Third, after completing this preliminary analysis phase, we met to review and discuss our coding categories and to collaboratively identify relevant patterns and thematic clustering related to this project question.

Project Question 1a

To determine (1a) *In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students*, we conducted individual interviews with seven undergraduate Latinx students. Interviews were conducted through Zoom.

Semi-Structured Student Interviews. Semi-structured student interviews were composed of Latinx undergraduate students. First, we audio-recorded each semi-structured interview and transcribed the interviews verbatim. Second, to increase inter-rater reliability and reduce bias within our work (Ravitch & Carl, 2021), we reviewed and coded transcripts independently by highlighting sections of text and labeling segments of data into larger categories or themes based on a priori codes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Any themes or patterns that do not fit into our deductive coding structure but appeared to influence *servingsness* were coded as “*servingsness* - other”. For example, we created our code book after the analysis of our literature review. However, interviews with students demonstrated an insular view of *servingsness*

that did not always correlate with scholarship. In these cases, we indicated those perceptions as “other”. Third, after completing this preliminary phase, we met to review and discuss larger code categories and collaboratively analyze our data to identify relevant patterns and thematic clustering related to this project question. For example, if we individually identified the same sections of students’ interviews and coded them the same, we ensured these reflections were included in our findings. If we identified different sections of students’ interviews to be included in our findings, we exchanged our coding and interpretation of the data, its significance to answering our project question, and then agreed on which reflections were most impactful for inclusion in our findings. Finally, in addition to discussing codes during our meetings, we engaged in critical reflection and shared dialogue to interrogate our positionality, interpretations, and subjectivities in relation to interview data.

Project Question 1b

To determine (1b) *In what ways do student services professional and administrative staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students*, we interviewed five student services professional and administrative staff members within the Division of Student Affairs and Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DDEI). Interviews were conducted through Zoom.

Semi-Structured Student Services Professional and Administrative Staff Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were composed of student services professionals and administrative staff. Staff needed to work directly with students: they did not, however, have to self-identify as

Latinx. To verify preliminary findings about how TTU recognizes Hispanic *servingness* from the document analysis conducted for project question 1, we analyzed semi-structured interview responses to determine professional staffs' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding their understanding of and experiences with *servingness*; how HSI goals and objectives identified in Title V grant applications translated to organizational/staff efforts, if at all; clarified how Title V grant monies were being used; and determined how these Title V programs and services aligned with Latinx students' needs.

First, we audio-recorded each semi-structured interview and transcribed the interviews verbatim. Second, to increase inter-rater reliability and reduce bias within our work (Ravitch & Carl, 2021), we reviewed and coded transcripts independently by highlighting sections of text and labeling segments of data into larger categories or themes based on a priori codes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Third, after completing this preliminary phase, we met to review and discuss larger code categories and collaboratively analyze data to identify relevant patterns and thematic clustering related to this project question. For example, if we individually identified the same sections of staff interviews and coded them the same, we ensured these reflections were included in our findings. If we identified different sections of staff interviews to be included in our findings, we exchanged our coding and interpretation of the data, its significance to answering our project question, and then agreed on which reflections were most impactful for inclusion in our findings. Finally, in addition to discussing codes during our meetings, we engaged in critical

reflection and shared dialogue to interrogate our positionality, interpretations, and subjectivities in relation to interview data.

Project Question 2

Semi-Structured Student Services Professional and Administrative Staff Interviews.

We used these semi-structured interview responses to understand how and/or if student services professional and administrative staff members perceived TTU's organizational identity as a Hispanic-serving institution and the structures that facilitate or inhibit Hispanic-*servingsess*. For analysis purposes, we continued the coding process described above in project question 1b.

Project Question 3

Document Analysis. To make meaning from and understand how student-level outcomes for Latinx students are collectively talked about, described, and measured by the institution, we continued with the document analysis method described above in project question 1.

Project Question 3a

Semi-Structured Student Services Professional and Administrative Staff Interviews.

To verify preliminary findings from the document analysis described above and understand where there is alignment with students' needs and perceptions of *servingsness* from the semi-structured student interviews obtained from project question 1a, we analyzed semi-structured interview responses using the same deductive coding process described in above in project questions 1b and 2.

Findings

Through the analysis of institutional artifacts, semi-structured interviews with both self-identifying Latinx undergraduate students, and student services professional and administrative staff members within the Division of Student Affairs and Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, we see the challenges TTU faces in transitioning to an inclusive organizational identity that amplifies and optimizes the institution's HSI designation. Figure 3 summarizes our findings.

Summary of Findings

1. After receiving the HSI designation, Texas Tech University leaders created several strategic initiatives, including forming a committee to focus on HSI *servicingness*, that signaled to internal stakeholders a commitment to Hispanic *servicingness*.
2. A vast majority of student participants indicated that TTU strives to intentionally “serve” its Latinx students by offering a multitude of Hispanic-oriented student organizations and culturally responsive support programs and curricula.
3. Like student participants, staff participants recognized the importance of understanding the unique needs of Latinx students within the context of the new HSI designation. However, students and staff recognized the need for continued and sustained efforts that uncover and respond to Latinx students’ needs and reaffirm Latinx students’ identities.
4. After accepting the HSI designation, TTU leaders increased initiatives, such as sponsoring the inaugural Hispanic Serving Institution Week that highlighted the benefits

of being an HSI, to amplify and promote Hispanic *servingsness* as a campuswide organizational identity.

5. While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic *servingsness*, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic *servingsness*.
6. TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.
7. TTU maintains the same success criteria for Latinx student outcomes as they do for the entire student population, with few indicators designed to assess the success of Latinx students specifically.

Figure 3 - Summary of Findings

Below, we draw on the data by integrating participants' quotes and excerpting language from institutional artifacts to distill our findings respective to each project question.

Project Question 1. In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic *servingsness*?

Finding 1: After receiving the HSI designation, Texas Tech University leaders created several strategic initiatives, including forming a committee to focus on HSI *servingsness*, that signaled to internal stakeholders a commitment to Hispanic *servingsness*.

In recognizing the transformational needs of the university, Texas Tech University leaders initiated changes to meet the needs of its Latinx student populations. For example, after receiving the HSI designation, university leaders created a 43-member committee to focus on Latinx *servingness*. The TTU HSI committee comprises three subcommittees focusing on academic engagement, student success, and research and external funding. Generally, the HSI committee's goals include eight focus areas to "help ensure Texas Tech's HSI designation is further established as a fundamental part of Texas Tech's institutional practice, climate, and culture" (Texas Tech University, n.d.). The work of the HSI student success subcommittee, our primary connection with TTU, focuses on *servingness* support and culture, student *servingness*, academic *servingness*, and *servingness* through data. Subcommittee efforts include meeting regularly to discuss the committee's purpose, identifying focus areas for the university regarding Hispanic *servingness*, defining best practices for the university as it moves towards an HSI organizational identity, and benchmarking its practices against other HSI-designated organizations.

Additionally, in defining their purpose, TTU's student success subcommittee identified six action items to drive organizational change and the university's recognition of Hispanic *servingness*. The three actions items most centered on recognizing Hispanic-*servingness* include adopting a university definition of *servingness*, adopting a definition of belongingness for the HSI committee, and re-envisioning the university's definition of student success that centers Latinx students and their HSI designation (Texas Tech University, personal communication,

May 13, 2022). While TTU's subcommittee recognizes these focus areas and the university seems to have the people in place committed to and ready to lead change, subcommittee notes and meeting minutes confirm leadership's struggles with "doing the work" and the university president's ongoing desire for "action" and action steps.

Finally, TTU's administration also signaled the university's commitment to *serviingness* by amplifying its new designation as an HSI on the university's website and hiring an inaugural HSI program director. First, on the university's home page, there is a "Hispanic Serving" link that directs browsers to the university's Hispanic Serving Institution website, located on the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's web page. The Hispanic Serving Institution's website is a collection of pages providing information on the history of achieving the HSI designation, what the HSI designation means, the university's HSI committee structure, HSI-focused programs and initiatives, a glossary of terms, a listing of Hispanic/Latinx faculty, and professional resources and affiliations associated with being a HSI (Texas Tech University, n.d.). Second, the university created a position for a program director to be responsible for guiding faculty, staff, students, and community groups/organizations in the development and implementation of policies, initiatives, and programs in support of the HSI grant. Both this high-profile, online footprint and the hiring of a staff member specifically responsible for coordinating and managing HSI programming and events signaled to internal stakeholders the university administration's commitment to Hispanic *serviingness* in direct response to requests by the HSI student success subcommittee.

Project Question 1a. In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?

Finding 2: A vast majority of student participants indicated that TTU strives to intentionally “serve” its Latinx students by offering a multitude of Hispanic-oriented student organizations and culturally responsive support programs and curricula.

Central themes revealed that students perceived TTU’s attempts to “serve” its Latinx students as intentional efforts to shift the campus environment and culture to meet the specific needs of Latinx students’ unique backgrounds. For example, several students stated that the university supports the needs of Latinx students through “many clubs and support organizations” (Student 2 personal communication, January 16, 2023). In addition, Student 1 discussed a specific instance where the university supported her as a Latinx student.

An example of this took place during parents’ weekend in which students and their families were allowed to meet other Hispanic families, creating a safe community in which students [could] seek support. This was hosted by the Division of Diversity Equity and Inclusion, called Familias de Tech (personal communication, January 16, 2023).

Student responses also reiterated themes, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs discussed in the literature (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Hurtado et al., 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2020). Specifically, that enhancing racial and cultural identity experiences and personal knowledge of self (Garcia, 2019; Hurtado et al., 2012), and maximizing achievement through equitable, holistic, and inclusive advising (Hernandez, 2020; Ordaz et al., 2020) increases positive feelings

towards campus climate and a sense of belonging (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Hurtado et al., 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Additionally, Sanchez (2019) argues that Latinx students attending HSIs develop a strong sense of racial-ethnic identity, increased belonging, and positive perceptions of their academic abilities. Student 3 discussed how several university efforts led to what she interpreted as mental and emotional support.

So far, Texas Tech has helped me succeed as a Hispanic/Latinx student by providing me with various resources through the Hispanic Student Society and the First-Generation Transition and Mentoring Program. Through these programs, I have been able to speak to other first-generation students and get the help I need whether it is for classes or scholarships to help me continue my college education. Connecting with other students who are going through the same experiences as me not only helps my confidence but helps me understand that it is possible to pursue a degree even though no one else in my family has had the opportunity to (personal communication, January 16, 2023).

Additionally, whether intentional or not to the university's *serviingness* designation, student participants recognized Tech Texas Spanish course, *Spanish 2303*, a course designed for Hispanic students, as the university's efforts to establish a culturally responsive curriculum, which further added to Latinx students' sense of belonging.

As a student in Spanish 2303 Intermediate Spanish for Hispanic Students, I saw a breakthrough in the way Hispanic students learned. Being able to share my class with

other Hispanic students and see their side of the way Texas Tech serves the Latinx community was huge. Texas Tech has done an amazing job of being diverse and sharing the importance of the Latinx community (personal communication, January 16, 2023).

Nevertheless, student participants recognized the need for the university's continued support and push toward inclusion with the Latinx community. Most student participants suggested that the university support students through Latinx-specific scholarships and more "Hispanic student organizations for pre-professional programs" (Student 2, personal communication, January 16, 2023). Student 3 suggested that it would be helpful to see "more Hispanic students on [the university's] council, or as teacher assistants" (Student 3, personal communication, January 16, 2023).

Project Question 1b. In what ways do professional staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?

Finding 3: Like student participants, staff participants recognized the importance of understanding the unique needs of Latinx students within the context of the new HSI designation. However, students and staff recognized the need for continued and sustained efforts that uncover and respond to Latinx students' needs and reaffirm Latinx students' identities.

Interviews with student services professionals and administrative staff members reiterated the importance of understanding the unique needs of Latinx students within the context

of this new HSI designation while also reaffirming the importance of understanding and supporting all students. For example, employee 1 states the following:

Every initiative that we take on, we consider the impact that it has, the positive impact that it can have on [sic] our Hispanic student population. And that's across the board, not just with our Hispanic student population but with all measures of diversity, equity, and inclusion (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Employee 2 affirms how her department's mission of supporting first-generation students has historically been focused on supporting all first-generation students. However, while that focus remains, her department is also now asking:

What are we doing specifically for our Latinx students, especially since we're now designated as an HSI? So, I think this semester, especially as we're moving towards the opt-out model, is really calling for honestly brainstorming on what are some of the intentional practices that we can do to serve, better serve our Latinx students (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Finally, both employees 1 and 2 mention how the construction of a new intercultural center, partially funded with HSI-designated grant dollars, is an example of the dissonance felt by certain Texas Tech stakeholders when Texas Tech chooses to use Title V grant dollars to serve all students at the expense of Hispanic students. Specifically, employee 1 states:

Yes, there was a place given to everyone for all cultures to be highlighted and like an educational setting for all cultures um, but it seemed a little bit contrary to the status of

the institution. That may be the Hispanic students' voices, they thought they had been slighted a little bit. Okay, so you're going to make an intercultural center, but we're a Hispanic serving institution, but there's nothing specifically educational [sic] that highlights the Hispanic heritage, the Hispanic culture that makes Texas Tech what it is and makes it a Hispanic serving institution like you're not highlighting that. You're not giving us a voice in that. We need a bigger part, and so they did feel like they were underserved in that area that the university should have done more in building that educational space (personal communication, December 15, 2022).

Beyond understanding the specific needs and support needed for the Latinx community, employee 2 states that the HSI designation also means greater responsibility in serving Latinx student populations:

With great power comes great responsibility, right? I understand this designation as you know, just the literal definition of serving 25% or more students that identify as Hispanic or Latinx. But I think with that comes the responsibility that we are now aware of this data. We are now aware of this population here; you know, at the end of the day, it's not just a percentage. It's not just the number of students and their experiences. And so, I think that calls for action and responsibility or an onus on our behalf of coming to the table with experiences and services that will actually serve our students in the way that they need to be served (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Project Question 2. In what ways do organizational structures facilitate or inhibit Hispanic *serviingness*?

Finding 4: After accepting the HSI designation, TTU leaders increased initiatives, such as sponsoring the inaugural Hispanic Serving Institution Week that highlighted the benefits of being an HSI, to amplify and promote Hispanic *serviingness* as a campus wide organizational identity.

Data from the TTU’s HSI student success subcommittee year-end report indicate their internal focus on identifying indicators and structures of *serviingness*. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the subcommittee's efforts were focused on “*serviingness* support & culture, student *serviingness* (all levels), academic *serviingness*, and *serviingness* through data” (Texas Tech University, personal communication, May 13, 2022). The student success subcommittee final report (Texas Tech University, personal communication, May 13, 2022) also indicates that the subcommittee aimed to attain its *serviingness* goal through the following actionable steps:

- Leveraging institutional support to bring Dr. Gina Garcia to Texas Tech University for strategic planning with executive leadership and the HSI Committee;
- Providing ongoing HSI educational workshops, conferences, and sessions with Dr. Gina Garcia for TTU students, scholars, and practitioners intentionally serving Latinx students;
- Elevating HSI marketing plan to uplift Latinx student, faculty, and staff stories;
- Increasing support services and networks for Latinx students, faculty, and staff; and
- Further defining focus areas using data from the institution to set goals and priorities.

Most significantly, the HSI student success subcommittee was instrumental in obtaining institutional support for creating TTU’s inaugural *Hispanic Serving Institution Week*. This week-long celebration included events and discussions to foster and promote conversations about Hispanic culture and the benefits of being a Hispanic Serving Institution. All events were open to Texas Tech and Lubbock community members. Events included an HSI week kickoff with TTU departments and services promoting their services for Latinx students and community members; an academic exhibit showcasing work produced by TTU Latinx faculty, staff, and student organizations; cultural celebrations sponsored by various academic departments and colleges; and academic programs discussing the importance of Hispanic/Latinx/Chicana/o/x history, culture, heritage, and influence. The week’s highlight was a keynote address and conversation with Dr. Gina Garcia titled “Defining *Servingness* in Practice at Hispanic Serving Institutions.” The Hispanic Serving Institution Week also had its own website (Texas Tech University, n.d.) and served as a launchpad to the university’s celebration of Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month.

Finding 5: While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic *servingness*, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic *servingness*.

Institutional data illustrates how Texas Tech has taken the “rising tide lifts all boats” approach (Aguilar-Smith, 2021) to define its HSI status. Our review of Texas Tech’s webpage found that emphasis was placed on describing how the institution became an HSI (i.e., enrollment of disadvantaged students, low average expenditures per student, and enrollment of

full-time, undergraduate students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic), yet there was a lack of language that discussed the steps the university is taking to ensure *serviingness* specifically to the Latinx population. Congruently, emphasis is placed on explicitly stating that racialized funds will benefit all students through institution-level interventions. Language taken from this web page instructs the institutional community that “achieving HSI status will benefit ALL of TTU in different ways” (Texas Tech University, n.d.) and the \$8 million in additional funding for TTU “... will benefit all Tech students” and “advance the entire university and enhance TTU’s position as a leader in higher education” (Texas Tech University, n.d.).

In addition, committee notes indicated a lack of institutional accountability regarding the campus’ strategic discussion on HSI *serviingness* as a practice. TTU rolled out its latest strategic plan, "A Foundation for the Next Century: A Pathway to 2025" (Texas Tech University, 2017), as an institutional guide to carry out the institution's mission, vision, and values over the next five years. Messages within the strategic plan from the university's president and provost indicate a desire to solidify the university as a "premier public research university committed to advancing [the] basic missions of education, discovery, creativity, engagement, and innovation" (Texas Tech University, 2017, p. 3) while leading the university to the next century by educating and empowering “a diverse student body" (Texas Tech University, 2017, p. 5). TTU’s strategic plan highlights achieving the benchmarks to qualify as a Hispanic-serving institution and states that this designation is "a significant step in the university's overarching commitment to serve the educational needs of the diverse population of [the] state and the nation” (Texas Tech University,

2017, p. 9). However, the strategic plan makes no specific mention of the HSI committee or ways in which the university will advance a campus climate and culture inclusive of Latinx students. While the strategic plan does identify four yearly targets for the percentage of first time in college (FTIC) enrollment of Latinx students among a list of 22 identified goals and yearly targets, the lack of explicit recognition and goal-setting for the Latinx student population underscores a minimal understanding of the implications of the campus' newfound designation and a lack of commitment to amplify Hispanic *serviingness*.

Although aware that an HSI designation requires change, most efforts pale in comparison to the university's "overarching commitment to serve the educational needs" of all diverse populations. As stated on the HSI webpage, the HSI committee's work centers on "intentionality and '*serviingness*' to facilitate student sense of belonging, build on the strength of the university community, enhance opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to fully engage and thrive at Texas Tech, and leverage HSI grant funding opportunities to enhance the campus experience" (Texas Tech University, n.d.). Additionally, the committee's four overarching goals fail to place a primary emphasis on the success of Latinx students despite obtaining racialized funds to serve Latinx students. Two of the four goals speak first to advancing minoritized students and/or faculty and staff and secondarily focusing on Latinx students and/or faculty and staff. One of the four goals does not explicitly name Latinx students at all, rather it focuses on identifying and making recommendations "on how to leverage existing resources and assets, including faculty,

staff, and student resources, to benefit all minoritized student populations” (Texas Tech University, n.d.).

Additionally, interview data underscores the campus's challenges in adopting an HSI-inclusive identity, including institutional history, structural diversity, and psychological and behavioral climates. Semi-structured interviews with student services professionals and administrative staff highlighted the challenges faced by organization members in supporting Latinx students. Employee 2 noted that despite the university's intentions, their goals are met with concerns that do not "fully understand the work that comes along with creating an HSI identity".

When [people] hear the name Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, especially at an institution like this, [they] think that you're trying to make it more diverse and change things up. Left and right upside down, you know, and sometimes that makes people feel uncomfortable (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Employee 1 acknowledges that changes to university culture are bureaucratic, often moving at a snail's pace. When asked what impedes the change, employee 1 offered "the system" (personal communication, December 11, 2022). While creating and implementing an organizational identity, it is understood that "higher education moves slow and that maybe the changes that we want to see culturally are still taking a while to happen" (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

In addition to systemic hurdles, participants acknowledge how institutional history and

structural diversity impacts cultural changes in the university. For example, the university is approaching its centennial birthday, highlighting the campus' long and established history of serving its community. TTU derives from a conservative agricultural community that butts up against the oil fields (Employee 3, personal communication, December 22, 2022). All participants indicated that Texas Tech maintains a "Raider Red" pride that often encourages alum to return to the university and work as staff and faculty members. Unfortunately, this causes the university's predominantly white staff and faculty to be less diverse in race/ethnicity and worldview (Employee 1, personal communication, December 11, 2022). This can challenge understanding diverse students' needs - specifically Latinx students - as their experiences are not monolithic. Although Texas Tech achieved the HSI designation based on increased Hispanic enrollment, the student body has yet to look like a "Hispanic-serving" institution. Employee 2 notes that:

Prospective students come in and we had a family from the valley from like the Rio Grande Valley, asking well, really like we noticed that there aren't a lot of minorities or Hispanics here. Like, how is it? And we get that question a lot. Not only for the Hispanic or Latinx community, but also like our APIDA [Asian Pacific Islander Desi American] community and our Black community. And so, to me, it's, it's hard to answer that question and we/I can't change the facts, you know. And so yes, we're all here. We're here just not in the numbers that you may see in other parts of Texas, or the US (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

In addition, employee 1 acknowledges that although Texas Tech is a Hispanic-serving institution, it has yet to provide a voice for that community as "nothing specifically educational that highlights the Hispanic heritage" (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Finally, however, all participants demonstrated an understanding that the ultimate recipients of the university's structural changes are the student body. That understanding serves as a reminder of the progress being made concerning organizational identity. Employee 1 notes that Texas Tech's culture has become one that "include[s] the voice of our students and champion[s] for them" (personal communication, December 11, 2022). Understanding that students' voices are essential to the change process does not go without challenges. Employee 1 (personal communication, December 11, 2022) further explains that staff recognizes their responsibility to "justify to certain groups that [the university] can provide those unique resources to [Latinx] students", however:

The biggest barrier is having people understand what that means. The work that comes along with it, but then also translating that into a message that our students can understand. Because at the end of the day, we can say we're an HSI ... [but] if our students are not on the receiving end and fully feeling that support that comes through the work of an HSI, then we're not being so effective.

Project Question 3. In what ways does Texas Tech's HSI designation influence how student-level success outcomes are defined for Latinx students?

Finding 6: TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campus wide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.

Colleges and universities reinforce racial structures and racial ideologies that continuously shape and reshape the contours of race and inequality for minoritized people in postsecondary education and society at large (Bonilla-Silva & Peoples, 2022; Ray, 2019; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019; Vega et al., 2022). Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2019) find that “wittingly or not, the dominant racial logics of these institutions - the explicit or implicit modal conceptualizations of race and racism institutional leaders and actors abide by - inform the programs, initiatives, and everyday practices” (p. 401). Therefore, existing success matrices, such as retention, persistence, and graduation rates, are set by the white dominant field of higher education (Garcia, 2019). According to Garcia (2019), legitimized norms fail to recognize the multiple ways success outcomes might be defined and measured based on the unique needs, experiences, and expectations of Latinx students. Congruent with literature, staff members recognized a need for different success matrices for Latinx students based on the campus’ HSI designation. Interview responses indicated that they could not indicate how the campus supported student-level outcomes specific for Latinx students. In their own words, when asked to explain what the HSI designation means to them and their work, employees 1 and 2 described the HSI designation using similar language focused on understanding the needs and support of the Latinx community. Employee 1 states:

By having an HSI distinction... That we not just academically but student service-wise in all areas of student service understand the cultural and ethical needs of the Hispanic student population and that we have justified to certain groups that we can provide those unique resources to that group of students. (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

However, when asked to describe how the institution measures outcomes or success for their Latinx students, neither employee 1 nor employee 2 knew how to answer this question. Employee 1 states that she “[doesn’t] know how to answer. Okay yeah, that’s definitely above my pay grade” (personal communication, December 11, 2022). At the same time, employee 2 states that she “[doesn’t] think that [she] can answer [the] question that will really serve your need at this point” (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

When asked how their departments measure outcomes or success for Latinx students, both speak to aspirational notions of measuring success. Employee 1 believes that measuring outcomes should include:

Pulling a number of students of Hispanic ethnicity who are involved in at least one student organization that, a) doesn't have anything to do with their ethnicity and their culture and, b) does have something to do with their ethnicity and culture, and then it would be even better to know why they wanted to join said organizations (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Employee 2, similarly, speaks to how the department plans to measure success in the near future:

We've just, we've focused the last two semesters been cleaning up our data ... And so, what we're now getting to is comparing the data for graduates and that retention from semester to semester, the persistence and so we're just now getting to that point where we can say like, oh, this is the percentage of graduates that we've had, or this and that. So, I just wish I had a better answer for you. But at least for us, it's at least being aware of the student population we have, going in and just measuring what everyone does and, you know, graduation rates and things like that (personal communication, December 11, 2022).

Project Question 3a. In what ways does TTU currently measure success for Latinx students that is different from all other students?

Finding 7: TTU maintains the same success criteria for Latinx student outcomes as they do for the entire student population, with few indicators designed to assess the success of Latinx students specifically.

A review of TTU's Title V grant application, "Sirviendo Estudiantes: Moving Texas Tech from Hispanic Enrolling to a Hispanic Serving Institution" (Texas Tech University, personal communication, n.d.), shows an institution primarily focused on improving Latinx student success based on legitimized norms (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019). Improving first-year retention rates, two- and three-year persistence rates, and four- and six-year graduation rates for TTU's Latinx students are primary student success goals within this grant application's narrative. Similarly, a review of TTU's strategic plan

affirms a strategic priority to educate and empower a diverse student body by increasing total student credit hours, student credit hours per full-time undergraduate student, one-year retention rates, four- and six-year graduation rates, and placement of graduates.

Staff Member 3 acknowledges the university's robust outcome measures related to the enrollment of Latinx students:

We have been doing an excellent job at the enrollment. There are specific goals that our undergraduate admissions and enrollment management team have related to recruitment and enrollment of Hispanic-Latino students. They could probably give you pages upon pages of that information. You know intentionally, you know targeted messaging, making sure everything is converted into Spanish, making sure that we're looking at recruiting.

You know HSI community colleges, right? Looking at our transfer student populations, making sure that we're, you know ... using our systems ... to reach our target demographic (personal communication, December 22, 2022).

However, this staff member goes on to explain that Texas Tech currently “has really just been looking at our persistence, retention, and graduation rates disaggregated by year, but there are not specific goals related to Hispanic/Latino students now”.

Summary of Findings

Our study sought to understand how Texas Tech University, a historically white comprehensive public research university that gained recognition as a Hispanic-serving institution in 2019, is serving Latinx students. We learned that salient issues challenge the

transformation of predominantly white organizational cultures to meet the needs of Latinx student populations. Texas Tech confronts many challenges, including (1) how to adopt a cultural identity that ensures *servingsness* for the campus' Latinx population when that group is still a minority on their campus; (2) how to ensure inclusion for all and yet justify to Latinx student populations that they can provide them with unique resources and *servingsness*; and (3) as campus leaders how to push past bureaucracy to ensure an enhanced quality of education, increased degree attainment, and a sense of belonging for Latinx students. Although participants believed that they have a fiduciary, ethical, and socially just responsibility to foster a culture that emboldens the population they pledge to serve, they were overwhelmingly bound to institutional structures and unclear how *servingsness* persists outside of legitimized norms.

Figure 3 summarizes our research findings.

Summary of Findings
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. After receiving the HSI designation, Texas Tech University leaders created several strategic initiatives, including forming a committee to focus on HSI <i>servingsness</i>, that signaled to internal stakeholders a commitment to Hispanic <i>servingsness</i>.2. A vast majority of student participants indicated that TTU strives to intentionally “serve” its Latinx students by offering a multitude of Hispanic-oriented student organizations and culturally responsive support programs and curriculum.3. Like student participants, staff participants recognized the importance of understanding the unique needs of Latinx students within the context of the new HSI designation.

However, students and staff recognized the need for continued and sustained efforts that uncover and respond to Latinx students' needs and reaffirm Latinx students' identities.

4. After accepting the HSI designation, TTU leaders increased initiatives, such as sponsoring the inaugural Hispanic Serving Institution Week that highlighted the benefits of being an HSI, to amplify and promote Hispanic *serviingness* as a campuswide organizational identity.
5. While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic *serviingness*, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic *serviingness*.
6. TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.
7. TTU maintains the same success criteria for Latinx student outcomes as they do for the entire student population, with few indicators designed to assess the success of Latinx students specifically.

Figure 3 - Summary of Findings

Recommendations

Like many newly designated Hispanic Serving Institutions, Texas Tech went into the years-long process of achieving HSI status, focusing on the opportunity to receive large amounts of grant dollars because of their Latinx student enrollment. In doing so, institutional leaders signaled to the university community a Hispanic-*enrolling* identity. In the form of millions of dollars in federal grant monies, this official recognition signaled an institutional value associated with Hispanic student enrollment numbers. Research supports that “individuals interpret organizational initiatives and practices - which are easily observable - as signals of what an organization is like, including its values, priorities, culture, and climate” (Leslie, 2019, p. 545). Once this signal reverberated around and through campus, TTU’s identity as a Hispanic-enrolling institution was formed.

Beyond the TTU HSI committee’s work on defining and deepening Hispanic-*servingness* culture, the campus might benefit from the following recommendations to move the university’s identity towards *servingness*. Figure 4 summarizes our purposed recommendations and their correlation to our findings.

Recommendation	Finding(s)
<p>Recommendation 1: The HSI student success subcommittee should establish a campuswide agreed-upon definition of <i>servingness</i> informed by data from Latinx undergraduate student focus groups. This definition should include academic outcomes and non-academic experiences for Latinx students.</p>	<p>Finding 5: While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic <i>servingness</i>, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic <i>servingness</i>.</p>

<p>Recommendation 2: The HSI student success subcommittee should establish a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success that goes beyond legitimized norms. These outcomes should center and incorporate the non-dominant expectations of Latinx undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty and, where possible, incorporate evidence-based practices that support Latinx student success</p>	<p>Finding 6: TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.</p> <p>Finding 7: TTU maintains the same success criteria for Latinx student outcomes as they do for the entire student population, with few indicators designed to assess the success of Latinx students specifically.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The HSI student success subcommittee should lead in creating an improvement process that outlines immediate, intermediate, and aspirational goals for Latinx students at TTU. This improvement process should incorporate their new definition of <i>servingness</i> and Latinx student success with Excelencia in Education’s “Seal of Excelencia” framework.</p>	<p>Finding 3: Like student participants, staff participants recognized the importance of understanding the unique needs of Latinx students within the context of the new HSI designation. However, students and staff recognized the need for continued and sustained efforts that uncover and respond to Latinx students’ needs and reaffirm Latinx students’ identities.</p> <p>Finding 5: While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic <i>servingness</i>, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic <i>servingness</i>.</p> <p>Finding 6: TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.</p> <p>Finding 7: TTU maintains the same success criteria for Latinx student outcomes as they do for the entire student population, with few</p>

	indicators designed to assess the success of Latinx students specifically.
To communicate Hispanic <i>servingness</i> as a dominant cultural value, the university should update language in their institutional documents, websites, and leadership communication to prioritize and affirm Latinx students, faculty, and staff as primary benefactors of the HSI designation and HSI grant dollars.	<p>Finding 5: While Texas Tech University aims for Hispanic <i>servingness</i>, existing socio-historical systems interfere with the necessary organizational changes that would align the university with explicit elements of Hispanic <i>servingness</i>.</p> <p>Finding 6: TTU staff recognizes the need to understand and create student-level success outcomes that center Latinx students. However, a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success still needs to be determined.</p>

Figure 4 - Summary of Proposed Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The HSI student success subcommittee should establish a campuswide agreed-upon definition of *servingness* informed by data from Latinx undergraduate student focus groups. This definition should include academic outcomes and non-academic experiences for Latinx students. Using a common definition for organizational priorities assists individuals and organizations with understanding organizational needs, establishing goals and objectives, devising strategies for goal achievement, reducing ambiguity, enhancing connection with belief systems, and increasing transparent communication (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Clegg et al., 2007; Hsu and Hannan, 2005). Using a process where data is collected from Latinx, undergraduate student focus groups, the HSI student success subcommittee should define and enact *servingness* through a multidimensional race-conscious lens that includes academic outcomes and non-

academic experiences for Latinx students. In addition, TTU's definition of *servingsness* should affirm the diverse ethnicities, languages, and cultural experiences of Latinx students. A campus wide definition of *servingsness* would enable TTU leadership to move from *servingsness* as a concept with aspirational goals to an actual practice that helps campus leadership realize their desire for action.

Recommendation 2

The HSI student success subcommittee should establish a campuswide agreed-upon definition of Latinx student success that goes beyond historically normed measures of student success. These outcomes should center and incorporate the non-dominant expectations of Latinx undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty and, where possible, incorporate evidence-based practices that support Latinx student success.

According to Garcia (2019), legitimized norms are those white hegemonic standards, such as retention, persistence, and graduation rates, that are set by the white dominant field of higher education. These legitimized norms fail to recognize the multiple ways success outcomes might be defined and measured based on the unique needs, experiences, and expectations of Latinx students within different institutions (Burbage & Glass, 2022; Garcia, 2019). Additionally, using a cultural lens to define success beyond individual measures “places the onus on the institution to deeply examine its structures and historical legacy for serving racialized populations” (Garcia, 2017, p. 127S). Informed by data collected from focus groups of Latinx undergraduate students, Latinx graduate students, and Latinx faculty and staff, the HSI student success subcommittee

should establish student-level success outcomes that center and incorporate the non-dominant expectations of Latinx students at TTU. Where possible, evidence-based practices that support Latinx student success - such as developing a transfer-oriented culture for Latinx transfer students (Andrade, 2019), creating a sense of familia through culturally and linguistically responsive learning communities (Gonzalez et al., 2015), instituting pre-college intervention programs providing academic support and remediation, career development, and financial aid packaging (Rodriguez et al., 2015), incorporating holistic and proactive advising for Latinx students (Museus & Ravello, 2010), and helping Latinx students acknowledge and activate their funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth (Contreras & Kiyama, 2022) - should be incorporated into this definition. Institutions like the University of California, Santa Cruz; California Lutheran University; California State University, Long Beach; California State University, Fresno; University of Arizona; and the University of Central Florida are examples of universities who are substantively and effectively strengthening their capacity to serve Latinx students.

Recommendation 3

The HSI student success subcommittee should lead in creating an improvement process that outlines immediate, intermediate, and aspirational goals for Latinx students at TTU. This improvement process should incorporate their new definition of *servingness* and Latinx student success with Excelencia in Education’s “Seal of Excelencia” framework.

This improvement process should incorporate TTU’s new definition for Hispanic *servingness*

and Latinx student success with Excelencia in Education’s “Seal of Excelencia” framework (Excelencia in Education, n.d.). *Excelencia* in Education is a public policy and advocacy network whose mission is to accelerate Latinx student success in higher education by working with HSIs to address structural inequities and transform their institutions (Excelencia in Education, n.d.). *Excelencia* in Education established the Seal of *Excelencia*, a national certification for institutions of higher education seeking a comprehensive institutional strategy for moving from simply enrolling Latinx students to intentionally serving Latinx students. This framework has three core components focused on disaggregating data to highlight the status of Latinx students, practicing evidence-based programs and policies to achieve desired results for Latinx students, and demonstrating leadership and impact based on aligning data and practice to improve Latinx student success. By assigning metrics to stated goals associated with TTU’s definition of *servingness* and Latinx student success, the HSI student success subcommittee can use outcomes to publicly track and demonstrate progress or improvement.

Recommendation 4

To communicate Hispanic *servingness* as a dominant cultural value, the university should update language in their institutional documents, websites, and leadership communication to prioritize and affirm Latinx students, faculty, and staff as primary benefactors of the HSI designation and HSI grant dollars. By failing to affirm Latinx students, staff, and faculty as the primary focus of racialized funds and using grant funds to support programs and services that are either race-evasive or race-neutral, TTU is unintentionally

minimizing race (Bonilla-Silva, 2015), racial structures (Ray, 2019), and the racialization process (Ray, 2019). Bonilla-Silva (2015) argues that this type of “racial ideology based on the superficial extension of the principles of liberalism to racial matters that result in ‘raceless’ explanations for all sort of race-related affairs” (p. 1364) is simply another racial structure employed by white organizations to justify the unequal distribution of resources along racial lines and protect their material interests against people of color (Ray & Purifoy, 2019). Therefore, as recipients of racialized funding it is ethically and socially responsible for TTU leaders to cultivate a culture that emboldens the population they pledge to serve. Intentional language within institutional artifacts that decentralizes white hegemonic norms and engenders the Latinx experience communicates Hispanic *servingness* as a dominant cultural value, usurping the campus’ socio-historical challenges while solidifying a Latinx identity within the existing organizational identity.

Conclusion

Texas Tech University has made great strides since receiving the HSI designation in 2019 and has students and professional staff in place committed to and ready for transforming their organizational identity to one fully committed to Hispanic *serviingness*. An intentional shift from Hispanic-enrolling to Hispanic-serving could communicate Hispanic *serviingness* as a dominant cultural value that might motivate campus stakeholders to engage in practices, behaviors, and routines that facilitate these new organizational goals. By following the recommendations outlined in this study, Texas Tech might reconstruct an organizational identity that achieves its identified educational outcomes and fulfills its promise to center and serve the ethnic experiences of its Latinx students. Who knows? In a few years' time, Texas Tech might find itself serving as a national leader for HSIs evolving from a Hispanic-serving institution to a Hispanic-thriving institution.

Appendix A - Data Collection Approach

Project Question	What data do we need to answer this question?	Why do we need this data?	What methods will we use to collect this data?
<p>PQ1. In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic-servingness?</p>	<p>Information from institutional documents - strategic and other institutional plans (e.g., strategic enrollment management plan, equity plan, student success plan, etc.), HSI Title III application for funding, HSI Title V application for funding, HSI committee meeting notes, HSI student success subcommittee meeting notes, HSI committee end of year reports, HSI student success subcommittee end of year reports, and other relevant reports or supplemental documents associated with Title III and V applications.</p>	<p>Understand institutional perceptions and perspectives about and goals/objectives for <i>servingsness</i>.</p> <p>Understand how institutional leaders understand and/or signal Hispanic-servingness as a central part of the institutional culture and organizational identity.</p> <p>Determine how the institution defined <i>servingsness</i>, described indicators of <i>servingsness</i>, and identified measures of impact for Title III and V grant funds.</p> <p>Understand the overall approach to Hispanic-servingness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is TTU offering? ● How does it roll out services and programs? ● What is the Title III and V money being used for specifically and how is this aligned with Hispanic students' needs? 	<p>Document analysis.</p>

		<p>Understand how the organization identifies as a Hispanic-serving institution.</p> <p>Identify what is common or corroborated and then build the interview protocol to drill into organizational factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What organizational factors facilitate Hispanic-servingness? • What organizational factors inhibit Hispanic-servingness? 	
<p>PQ1a. In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?</p>	<p>Information from students.</p>	<p>Understand students' perceptions of <i>serviingness</i> through Title III and V funds.</p> <p>Check out/Verify understandings from documents to see if students' perceptions and perspectives of <i>serviingness</i> align with HSI funds.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with Latinx students identified by the student success HSI subcommittee</p>
<p>PQ1b. In what ways do professional staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?</p>	<p>Perceptions from professional, student services professional and administrative staff student affairs and diversity, equity, and inclusion staff (employees with the most interactions with students).</p>	<p>Understand professional staffs' perceptions of <i>serviingness</i> through Title III and V funds.</p> <p>Check out/Verify understandings from documents to see if perceptions and perspectives align with professional staffs' understanding of</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff</p>

		<p><i>servingsness.</i> Check out/Verify students' understanding of <i>servingsness</i> with staffs' understanding of <i>servingsness.</i></p>	
<p>PQ2. In what ways do organizational structures facilitate or inhibit Hispanic-<i>servingsness</i>?</p>	<p>Perceptions from student services professional and administrative staff student affairs and diversity, equity, and inclusion staff (employees with the most interactions with students).</p>	<p>Understand professional staffs' perceptions of structures for <i>servingsness</i> that facilitate an HSI organizational identity.</p> <p>Understand professional staffs' perceptions of structures for <i>servingsness</i> that inhibit an HSI organizational identity.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff</p>
<p>PQ3. In what ways does Texas Tech's HSI designation influence how student-level success outcomes are defined for Latinx students?</p>	<p>Information from institutional documents - strategic plan and other institutional plans (e.g., strategic enrollment management plan, equity plan, student success plan, etc.), HSI Title III application for funding, HSI Title V application for funding, and other relevant reports or supplemental documents associated with Title III and V applications.</p>	<p>Understand how student-level outcomes for Latinx students are talked about, described, and documented.</p> <p>Check findings from document review and semi-structured interviews with students to understand where there is or is no alignment with students' needs and ideas of success.</p>	<p>Document analysis and semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff</p>
<p>PQ3a. In what ways does TTU currently measure success for Latinx students that is different from all other students?</p>	<p>Information from student services professional and administrative staff student affairs and DDEI staff (employees with the</p>	<p>Understand how student-level outcomes are assessed for Latinx students in ways that are different from legitimized</p>	<p>Document analysis and semi-structured interviews with student services professionals and administrative staff</p>

	most interactions with students).	or common measures of success.	
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Appendix B - Detailed Document Explanation

Type of Document	Document Description
TTU's website	Websites operated by all of Texas Tech University Schools and Academic Departments, News Organizations, Administrative Offices, Museums and Libraries, Academic Centers, Initiatives, and Programs.
TTU's Strategic Plan	The university's strategic plan, "A Foundation for the Next Century: A Pathway to 2025", provides a roadmap for the university moving forward and supporting its efforts to solidify Texas Tech's position as a premier public research university.
TTU's Title V project narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Title V- Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program application ● Provides grants to assist HSIs in expanding educational opportunities for, and improving the attainment of Hispanic students. These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability. ● "Funds may be used for activities such as scientific or laboratory equipment for teaching; construction or renovation of instructional facilities; faculty development; purchase of educational materials; academic tutoring or counseling programs; funds and administrative management; joint use of facilities; endowment funds; distance learning academic instruction; teacher education; and student support services" (https://www2.ed.gov/programs/ideshsi/index.html)
HSI committee meeting notes	Live streams, recorded videos, and/or meeting agenda/ minutes for sub-committee meetings held concerning Hispanic <i>servingsness</i>
HSI committee end of year report	Summation of year-long committee efforts and proposed goals as the committee work continues.
HSI <i>Servingsness</i> Tool	Assessment tool, created by Garcia et al. (2019), that enables organizational leaders to understand and assess Hispanic <i>servingsness</i> on their campus.

Appendix C - Needs Assessment for Interview Questions

Based on TTU's needs, what are the most important concepts we want/need to focus on thereby revealing which questions we want to ask?

If we ground our interview questions within our literature review, we should ask questions about

1. *Servingness*

- a. Indicators of servingness - academic and/or nonacademic
 - i. Perceptions/Knowledge of academic outcomes (i.e., is this important TO Latinx students, do they know about these indicators/do they care about these indicators?).
 - ii. Perceptions associated with nonacademic experiences with culturally relevant programs, services, and pedagogy.
 - iii. Perceptions associated with nonacademic experiences of belongingness or campus climate.
 - b. Structures for servingness
 - i. Can students answer questions about structures for *servingness* at TTU?
 - ii. Perceptions about internal organizational dimensions.
 - iii. Perceptions about external influences on organization.
- ### 2. Organizational Identity
- a. Historically and predominantly white institutional identity (i.e., racialized organizations).
 - b. New identity as an HSI (i.e., typology of HSI organizational identity).

Appendix D - Data Analysis Plan

Project Question	What methods will we use to collect this data?	How will we analyze this data?
PQ1. In what ways does Texas Tech University, a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), recognize Hispanic- <i>servingsness</i> ?	Document analysis.	Fieldnote writing to identify patterns within and relationships among documents using a priori codes on organizational identity.
PQ1a. In what ways do students perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?	Semi-structured interviews with Latinx students identified by the student success HSI subcommittee.	Semi-structured interviews with Latinx students identified by the student success HSI subcommittee - codebook using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> .
PQ1b. In what ways do professional staff perceive that TTU supports Latinx students?	Semi-structured interviews with student services professionals and administrative staff.	Semi-structured interviews - codebook using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> .
PQ2. In what ways do organizational structures facilitate or inhibit Hispanic- <i>servingsness</i> ?	Semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff.	Codebook using a priori codes on structures for <i>servingsness</i> .
PQ3. In what ways does Texas Tech's HSI designation influence how student-level success outcomes are defined for Latinx students?	Document analysis and semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff.	Fieldnote writing to identify patterns within and relationships among documents using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> . Semi-structured interviews - codebook using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> .
PQ3a. In what ways does TTU currently measure success for Latinx students that is different from all other students?	Document analysis and semi-structured interviews with student services professional and administrative staff.	Fieldnote writing to identify patterns within and relationships among documents using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> . Semi-structured interviews - codebook using a priori codes on indicators of <i>servingsness</i> .

Appendix E - Code Book

A Priori Codes: Codes that are predetermined before coding data (Saldaña, 2016).

Code	Detailed Content Description	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Brief data example for reference (Quotes or text segments)
(ISA) Indicators of <i>servingness</i> for Latinx students-academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic preparedness at the primary and secondary level ● dual enrollment ● the success of undocumented and DACA students ● successful progression of Latinxs through developmental (remedial) education ● accelerating time to degree completion ● financial commitment to actualizing an HSI identity ● investment in positions that lead HSI efforts ● 	Perceptions/ Knowledge of academic outcomes (i.e., is this important TO Latinx students, do they know about these indicators/do they care about these indicators?).	Discussion of indicators that are not specific to Latinx students and/or the result of the campus' HSI designation or efforts since receiving the designation.	To be completed with the collection of data
(ISNA) Indicators of <i>servingness</i> for Latinx students-non-academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students' academic self-concept and social agency ● racial identity; and leadership identity ● mentoring and 	● Perceptions associated with nonacademic experiences with culturally relevant programs, services,	Discussion of indicators that are not specific to Latinx students and/or the result of the campus' HSI designation or	To be completed with the collection of data

	<p>support programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interactions with same-ethnicity and Spanish-speaking peers, faculty, and staff • culturally significant programming such as murals by Latinx artists, mariachi bands, and Día de Los Muertos celebrations 	<p>pedagogy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions associated with nonacademic experiences of belongingness or campus climate. 	<p>efforts since receiving the designation.</p>	
<p>(SS) structures of <i>servingness</i> specific to the Latinx student population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating the HSI identity in institutional mission statements • Institutional policies; decision-making processes; curricular and co-curricular structures and programs; compositional diversity of staff, faculty, and administrators; diversity and equity plans; and leadership practices • Culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum, and programs and services 	<p>Perceptions about internal organizational dimensions. Perceptions about external influences on organization.</p>	<p>Discussion of structures that are not specific to Latinx students and/or the result of the campus' HSI designation or efforts since receiving the designation.</p>	<p>To be completed with the collection of data</p>
<p>(SO) <i>Servingness</i> other</p>	<p>Any themes or patterns that do not fit into our deductive coding structure but appear to influence</p>	<p>Any themes or patterns that do not fit into our deductive coding structure but appear to influence</p>	<p>Themes or patterns of <i>servingness</i> that clearly align with indicators or structures.</p>	<p>To be completed with the collection of data</p>

	<i>servingness</i>	<i>servingness</i>		
(OI) organizational identity- (P) purpose, (V) value, (C) Culture	Visible and public dimensions that signal the university's purpose and philosophy to the public	Perceptions and perspectives of the TTU's purpose, value, and culture found in mission statements, marketing, member communication, and behavior, etc.	A wide variety of data can be used to support the university's public dimensions and what the campus signals to the public	To be completed with the collection of data
(OO) organizational identity- other	Any themes or patterns that do not fit into our deductive coding structure but appear to influence the campus' organizational identity	Any themes or patterns that do not fit into our deductive coding structure but appear to influence the campus' organizational identity	Themes or patterns that align with predetermined characteristics of organizational identity.	To be completed with the collection of data
(RN) Race-neutral Stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and initiatives created by HSI-designated funds that are not limited to one, culture, race, or ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad-sweeping, race-evasive, or race-neutral approaches that legitimate unequal distribution of resources and exacerbate pre-existing patterns of racialized inequality 	Race-conscious conceptualizations of HSIs	To be completed with the collection of data

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