ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	BECOMING A RECOGNIZED HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI): INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE & TITLE V
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The purpose of this study was to understand the influence of institutional culture at an HSI on the Title V program. The findings highlight the forces that influence the process of securing, evaluating, and sustaining Title V grants. Drawing upon Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008), a single-site case study was constructed to explore all phases of a Title V grant cycle at a four-year public HSI. Data from 18 semi-structured interviews and over 20 institutional documents were used to investigate the institution and its Title V program utilizing the layers of institutional culture, such as external environment, mission, individual actors, and subcultures.

While Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney's (1988; 2008) frameworks capture most of the findings, several aspects of institutional culture emerged that were not fully integrated into either framework. Most notably, race and ethnicity was central to all aspects of institutional culture and were added as a crosscutting layer. Additionally, external forces such as state-level policy changes or clarification of accrediting agency regulations directly influenced various stages of the Title V program. The new frame for analyzing institutional culture at HSIs situates the institution and its individual actors within the surrounding region and illustrates how external forces influence the various

layers. This study contributes to a growing body of research on HSIs and adds to our

understanding of federal support for these institutions through Title V.

BECOMING A RECOGNIZED HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI):
INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE & TITLE V

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my paternal grandmother.

Your untimely passing taught me to cherish everyday and live life to the fullest.

I am eternally grateful for your sacrifice and unending love.

-In loving memory of Guadalupe Villarreal

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Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the things we might do when we reauthorize the HEA is have a new section with special grants and incentives to schools that reach out to the Hispanic community, so that we recognize in a very special way that there is a problem that must be addressed. – Representative Paul Simon (D, IL), September 16, 1982

It took ten years and two more reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act

(HEA) to realize Simon's vision. In the 1980s, Simon and others at the federal level, as

well as state leaders and university presidents, recognized that a small set of institutions

enrolled a large percentage of Latino[1] students, but had low levels of resources. After

years of advocacy and debate, federal law under the HEA first recognized Hispanic-

Serving Institutions (HSIs) with the 1992 reauthorization and established a grant program

for these institutions to compete for additional resources. HSIs are now defined as

accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education

with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Latino full-time equivalent student

enrollment (20 U.S.C. 1101-1101d; 1103-1103g). The defining characteristic of this new

categorization was their Latino enrollment, not their institutional mission.

Background and Problem Statement

Whereas other minority serving institutions (MSIs), for example historically

Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) or Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs),

were established with the intention of serving distinct populations, many HSIs were

predominately White institutions (PWIs) that reached the threshold of 25 percent Latino

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[1] Hispanic and Latino are frequently utilized interchangeably. Latino is my preferred term and will be used in this document with the exception of direct quotations. (*see definition of terms p. 12*)

student population with several exceptions. A small number of institutions were founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the distinct mission to meet the educational needs of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. These institutions include Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College and Boricua College, both located in New York, St. Augustine (Illinois), which offers bilingual higher education, and the National Hispanic University located in California, which is now a for-profit institution and no longer an HSI based on the federal definition (Hurtado, 2003; Laden, 2004). Additionally, the 59 nonprofit HSIs in Puerto Rico were created with the express purpose of educating residents of the island, and currently maintain a total student population that is 97 percent Latino (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a).

In order to be eligible to compete for federal support through an annual grant program, the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program (DHSI) (Title V) (Appendix A), HSIs must request designation as an eligible institution. Beyond the basic defining features of an HSI (accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Latino full-time equivalent student enrollment), eligibility requirements include the following: at least 50 percent of the institution's Latino students are low-income; the institution has an enrollment of needy students; and the institution has low average education and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student (20 U.S.C. 1101-1101d; 1103-1103g). Funded through the HEA, the program was designed to "assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students. HSI grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Since its

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inception, the Title V program has supported over 500 programs at countless institutions, yet beyond formal grant reporting to the Department of Education, very little is known about the *impact* of Title V program in its entirety on institutional level outcomes.

Initial allocation to the Developing HSIs Program in 1995 was $10 million and 15 years later, in 2010 the appropriation for the program was $217 million. This substantial increase in support combined with limited evaluative efforts and minimal accountability for how HSIs utilize their funds has sparked debates and many question whether Latino students actually benefit from the program. Further, as recent as 2011, the Republican controlled House of Representatives has proposed drastic cuts in funding to HSIs, potentially reducing federal support by over 80 percent, to levels not experienced since 1995 when the program first began (Dervarics, 2011). As Congress prepares for reauthorization in 2014, it is uncertain how HSIs, or MSIs in general, will function in the future.   Now, more than ever, HSIs must be able to articulate why the Title V program is an essential infusion of financial resources that facilitates expanded access and success for Latino students.

Of the previous studies conducted on HSIs, few have explored the Title V program or institutional culture. Pineda's (2010) dissertation explored the evolution of the Title V program and its effects on Latino college student enrollment and graduation rates. The first and only known examination of the Title V program, Pineda did not find the Title V program had an effect on Latino enrollment or degree completion.

Moreover, much of the research exploring HSIs in general tends to be descriptive in nature, explaining the history of the HSI designation or providing cursory overviews of HSIs (Benítez, 1998; Benítez & DeAro, 2004; De Los Santos & De Los Santos, 2003;

Hurtado, 2003; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Laden, 2001; Laden, 2004; Santiago, 2006).

Given the nuances of HSIs, these overviews provide valuable contributions to

understanding this diverse institutional type, but more empirical studies are essential.

HSIs are not a monolithic institutional type; rather, they include two- and four-year,

public and private institutions located in rural, urban, and suburban environments

scattered across the contiguous U.S. and island of Puerto Rico.

While rigorous qualitative and quantitative studies exploring HSIs are beginning

to emerge, much of the focus is on student choices or experiences (Arellano, 2011;

Bridges, Kinzie, Nelson Laird, Kuh, 2008; Cejda, Casparis, & Rhodes, 2002; Crisp,

Nora, & Taggart, 2009; Cuellar, 2012; González, 2008; Guardia & Evans, 2008; Maestas,

Vaquera, & Muñoz Zehr, 2007). Several researchers have started to explore HSIs as

organizations, specifically exploring institutional climate (Cortez, 2011); identity (Garcia,

2013); and characteristics of HSIs, such as structural-demographic, peer context, and

organizational behavior factors (Nuñez & Elizondo, 2012). This area of research is in its

infancy, and many of the studies are dissertations or conference papers, though more

empirical, referred journal articles are beginning to emerge.

Furthermore, the percentage-based definition of HSIs impacts research design

choices, as the list of HSIs is not fixed nor is the list of Title V eligible institutions. Each

year, institutions must submit eligibility documents to the Department of Education,

verifying that the institution meets the eligibility criteria. If an institution does not

complete the eligibility application or its Latino population slips below 25 percent, a

campus would not be an HSI by the federal definition.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the Title V program through the lens of institutional culture by exploring the process of securing, evaluating, and sustaining Title V grants. I explored one four-year public HSI using a qualitative methodology, specifically looking at institutional culture and the Title V program. The major research in this study centered on one question:

How does institutional culture influence the Title V program across all phases of a grant cycle at a four-year public HSI?

By interviewing current institutional leaders and those involved with the first Title V grant (2003-2008), I gained insight into how and why Title V proposals were crafted and then implemented, evaluated, and institutionalized.

According to Tierney (1990), the motivation for studying campus "culture is to understand how 'decisions and actions' are culturally influenced so that we might utilize our newfound understanding to create more effective organizations" (p. 1). Moreover, Peterson and Spencer (1990) suggest that organizational culture and climate provide a framework for "making sense of the nonrational and informal aspects of an organization that are not captured in formal documents and procedures, objective characteristics of its members, quantitative measures of resources and performance, or organizational chart" (p. 4). In order to explore organizational culture, Peterson and Spencer (1990) recommend qualitative methods, "involving ethnographically thick descriptions drawn from participant observation by the researcher, examination of institutional records and documents, and open-ended interviews" (p. 14).

I used two frameworks that explore institutional culture and environments to

inform this study. The first is Kuh and Whitt (1988)'s framework for reviewing culture

in higher education which provided four layers of analysis: (1) the external environment

that surrounds a college or university; (2) the institution itself; (3) sub-cultures within the

institution and within subcultures; (4) individual actors and roles. I felt that these

categories were very broad, so I turned to Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework of

organizational culture, which outlines six major components connected to studying

culture, including environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and

leadership, to provide a more narrow lens. Within each of the six categories, Tierney

(1988; 2008) provides several guiding questions that will be useful in identifying the

meaning of these terms within distinct environments; however, based on the literature

around HSIs and Title V, Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework exclusively would not fully

capture important elements of institutional culture at an HSI.

 Instead of using one or the other, the conceptual model I used to explore the Title

V program and institutional culture at a public four-year HSI drew from both Kuh and

Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) frameworks. Kuh and Whitt's (1988) framework

provided the broad categories for exploring institutional culture and Tierney's (1988;

2008) framework provided several sub-categories and specific questions used to explore

that segment of institutional culture. Specifically, the frameworks helped me to

conceptualize my interview questions and informed my participant selection as well as

my institutional document collection process and subsequent analysis. This process is

discussed further in Chapter 2.

Rationale for the Study

The key assumption underlying the rationale for the Title V program is that funding for institutional capacity building will translate to improvements in student-level outcomes for Latino students, such as increased access to higher education and higher rates of retention and graduation (Villarreal & Santiago, 2012). The federal government supports HSIs for a wide variety of efforts, such as the purchase of equipment for education and research; improvement of instruction facilities (construction, maintenance, renovation); faculty and staff development; curriculum revision and development; enhancement of student support services, such as tutoring or academic success programs, creation or re-development of articulation agreements and student support programs designed to facilitate the transfer of students from two-year to four-year institutions. Given the diversity of supported efforts, it is difficult to examine the entire Title V program and measure its effectiveness.

In 1995-96, there were 135 HSIs (Santiago, n.d.), and as of 2012-13 the number of HSIs has more than doubled to 370 institutions that enroll nearly 60 percent of the Latino undergraduates and account for approximately 11 percent of institutions of higher education in the United States (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a). The growing number of institutions serving large populations of Latino students is expected to increase, yet the primary form of federal support through Title V provides assistance to a very limited number of campuses each year. Even though overall allocations to the program have grown substantially from 1995-96 ($12 million) to 2010-11 ($117 million), the growth in the number of awards granted is relatively flat, with approximately 50-80 institutions receiving awards each year, though annual amounts given to each institution

has nearly doubled from $334,000 to $626,000 (Villarreal & Santiago, 2012). This substantial increase in total support over the last 15 years combined with limited evaluative efforts and minimal accountability for how HSIs utilize their funds has sparked debate: Should institutions applying for HSI grants target their initiatives for only Latino students or expand programs to include all students? Additionally, should there be an increased level of reporting and accountability requiring awardees to show that their efforts are benefitting Latino students?

In general, Latino advocates suggest that money should not go to Latino students exclusively, but that there is an expectation that for an HSI *serving* Latino students is a priority (Moltz, 2010). Others suggest that federal support should be tied to performance outcomes, and institutions that successfully serve Latino students through degree completion and successful workforce placement should be designated HSIs (Kelly, Schneider, & Carey, 2010). Despite the HSI designation, some argue that financial support should not be funneled directly and only to Latino students; because of the large number of Latinos enrolled at HSIs, any financial support or program enhancement will eventually benefit them (Moltz, 2010).

Regardless of where the money should be targeted, the Title V program or other similar programs designed to provide additional resources and increase opportunities for Latino students is not guaranteed. During an era of heightened scrutiny and increased calls for accountability, understanding how HSIs make decisions about applying for and utilizing federal money through the Title V program will provide much needed insight into an unknown process. Finally, understanding how institutions evaluate their Title V funded activities beyond federal evaluative efforts will also provide important

information.   This is particularly of interest should the Department of Education change evaluation expectations or if HSIs are asked to articulate the impact of the Title V and provide data to support their claims.

Title V is not prescriptive and supports eight diverse activities aimed at increasing educational opportunities for Latino students. Additionally, HSIs submitting proposals may want to direct financial support to remedy issues or achieve goals that manifest uniquely within campus environments. Just as no two institutions of higher education are identical, Title V programs are unique; therefore it is important to explore Title V programs within a specific institutional context.

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative methodology to explore institutional culture's influence on the Title V program at a four-year public HSI. I employed a single-case study design. Utilizing purposeful sampling, I selected an institution because it, "purposefully inform[ed] an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Moreover, I utilized a general set of criteria for selecting a research site: (a) four-year public institution; (b) within the state of Texas; (c) met definition of HSI; (d) past recipient of Title V individual grant; (e) concluded Title V grant cycle under investigation.

The site, University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), is located in south Texas, in a region of the state known at the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). The institution, an HSI before the designation was established, currently (Fall 2012) enrolls approximately 17,220 Latino students (89 percent of total student population). UTPA was awarded a Title V grant in FY2003 with a five-year annual award amount of $333,963 to improve

student retention and time to graduation through programmatic and curricular innovation as well as provide faculty and staff development.

In order to explore institutional culture connected to UTPA's Title V grant, I included individual interviews, document analysis, and institutional data in my data collection. I interviewed faculty, staff, and administrators and asked about their involvement and experiences with the Title V application process, the funded programs after the grant was secured, evaluative activities, and sustainability efforts after the federal funding ceased.

Yin (2009) states that case studies best address "how" or "why" questions seeking to understand an in-depth phenomenon. Additionally, Yin (2009) describes case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). Institutional culture permeates all aspects of an institution. There are no clear boundaries between institutional culture and the Title V program; therefore, case study is an ideal research method to address this topic.

<p align="center">**Significance of the Study**</p>

While empirical work exploring HSIs is expanding, there is still a dearth of scholarly research on this growing category of institutions; further examination is required to understand their role within the broader higher education context. Contreras, Malcom, and Bensimon (2008) describe the urgent need to study HSIs both qualitatively and quantitatively to address topics such as "the academic culture of HSIs; the attitudes, values, and commitments of HSI faculty members… the academic outcomes HSIs produce for Latina/o students (cohort analysis); and the role of HSIs in increasing college

enrollment and degree attainment for Latinas/os" (p. 88). By examining institutional

culture in connection to Title V, this study provides an opportunity to explore many of

the research gaps Contreras et al. (2008) highlight within one distinct campus

environment. This study provides insight into the most widely recognized federal grant

program for HSIs. It explores the influence of institutional culture within a specific

university and Title V program context. Highlighting the challenges and successes of all

stages of the grant cycle can provide valuable guidance and potentially serve as

motivation for institutions considering applying for or institutions in the middle of a Title

V grant. Moreover, it makes the case for considering how their institutional culture may

influence their efforts across all stages of a Title V grant. Finally, based on my findings,

I suggest a framework for analyzing institutional culture at HSIs; more than exploring

Title V, I posit that the framework can be used to explore other elements of HSIs and

even extend to other MSI contexts.

Definition of Key Terms

The terms **Hispanic** and **Latino** are frequently used interchangeably as umbrella

terms that include people from diverse national origins, races, and cultures (Benítez,

1998). Additionally, the terms describe people with varied English-language skills and

immigration status, as well as sixth- and seventh-generation U.S. citizens. The U.S.

Office of Management and Budget defines "Hispanic or Latino" as "a person of Mexican,

Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin,

regardless of race" (1997, Categories and Definitions section, para. 5).

A 2002 Pew Hispanic Center report suggests that a large majority of Latinos (88

percent) indicate that they identify themselves by the country where their parents or

ancestors were born (i.e., "Mexican" or "Colombian"). Additionally, they are more likely to use "Hispanic," than "Latino" and lastly identifying as "American" (Brodie, Steffenson, Valdez, Levin, & Suro, 2002). Because research does not use consistent terminology, my preference is to use Latino to describe the population as a whole, but I will utilize other terms if they appear in direct quotations or describe a specific program.

The term **Anglo** is frequently used in the Rio Grande Valley to describe people not of Latino descent. As the American Heritage Dictionary suggests, Anglo is generally used in direct contrast to Latino and the term is not limited to persons of English or even British descent but can be generally applied to any non-Latino White person (Harcourt, 2011). In the Valley, a person of Polish, Irish, or German heritage is termed an Anglo just as readily as a person of English descent.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one provides a brief review of HSIs and Title V, an outline of the research purpose and question, and an overview of the research design. I also highlight the significance of my study and define several key terms used throughout the document. Chapter two contains two sections. The first is an examination of institutional culture, specifically Kuh and Whitt's (1988) framework for analyzing culture in higher education and Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework of organizational culture. The second provides a review of the literature on Title V and HSIs. The third chapter includes the methodology and procedures I used to gather data. Chapter four is a presentation of the case and includes in-depth historical and background information for the institution, its general retention efforts, and the Title V program. Within chapter five, I present findings that connect to my original conceptual model and other emergent themes. In chapter six, I

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discuss my findings and analysis, present a new framework for exploring institutional

culture at HSIs, and outline the study's implications, areas for future research, and

limitations.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Beyond understanding the purpose of this study, a thorough analysis of relevant literature provides context for this study and highlights its contribution to the field. This chapter explores the institutional culture of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). The chapter begins with literature examining institutional culture and then turns to several frameworks used to study institutional culture. After reviewing each of the frameworks, I will outline how each informed my framework for exploring institutional culture at a four-year public HSI. The following sections explore HSI specific literature and are organized utilizing the major themes within my conceptual framework. These areas include history, external environment, and internal environment.

Institutional Culture and Higher Education Institutions

Studies exploring culture within the higher education context emerged in the 1960s with a focus on student cultures (Becker, 1963; Bushnell, 1962; Pace 1960, 1962). In the 1970s, Clark explored culture through three colleges (1970) and institutional identity utilizing organizational sagas (1972). Studies exploring academic cultures (Becher, 1981; Freedman, 1979; Gaff & Wilson, 1971), leadership and institutional management culture (Chaffee, 1983; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Tierney, 1988) also began. More recent work (late 1980s and beyond) explores higher education institutional culture in the context of student experiences and persistence (Kuh & Vesper, 1997; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010; Museus & Quaye, 2009), faculty research and teaching (Aguirre, 2000; Austin, 1996; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007), subcultures (Renn & Arnold, 2003), and institutional change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

Theoretical Frameworks

One of the first attempts to define culture utilizing an organizational theory perspective was Schein (1985), who described culture as shared assumptions of the group that used to successfully navigate difficult issues and then socialized new members of the organization to think and act similarly when those problems occur. Drawing from Schein and others, Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) established frameworks for exploring culture in higher education institutions. While both frameworks are similar, each highlights slightly different nuances for exploring institutional culture.

A framework for analyzing culture in higher education. Exploring institutional culture requires an in-depth understanding of the institution itself. As highlighted by Kuh and Whitt (1988), "An institution's culture evolves over time, shaped by patterns of routine interactions among students, faculty, institutional leaders, (including founders), alumni, and other constituents" (p. 45). Campus culture is more than these interactions; it is these interactions within a distinct environment shaped by an institution's "history—the college's original mission, its religious or ethnic heritage, and the circumstances under which the institution was founded" (p. 45). Moreover, Kuh and Whitt (1988) provide four layers of analysis: (1) the external environment that surrounds a college or university; (2) the institution itself; (3) subcultures within the institution and within subcultures; and 4) individual actors and roles. They define culture as, "*The collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups… and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus*" (emphasis in original, Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 12).

Kuh and Whitt (1988) provide a comprehensive examination of institutional culture and the various layers to explore when studying a university's culture. While the framework is comprehensive, it does not appear to capture dynamic movement or address changes in an institution that influence culture. Additionally, though more stylistic, Kuh and Whitt do not provide a visual interpretation of how their layers of institutional culture fit together or intersect.

Kuh and Whitt's (1988) monograph and framework has been cited over 600 times. A seminal work in campus culture literature, many scholars utilize Kuh and Whitt (1988) as part of their conceptual framework to enhance their understanding of campus culture. For example, Kuh and Arnold (1993) use institutional culture as an interpretive framework paired with socialization to explore alcoholic consumption among fraternity members. In the study, Kuh and Arnold (1993) viewed culture as "a system of reciprocal interactions among fraternity members, the physical manifestations of the setting(s) frequented by the group, and symbolic meanings unique to this group" (p. 327). Dubrow (2004) uses Kuh and Whitt's (1988) institutional culture framework along with Cuban's (1999) typology of academic change to explore the process of general education curriculum reform at a four-year religiously affiliated Liberal Arts College. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) use Kuh and Whitt (1988) in conjunction with college impact literature to inform their study on the role of faculty in student learning and engagement. The framework has been used to inform research conducted at myriad higher education institutions.

A framework of organizational culture. Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework identifies six major components connected to studying culture: environment, mission,

socialization, information, strategy, and leadership (Table 1). Additionally, Tierney

(1988; 2008) recognizes the external forces that shape institutional culture but suggests

there are also strong internal forces rooted in the history of the organization: "An

organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in

doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication on both an instrumental and

a symbolic level (p. 24).

Much like Kuh and Whitt (1988), Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework of

organizational culture provides a list of six categories that make up an institution's

organizational culture. Similarly, this framework does not suggest how these categories

might overlap or influence each other within the seemingly infinite institutional culture.

One unique feature of his framework includes a list of questions researchers should

address within each category to capture the key components influencing an institution's

culture.

Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework has been cited nearly 700 times. Bailey

(2011) uses Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework to explore organizational culture's impact

on the effectiveness of research administration units at HBCUs. Schroeder (2010) uses

Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework and guiding questions to explore institutional culture

within intercollegiate athletics departments and ultimately posits a new model for

exploring the unique cultural nuances of athletics.

Based on HSI and Title V literature, these frameworks alone did not seem to

capture institutional culture fully; therefore, I integrated them. Kuh and Whitt's (1988)

framework provided the broad categories for exploring institutional culture and Tierney's

(1988; 2008) framework provided several sub-categories and specific questions used to

explore that segment of institutional culture. This model, and those from which it is adapted, guided my data collection process. It informed my participant selection process, as I made sure I included participants with immediate involvement in the Title V program as well as others from the general institutional layer. I designed my questions to ask about all layers of the model as it pertained to retention efforts and the Title V program.

Transformational leadership. While Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) both include institutional leaders and the role their decision-making processes play in institutional culture, neither framework attends to types of leadership, specifically transformational leadership. Avolio and Cass (1987) suggest that transformational leaders can alter their environments. Moreover, "Transformational leaders do not necessarily react to environmental circumstances, they create them" (p. 36). Burns (1978) described transformational leaders as development oriented for the purpose of change. Further, transformational leaders focus on the individual development of subordinates, enhancing their performance, which, in turn, leads to organizational growth. House and Singh (1987) suggest that transformational leaders "focus on vision and mission, creating and maintaining a positive image in the minds of followers, showing confidence in and respect for followers, and behaving in a manner that reinforces the vision and mission" (p. 684). Additionally, Kezar and Eckel (2002) building from previous models, identified several strategies for exploring transformational change across an institution of higher education including: "(a) a willing president or strong administrative leadership; (b) a collaborative process; (c) persuasive and effective communication; (d) a motivating vision and mission; (e) long-term orientation; (f) providing rewards; and (g) developing support structures" (p. 298). The

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subsequent sections in this chapter will explore relevant research within each of the themes in the conceptual model. The research focuses exclusively on HSIs and the Title V program.

Historical Roots

While historical roots within the employed frameworks speak to individual campus environments, it is important to explore the historical roots of HSIs in general. This section provides background information on the formation of the HSI designation and the Title V program. In the 1980s, leaders at the federal, state, and institutional levels recognized that a small set of institutions enrolled a large percentage of Latino students but had low levels of resources. "Hispanic Institutions" were first mentioned at the federal level in 1983 during a series of Congressional hearings held in Texas, Illinois, and Puerto Rico highlighting Latino access (Santiago, 2006). Two major themes evolved from the *Hispanic Access to Higher Education* (1983) hearings: Latino students lacked access to higher education and many who began programs did not complete them; and secondly, Latinos were concentrated at institutions of higher education that received limited financial support to improve their quality of education. As a result of these hearings, Congressman Paul Simon (D-IL) introduced legislation that would support the improvement of the quality of education provided at institutions with a large percentage of Latino students (Santiago, 2006). In his bill, Simon defined a "Hispanic Institution" as an institution of higher education "which has an enrollment of which at least 40 percent are Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Hispanic students, or a combination thereof" (H.R. 5240, unenacted). The bill was not signed into legislation, but it was a turning point for Latinos in higher education. It indicated there was an

increased awareness of Latinos as a visible population in higher education, a need to

identify institutions that served large numbers of Latino students, and an interest in

supplying targeted funding to these institutions to improve the quality of education

provided to Latino students (Santiago, 2006).

In addition to national hearings, others were addressing the needs of this student

population. Several institutional leaders from colleges and universities in the Southwest

with large Latino student populations gathered for the first time in the mid-1980s

(Santiago, 2006). Individual institutions were experiencing limited success when

competing for federal, foundation, and corporate support with large institutions or those

already known for serving minority populations, so they united forces and created a

coalition. Antonio Rigual, an institutional leader at Our Lady of the Lake University and

the founding president of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU),

explained in a 2004 interview that the coalition was created to better advocate on behalf

of institutions educating large numbers of Latino students (Santiago, 2006). After

reviewing data from the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* annual almanac, they noted that

many institutions ranged from 20 to 40 percent Latino enrollment (Santiago, 2006). It

was decided that 25 percent Latino student enrollment signified a "critical mass" of

students that would change the organizational landscape of an institution, and they coined

the term "significantly Hispanic institutions" (Santiago, 2006). Moreover, the

institutional leaders worked to raise the recognition of, and investment in, the institutions

identified with the new criterion (Santiago, 2006). The institutions were united in 1986

with the creation of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and

the term "Hispanic-Serving Institution" was conceived at the first HACU conference in

1986 (Santiago, 2006).

It was not until 1992, six years after "Hispanic-Serving Institution" was first used, that the classification was federally recognized through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. HSIs were listed along with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) under Title III – "Developing Institutions." Then in 1998, the Higher Education Act was reauthorized again and HSIs were placed under a separate title, Title V – "Developing Institutions," whereas HBCUs remained in Title III which was renamed "Institutional Aid" with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). The change, championed by HBCU leaders, was in response to arguments that HSIs were "siphoning" off the funding for HBCUs and that there was a zero-sum game across Title III funding opportunities resulting in less funding for each institution (Gasman, 2008). The 1998 legislation defines HSIs as an "eligible institution [accredited, degree-granting], has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students" (H.R. 6-187, 1998). As of 2012-13, 370 HSIs make up 11 percent of all institutions of higher education and enroll 59 percent of the Latino student population (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a). Nearly half of HSIs are community colleges (48 percent), compared to public colleges or universities (20 percent) or private institutions (28 percent) (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a).

HSIs typically offer greater access and opportunity for Latino students who are frequently from low-income socioeconomic backgrounds, are often first-generation college students, and may be less prepared academically for college level work (Laden, 2001). For example, a majority of HSIs (61 percent) have an open admissions policy, compared to 30 percent of all degree-granting institutions; are public institutions (70

percent) (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago 2014b); and tend to be less expensive compared to other institutions (Benítez, 1998; Fry, 2002; O'Brien & Zudak, 1998; Santiago, 2007). Additionally, other characteristics of HSIs are appealing to Latino students such as degree programs and course offerings designed to accommodate part-time students (Benítez, 1998; Fry, 2002), opportunities to enroll in courses aimed at improving job skills without having to complete a degree (Fry, 2002), and convenient locations close to home (Benítez, 1998; Santiago, 2007).

In addition to providing access for a large number of Latinos, HSIs graduate a large number of Latinos. For example, in 2008-09, HSIs conferred 58 percent of subbaccalaureate certificates, 59 percent of associate degrees and 40 percent of bachelor's degrees earned by Latino students. HSIs graduate a significant proportion of Latinos in high-demand fields related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); nearly 65 percent of STEM certificates, 61 percent of STEM associate degrees and 40 percent of STEM bachelor's degrees awarded to Latinos in 2008-09 were conferred by HSIs. In addition, HSIs also provide critical pathways; Latinos who earn a bachelor's degree in STEM at HSIs are more likely to have earned their degrees in a math-intensive science field (e.g., computer science, engineering) than their counterparts who graduate from non-HSIs (Dowd, Malcom, & Macias, 2010).

External Environment

Institutions of higher education were created as a result of external environments and continue to be shaped by societal forces (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2011). Context matters and can have a large impact on institutional performance and decision-making (Lane & Brown, 2004). Kuh and Whitt (1988) describe an institution's external

context as a combination of regional, social, economic, and occupational forces. When examining institutional culture, it is important to consider these forces.

Location, in a variety of forms, plays a large role in institutional culture. Within the same region, differences in physical location may also impact institutional culture. For example, differences would be expected between institutions in urban and rural settings or within distinct regional environments (Lane & Brown, 2004). Additionally, as Clark and Trow (1966) suggest, the patterns of interactions between faculty, staff, administrators, and students are influenced by the culture of the surrounding community.

In 2012-13, while HSIs are located in 15 states and Puerto Rico, the majority of HSIs (75 percent) are situated in the Southwest (California, Texas, and New Mexico) and Puerto Rico (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a). California has the most HSIs (127), followed by Texas (68), Puerto Rico (59), and New Mexico (22) (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a). HSIs are also located in states not generally known for having large Latino populations such as Oregon, Kansas, and Connecticut, though most of these institutions are two-year institutions (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a). Additionally, the majority of HSIs are located in urban areas (52 percent), followed by suburban areas (31 percent), towns (10 percent), and rural communities (7 percent) (Calderón Galdeano & Santiago, 2014a).

Political

Beyond location, external political forces exert influence on institutions of higher education. El-Khawas and Walker (2001) suggest government (federal, state, and local entities) is the most critical external force as a source of power and control within higher education. Institutions must be responsive to governmental authorities, accrediting

agencies, and laws or policies. As Lane and Brown (2004) suggest, these entities or

mandates may vary across different political regions. For example, each state has distinct

policies impacting higher education institutions, and even regional differences exist

within the same state (Lane & Brown, 2004).

State involvement in higher education. In Texas, the Texas Higher Education

Coordinating Board (THECB) coordinates state-supported colleges and universities. The

fifty-ninth Texas Legislature established the Texas College and University System

Coordinating Board in 1965 and though the name changed in 1987, the mission has

remained the same; provide centralized planning and development of a comprehensive

system of higher education. For example, "the board provides statewide leadership in

achieving excellence in college education through efficient and effective use of resources

and the elimination of unnecessary duplication in program offerings, faculties, and

campus facilities" (Ashworth, 2010, para. 1). The governor appoints board members

from various geographical regions of the state and with approval from the Texas Senate

the designee joins the eighteen-member board and serves for a six-year term (Ashworth,

2010). Specific responsibilities of the THECB include: "the development of formulas for

equitable financing of institutions of higher education, the review of requests for degree

programs, the authorization of elections to establish public community college districts,

and the review of proposals for campus construction" (Ashworth, 2010, para. 2).

Beyond the THECB, the Texas Charter for Public Higher Education adopted in

1987 by the State legislator outlines formal goals and priorities for higher education in

the state as well as the roles and responsibilities of each of the entities in the state. The

Texas Legislature sets broad policy and finances public higher education and THECB

serves as the planning body, advises the Legislature on higher education, and coordinates services statewide (Select Committee on Higher Education, 1987).

Data politics. Another political force exerting pressure on the study of HSIs is the confusion around the institutional designation and how different entities describe the universe of institutions. Deborah Santiago, co-founder, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Policy of *Excelencia* in Education, a not-for profit educational organization committed to accelerating Latino student success in higher education by linking research, policy and practice, wrote about this topic in an essay "Creating a List of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)". Santiago (2011) outlines that in the absence of an official list of HSIs, the higher education field has created multiple lists, "developed for different purposes using definitions that vary from federal law. These multiple lists complicate efforts to establish a common understanding of HSIs, their strengths and needs by researchers, policymakers, advocates and students" (Santiago, 2011, p. 1).

Excelencia's list is developed annually utilizing data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Institutional Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) housed at the U.S. Department of Education. In the essay, Santiago (2011) provides the methodology and step-by-step instructions for creating an HSI list and provides several important notes: (1) this list does not address eligibility for any grant programs and (2) Puerto Rico's HSIs are eligible to receive federal support. Santiago (2011) urges researchers to use this common methodology to reduce confusion and to ensure the use of a single, clear definition of HSIs.

"Creating a List of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)"*,* also highlighted Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) use the same methodology

for developing a list of HSIs, which is often confused with HACU's membership list. HACU is a membership organization established in the 1980s that represents more than 400 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the US, Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain.

The Department of Education maintains several lists, but again, they are developed utilizing different methodologies and for different purposes. The HSI list contains the colleges and universities to which the Department's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) has awarded Title V grants. The list is available from 1999 to present, but does not include institutions that did not apply for, or that did not receive, competitive Department grants under the HSI Program. Moreover, the Department of Education posts a list of eligible institutions for Title III and Title V (FY 2005 to present), but the list does not distinguish between the two grant programs. In FY 2013, 913 institutions submitted an application and were determined eligible, but it is unclear which institutions are eligible for Title V and does not include any institutions that did not submit an application. Because the data for determining the percentage of Hispanic students that are low-income is not available through IPEDS, it is difficult to develop a list of Title V eligible institutions (Cook as cited in Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012). *Institutions with High Hispanic Enrollment,* is a third list available through the Department of Education and includes non-profit institutions of higher education whose full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of undergraduate students is at least 25 percent Hispanic. However, the list has not been updated regularly and was developed utilizing Fall 2006 enrollment data from IPEDS. The different lists, definitions, and lack of clarity around these institutions make it very difficult to research HSIs as a collective body.

Economic

While governmental forces may exert the most influence on institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, professional associations and the corporate sector also play a role. Phillips (2005) suggests private corporations, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations contribute to HSIs through scholarships and financial aid, research grants, and professional development, internship and job placement opportunities for students.

Beyond these external constituents, fundraising and development initiatives are also a venue for economic support. While minimal research has been conducted on institutional advancement at HSIs, Mulnix, Bowden, and López (2002) conducted a survey of HACU-member institutions around topics of fundraising, public relations, alumni affairs, marketing, enrollment management, and government relations with a response rate of 32 percent. Interestingly, HSI chancellors and presidents cited enrollment management and fundraising as extremely important institutional advancement activities, yet alumni relations received the only "not important" ratings (Mulnix et al., 2002). It is unclear why the institutional leaders in this study do not connect fundraising activities to strengthening their alumni networks. Moreover, growing supportive alumni networks are particularly important for HSIs, as many are entirely dependent on state and federal funding, and have small or no endowments (Mulnix et al., 2002).

Internal Environment

Exploring institutional culture requires an in-depth understanding of the institution itself. As highlighted by Kuh and Whitt (1988), "An institution's culture evolves over time, shaped by patterns of routine interactions among students, faculty,

institutional leaders, (including founders), alumni, and other constituents" (p. 45).

Campus culture is more than these interactions; it is these interactions within a distinct

environment shaped by an institution's "history—the college's original mission, its

religious or ethnic heritage, and the circumstances under which the institution was

founded" (p. 45).

History

Institutional history can be described in a variety of ways. Clark (1970, 1972)

developed the concept of organizational saga based on research at three higher education

institutions: Reed, Antioch, and Swarthmore. Described by Masland (1985), institutional

sagas are institutionalized, evolutionary stories describing important events and

individuals shaping the history of the institution. Clark (1972) highlights two stages to

the development of an institutional saga: initiation and fulfillment. Initiation can occur in

three ways: first through new leadership, second when an established organization is in

crisis, or finally through evolutionary change in an organization (Clark, 1972). Initiation

looks very different within each campus, and while fulfillment is also unique, it occurs

through similar mechanisms such as faculty or staff, programmatic offerings, students, or

rituals (Clark, 1972). These transmitters of organizational culture will be addressed later

in the chapter.

Mission

Institutional mission statements are a fixture in American higher education and

serve many purposes. Morphew and Hartley (2006) suggest two potential benefits to

outlining an institutional mission; when examined through an organizational culture lens,

mission statements serve as an expression of purpose, institutional values, and

commitment to external constituents (Carruthers & Lott, 1981; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988).

Additionally, a clear mission provides administrators and other institutional leaders with

guidance around decision-making and calibrating all campus activities (Morphew &

Hartley, 2006). Beyond providing information to external constituents and guidance for

institutional decision-making, mission statements have also been connected to effective

performance.

Contreras et al. (2008) purposefully selected 10 two- and four-year HSIs in

California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and New York (to reflect diversity of HSIs:

public/private, size, and location) and examined how the HSI designation was reflected in

their mission statements. Surprisingly, none of the 10 institutions mentioned the HSI

designation in their mission statements, but rather all statements contained at least one of

three keywords: "diversity/diverse," "culture/multicultural," and "access," and it was

unclear whether these terms were describing student populations, the campus, or the

greater community (Contreras et al., 2008). Overall, Contreras et al. (2008) found it

difficult to find a Latino identity or symbolic reference to the HSI designation across the

10 institutions. Moreover, the study also examined educational outcomes for Latino

students compared to other ethnic groups and across majors where Latinos are

underrepresented. Additionally, they found that the HSIs provided Latinos increased

access but unequal educational attainment, particularly in science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors (Contreras et al., 2008). One conclusion

Contreras et al. (2008) draw from their findings suggest that, "being an HSI has yet to

create a sense of collective responsibility and accountability among institutional leaders

and faculty members for producing equitable educational outcomes for Latino/a students"

(p. 87). It is important not to conclude that all HSIs hide their identity or are not

increasing Latino educational attainment based on a review of 10 purposefully selected

institutions. By examining mission statements and educational outcomes across 10

extremely diverse HSIs located in five states, Contreras et al. (2008) do not capture the

distinctiveness of individual HSIs or consider individual campus cultures. Public,

private, two- and four-year, rural and urban HSIs should be not examined as a single

institutional type.

Programs

Kuh and Whitt (1988) describe programs as academic or curricular offerings, but

for the purpose of this study, this category will focus on the Title V program. Beyond

defining HSIs, the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992 also created the

Developing HSIs Program, an annual competitive grant program awarding financial

support to HSIs to increase Latino and other low-income students' educational

opportunities and enhance academic quality. The U.S. Department of Education's Office

of Postsecondary Education (OPE) houses the program and the Institutional Development

and Undergraduate Education Services (IDUES) program office coordinates day-to-day

administration.

Title V background. In order to receive a grant under the Title V program, there

is a two-part application process. First, an institution of higher education must apply by

early February to be designated as an eligible institution. That application includes

general institutional information (name, address, contact person, two-or four-year

institution, and public or private), institutional enrollment (total head count and minority

enrollment), and institutional statistics (needy student requirement - number of Pell grant

recipients, recipients of Title IV need-based financial assistance, and educational and general expenditures requirement) (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). After receiving eligibility certification, an institution must complete a grant application outlining a comprehensive development plan (CDP).

The institutional grants promote capacity building at HSIs and the original list of 14 authorized activities supported growth across the institution. HSIs could apply for support to construct, renovate, or improve classrooms, libraries, and other instructional facilities; create faculty exchanges and professional development opportunities for faculty, assist with curriculum development or academic instruction, and provide faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in field of instruction; implement academic success programming such as tutoring or counseling services; and establish or improve a development office to strengthen or improve fundraising efforts (20 U.S.C. 1101). With the reauthorization of the HEA in 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act amended the list to include eight activities (See Table 2 for full list and changes). Little is known about why legislative changes decreased the number of authorized activities eligible for grant support in Title-DHSI, but the changes seem to have improved alignment with student success efforts (Villarreal & Santiago, 2012).

Eligible HSIs may apply for one of two distinct types of grants: Individual Development Grants (one eligible HSI) and Cooperative Development Grants, where an eligible HSI in cooperation with one or more institutions of higher education agree to share resources to better achieve outcome and avoid costly duplication (Developing HSIs Program, 1999).

After applications are submitted, experts serving on independent panels rank the quality of the proposed grant projects. Following the review process, funding is awarded based on average scores from the panel. There is not a set number of awards each fiscal year, but grants are awarded until funding is depleted. Each type of development grant may be awarded for a five-year period, but most times the Non-competing Continuation (NCC) grants are lower than the original award. An institution that received an individual development grant of five years may not subsequently receive another individual development grant for a period of two years from the date on which the five-year grant terminates. In one fiscal year, institutions may submit an application for an individual development grant and be part of a cooperative development application (Developing HSIs Program, 1999). Grantees are responsible for documenting and reporting annual performance to the Department of Education through annual performance reviews (APR).

Research on Title V. Few studies have examined the Title V program directly. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) authored several reports, provided testimony before the House of Representatives, and made recommendations for changes to the Title V program. Those reports will be reviewed briefly. Additionally, one dissertation, Pineda (2010), has explored the Title V program and its effects on enrollment rates and degree completion for Latinos at HSIs.

In 2004, the GAO submitted a report to the Secretary of Education entitled, "Low-Income and Minority Serving Institutions: Department of Education Could Improve its Monitoring and Assistance." In the report, the GAO (2004) reviewed Title III (grants for HBCUs and TCUs) and Title V (HSIs) grants and found that most

institutions focused their initiatives on improvements in academic quality, student

services (e.g., tutoring), and outcomes for students (e.g., course passage, persistence, and

graduation rates). The report also highlighted several areas for improvement in

monitoring and providing assistance to grantees (GAO, 2004). In 2007, the GAO testified

before the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness

as part of the Committee on Education and Labor in the House of Representatives. The

testimony, "Low-Income and Minority Serving Institutions: Education has Taken Steps

to Improve Monitoring and Assistance, but Further Progress is Needed," highlighted the

Department of Education's strides in monitoring Title III and Title V grantees and

providing technical assistance to at-risk grantees[2] but also emphasized the misalignment

between the program's accountability measures (Scott, 2007). The Department of

Education's strategic planning efforts shifted to improving the academic, administrative,

and fiscal stability of grantees, along with objectives and performance measures focused

on student outcomes, such as graduation rates, but the strategies did not align with the

outcomes. Moreover, similar to the 2004 report, the GAO continued to encourage the

Department of Education to create new venues for feedback and communication between

program officers and grantees beyond APRs that are a requirement for funding.

     The GAO submitted another report on Title V in 2009, entitled "Low-income and

Minority Serving Institutions: Management Attention to Long-standing Concerns Needed

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[2] At-risk is defined by the GAO testimony as institutions flagged based on risk
assessments conducted by Department of Education staff using a variety of sources,
such as expenditure of grant funds, review of performance reports, and federally
required audit reports.

to Improve Education's Oversight of Grant Programs," to the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, as part of the Committee on Education and Labor in the House of Representatives and testified before the committee in 2010 on the report's findings. The report and subsequent testimony were based on GAO's analysis of data from a representative sample of grant applications and APRs for the fiscal year 2006 grantees, interviews with Department of Education officials and 27 grantee institutions, and site visits at seven other grantee institutions. GAO (2009) contends that the Department of Education continued to improve monitoring based on 2004 and 2007 recommendations, but many initiatives have fallen short or remained incomplete. According to the GAO report (2009), several areas of concern continue to plague the Department of Education's successful implementation and evaluation of the Title III and Title V programs, such as staff skill gaps, substantial declines in site visits to grantees, and the lack of a comprehensive approach to monitoring that assures grantees appropriately manage federal funds, increasing the potential for fraud, waste, or abuse. In preparing this report, the GAO discovered more than $100,000 in questionable expenditures at one grantee institution including student trips to resorts and amusement parks and an airplane global positioning system (GAO, 2009).

Overall, the GAO reports and testimony provide an overview of the challenges the Department of Education faces in implementing both the Title III and Title V programs but do not capture the nuanced differences between the two federal grant programs. All HBCUs and TCUs receive annual support through Title III with a formula-based funding structure, whereas eligible HSIs participate in an annual competitive grant program and only a portion of the applicants receive support through

Title V. Moreover, while the GAO analysis included interviews and site visits at several

institutions, it is unclear which HSIs, if any, were included in this data collection.

Additionally, because the interview protocol is not included in the report, it is difficult to

gather any information regarding institutional decision-making related to either of the

grant programs. This study seeks to understand the Title V program from the

institutional lens and will address these challenges outlined by the GAO reports from one

institution's perspective.

While the GAO reports provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges

facing the Title III and Title V programs, Pineda (2010) focuses on the Title V program

from 2000-2007. With data provided by the Department of Education, Pineda's (2010)

descriptive analysis provides insight into the number of institutions that have applied for

and received Title V support. Additionally, Pineda (2010) also examines institutional

characteristics of grantee and non-grantee institutions. Beyond this review of the

program, the dissertation seeks to examine Latino student outcomes at the institutional

level as a result of the Title V grant; specifically, did the HSIs experience an increase in

Latino student enrollment or degrees (associate or bachelor's) awarded to Latino students

after receiving the award. One main finding of Pineda's analysis highlighted the

concentration of awards in a relatively small number of institutions and states/territories.

Pineda did not find the Title V program to have an effect on Latino enrollment or degree

completion. Her study's findings, as well as the limitations she outlines provide support

for this study, as her macro-level review of the Title V program did not allow for

campus-level activities to be captured. She calls for increased data collection at each HSI

receiving Title V awards and recognizes the issues of looking at enrollment and degree completion across a non-monolithic group of institutions.

Institutional Actors

Kuh and Whitt (1988) describe institutional actors as campus administrators, faculty, and staff and in some particular cases students. Though not an institutional actor, one organization exploring and advocating on behalf of HSIs is *Excelencia* in Education and several of their policy briefs are relevant to this study and thoroughly describe the HSI landscape from the perspective of institutional agents: "Latino Student Success at Hispanic-Serving Institution" (Santiago, Andrade, & Brown, 2004), "Hearing from Presidents of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Defining Student Success, Measures of Accountability, and What it Means to be an HSI" (Santiago, 2007), and "Modeling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Campus Practices That Work for Latino Students" (Santiago, 2008).

The first report, "Latino Student Success at Hispanic-Serving Institution" (Santiago et al., 2004), presents findings from a demonstration project examining Latino student success. The project compares institutional practices and Latino student outcomes at six participating institutions and engaged representatives from each campus for a 12-month period. Presidents at California State University-Dominguez Hills, California State University-Los Angeles, City University of New York-Lehman College, City University of New York-New York City College of Technology, The University of Texas at El Paso, and The University of San Antonio created campus teams with

representatives from offices of institutional research, academic services, and student life to explore what it means to be "Hispanic serving" and how an institution facilitates, defines, and evaluates Latino student success. At the time of the study, all six institutions were receiving federal support through the Title V grant program.

Findings from the project suggest that even with the diversity of HSIs there is some consensus in terms of defining Hispanic "serving" and Latino student success. The participating institutions agreed that a Hispanic "serving" institution:

Is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students from diverse cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds, has particular commitment and expertise in meeting the educational needs and ensuring the academic success of Latino students, and has an explicit mission that accepts responsibility for the learning and academic achievement of all its students. (Santiago et al., 2004, p. 3)

The participants recommended the implementation of a holistic approach to Latino student success – an ideal strategy would incorporate institutional leadership, community outreach, academic programs, support services, student life programs, families, as well as institutional research (Santiago et al., 2004). Further, they agreed that while one element of Latino student success is degree completion, other elements of success such as student engagement, continuous enrollment, employment beyond graduation, and enrollment in graduate education should also be considered in defining student success (Santiago et al., 2004). Moreover, the analysis highlights the importance of examining Hispanic "serving" institutions beyond the federal definition, which focuses on enrollment, and exploring institutional elements in-depth on distinct campuses.

Overall this study provides a good foundation in exploring HSIs from the

institutional leadership perspective. While exploring six institutions, the study provides very broad strokes and does not consider each institution's specific context. By exploring one campus, my study attempts to fill a gap and provide a "thick" description of institutional context and culture. Moreover, Santiago et al. (2004) used Title V grant program recipients as selection criteria but did not explore participating institutions' Title V programs further.

Presidents. A second report from Excelencia, "Hearing from Presidents of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Defining Student Success, Measures of Accountability, and What it Means to be an HSI" (Santiago, 2007), explores interviews with 13 presidents over the course of three years. The institutions included in the study from California, New York, and Texas: California State University-Dominguez Hills, El Camino College (CA), California State University-Los Angeles, East Los Angeles College, City University of New York-New York City College of Technology, City University of New York-La Guardia Community College, City University of New York-Lehman College, City University of New York- Borough of Manhattan Community College, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso Community College, The University of Texas at San Antonio, The University of Texas-Pan American, and South Texas College. The study asked a series of questions to participating presidents: How would you define student success at your institution? What is Latino student success? What is your institution doing that is having a positive effect on Latino student success? What role does faculty play in Latino student success? What measures of accountability are appropriate for assessing institutional effectiveness in educating Latino students? As

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an educational leader, what does it mean to you be a "Hispanic-serving" institution? How does your Title V-Developing HSIs grant impact Latino student success?

The findings suggest that there is great diversity across the 12 HSIs in the study; however, the responses are not categorized by institutional type. It is unclear if the presidents' statements refer to a two-or four-year, public or private HSI with a 27 percent Latino population or 94 percent. While this is one of the only studies addressing Title V directly, even without identifying the HSI, it is clear institutional differences exist. For example, one president stated, "After choosing to identify as an HSI, our staff began to see what resources were available for the institution and saw it as an opportunity to improve the institution and the services it provided its students" (Santiago, 2007, p. 15). The president went on to say that, "Programs, such as the HSI program, provide a 'safety net' that allows us to build a reputation and strengthen our programs so that we can eventually compete with other prominent institutions" (Santiago, 2007, p. 15). On the opposite end of the spectrum, another president spoke differently about the opportunity to address retention overall and benefit all students through the Title V program:

> While HSIs are defined by Latino enrollment, the Title V grant is not solely about Latino students.... The Title V funds and designation as an HSI allows us to talk about Latinos and conduct activities that target Latino students. Our activities funded by Title V, while targeting Latinos, address retention overall, which benefits all students. (Santiago, 2007, p. 16)

Each of the 13 presidents spoke about their respective Title V program differently. Building from these findings, this study seeks to address a gap by extensively exploring

the Title V program at one campus from multiple perspectives beyond just the president. Moreover, identifying the institution will provide an additional layer of specificity.

"Modeling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Campus Practices That Work for Latino Students" (Santiago, 2008) is a policy brief further synthesizing the 2007 work based on interviews with HSI presidents. This piece reflects findings from 12 of the 13 institutions; The University of Texas San Antonio was not included in the 2008 brief. Santiago (2008) reviewed institutional practices addressing five areas to improve Latino student success: (1) community outreach; (2) academic support; (3) data use; (4) faculty development; and (5) transfer paths. Institutional best practices in each of the five areas highlighted investment in providing better service to students. By naming the institution and providing details of the highlighted program, this brief offers more background into each institution and their grant supported programmatic efforts. While highlighting these institutional efforts allows other institutions to create similar programs, Santiago (2008) is missing in-depth institutional information and institutional context for each Title V program. This study seeks to explore in-depth one institution's process of securing Title V grant support and provide context for other institutions looking to replicate a program or initiative.

Faculty and staff. Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, and Plum (2004) interviewed administrators and students from five public and three private four-year universities in California and Texas to explore the experiences of working and going to college in HSI environments. They found that beyond serving as conflict mediators, many Latino faculty and staff also provide comfort, empowerment, an ethic of caring, and a sense of equality for students (Dayton et al., 2004). This genuine sense of caring

and support empowered students to achieve current and future aspirations (Dayton et al.,

2004). Additional research illustrates that Latino and other faculty of color are more

likely to offer academic and emotional support and encouragement, raise Latino and

other racial and ethnic students' aspirations, and are willing to serve as formal and

informal advisors and mentors (Baez, 2000; Laden, 1999; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

Additionally, spreading the workload across more Latino faculty members at HSIs

provides increased opportunities for students to be advised and mentored by faculty

members that look like them, compared to lower number of Latino faculty at traditionally

White institutions (TWIs) (Laden, 2001). Some students noted having Latino faculty

who were able to speak Spanish or who had previous experience with Latino culture

fostered a connection between students and professors (Dayton et al., 2004). The overall

role Latino faculty play in Latino student success is of critical importance and should be

considered by all institutional leaders as a focal point for enhancing Latino student

success, both prior to enrolling in higher education as well as throughout their

postsecondary educational careers.

While Dayton et al. (2004) provides insight into the experiences of administrators

and students at HSIs, the study combines the perspectives from participants at eight

different institutions (public and private institutions in California and Texas), but it is

unclear if they were two-year or four-year institutions. HSIs are not a monolithic group,

and it is difficult to discuss public and private two-year and four-year institutions within

the same study. Moreover, the administrators interviewed primarily served as chief

student affairs officers yet were asked about the role of faculty and funding at the

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institution. The study incorporates voices from a wide variety of institutional

constituents and ensures topics discussed directly relate to their job function.

Student Subculture

As Laden (2001) suggests, HSIs typically offer greater access and opportunity for

Latino students who are frequently from low-income socioeconomic backgrounds, are

often first-generation college students, and may be less prepared academically for college

level work. Terenzini, Cabrera, and Bernal's (2001) "Swimming Against the Tide: The

Poor in American Higher Education" captures the stark differences between low-

socioeconomic status (SES) and high-SES students in terms of academic preparation,

college experiences, and graduation rates. Students of low-SES are: "less likely to enroll

in any form of postsecondary education; bring fewer academic resources to college; and

are more sensitive to tuition costs and financial aid availability when choosing an

institution" (Terenzini, et al., 2001, p. 40). Moreover, the economic situation for these

students necessitates more financial assistance to meet their needs and when compared to

their high-SES peers are "both more likely to work off campus (48 versus 19 percent,

respectively) and to work longer hours (13 versus 3 percent work 30 hours or more per

week off campus) (Terenzini, et al., 2001, p. vi). While this portrait does not exclusively

address Latino students at HSIs, it provides insight into the student subculture.

<center>**Summary of Literature Review**</center>

This chapter synthesizes existing literature on institutional culture, HSIs, and Title

V. Additionally, this chapter highlights the need for future research on institutional

culture and importance of examining HSIs' distinct context. As the number of HSIs

continues to grow within a context of increased accountability for federal dollars, it is

<center>42</center>

important to know how these institutions make decisions about Title V and how their

institutional culture influences these decisions.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study sought to understand institutional decision-making processes at HSIs related to securing, evaluating, and sustaining Title V grants. This study was guided by the following major research question: How does institutional culture influence the Title V program across all phases of a grant cycle at a four-year public HSI? My exploration of institutional culture, as well as a related review of the literature, led me to employ qualitative research methods. Peterson and Spencer (1990) suggest that while studying culture quantitatively allows for statistical comparisons and contrasts, the primary methods are qualitative, utilizing "ethnographically thick descriptions drawn from participant observation by the researcher, examination of institutional records and documents, and open-ended interviews" (p. 14). Tierney (1988; 2008) supports a multifaceted approach to the study of organizations. This chapter is dedicated to explaining the qualitative research design, site and participant selection, and data collection and analysis techniques used in this study.

Guiding Research Perspective: Social Constructivist Perspective

Social constructivists look for how individuals understand and construct their worldviews from unique vantage points (Creswell, 2007). Tierney (1988; 2008) utilizes the concept of constructivism in describing an enacted environment; he suggests members within an organization socially construct their environments, "Participants develop interpretations about the nature of the organization from their social construction of the organization's culture based on historical traditions, current situational contexts, and individual perceptions" (p. 11). Utilizing patterns and meanings, the organization's culture highlights participants' understanding of their environment (Tierney, 2008). In

this study, I sought to understand the views of multiple members of the UTPA community who have been involved with the Title V grant program. In some cases, I sought to understand the views and experiences of UTPA faculty and administrators that may not have worked directly with the Title V grant program but who have unique institutional knowledge given their more than 20 years of service to the campus.

Research Design: Case Study

As Merriam (2009) points out, there are several approaches and definitions of case study. This project most closely aligns with Yin's (2009) approach. Case study design should be considered when the following criteria are met: (a) the study seeks to answer "how" and "why" questions, (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study, (c) contextual conditions may be relevant to the phenomenon under study, or (d) the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2009). My goal was to understand how institutional culture influenced the Title V program at UTPA, specifically around the grant award from 2003 to 2008. It was not possible to separate the UTPA context from Title V program. Therefore, a case study helped me explore the phenomenon of applying for, securing, implementing, evaluating, and institutionalizing a federal grant program while taking into account the distinct UTPA context.

Unit of Analysis and Scope of the Study

The unit of analysis is the Title V program. This case describes and explores this unique situation bounded by (1) location, UTPA; (2) time, the years of the Title V grant application and implementation (2003-2008); and (3) activity, a full grant cycle. This study does not explore the institution's cultural influence at other higher education

institutions in the state of Texas, HSIs, or Title V programs. Additionally, the study does

not explore the influence of UTPA's institutional culture on other programmatic efforts.

Data Collection

Case study methods require "both breadth and depth of data collection" (Merriam,

1998, p. 134). I employed a variety of data collection procedures: individual interviews,

site observations, researcher memos, and document analysis of institutional reports,

strategic plans, and Title V grant materials. Over a period of three months, I spent

approximately one-week every month immersed in the institution. During my visits, I

had the opportunity to explore campus academic buildings, resource centers, and the

university archives, and I spoke with faculty, staff, and senior administrators. With each

conversation and new section of campus, I gained a better understanding of UTPA's

history and the current landscape.

Merriam (2009) suggests there are two general types of sampling: probability and

nonprobability. Probability sampling allows for generalization from the sample to the

population, but because generalization is not a goal of qualitative research,

nonprobability sampling provides the ability to address qualitative questions (Merriam,

2009). Nonprobability sampling, also described as purposeful sampling, allows the

qualitative researcher to "select[s] individuals and sites for study because they can

purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in

the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). I employed purposeful sampling when selecting my

site (institution) and participants.

The literature review informed the criteria used to select my site: (a) four-year,

public institution; (b) met the definition of an HSI; (c) past recipient of Title V individual

grant; (d) completed Title V grant cycle within the last 10 years; and (e) not currently

participating in Title V program. The study participants included current and past

presidents, faculty and staff involved with writing the Title V grant, as well as those

instrumental to the implementation or evaluation of the funded programs. Institutional

documents and data were also collected and analyzed.

Institution

The site, University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), is located in south Texas, in

a region of the state known at the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). UTPA is located in

Edinburg, Texas, approximately 10 miles north of the US/Mexico border. Founded in

1927 as a two-year community college, the institution transformed from a junior college

to a four-year university in the early 1950s, and the name Pan American was selected to

reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the institution and its desire to bridge the

cultures of North and South America. The 1970s marked a name change from Pan

American College to Pan American University, and the student population expanded and

began to reflect the regions predominantly Mexican-American population. In 1989, the

University of Texas-Pan American as it is known today was created after a merger of Pan

American University and the University of Texas System. Classified as Carnegie

Master's University, UTPA is one of the fastest growing universities in the UT System

and enrolls approximately 19,000 students, 89 percent of which are Latino. (More

detailed information on the institution's history is available in chapter 4).

Rationale for Site Selection

Several considerations guided the selection of UTPA for this study. First, UTPA

is a four-year public HSI that had concluded a Title V grant cycle. Even though the

majority of HSIs are two-year institutions, this study seeks to explore culture within a four-year institutional context. Community colleges have diverse missions that sometimes compete such as preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution and workforce development or short-term certificate programs (Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2005), so exploring culture in a four-year institution is appropriate. Texas has the third highest concentration of HSIs next to California and Puerto Rico. Because California has an extremely unique tiered system of higher education and Puerto Rican institutions are situated in a distinct island context, neither location is ideal for this case study.

As of 2011-12, Texas had 66 HSIs, 19 of which were four-year public institutions (Santiago, 2013). Only five institutions had completed a Title V grant cycle and do not currently have additional Title V funding (Department of Education, n.d.). UTPA was awarded a Title V grant in FY2003 with an annual award amount of $333,963 to improve student retention and time to graduation through programmatic and curricular innovation as well as provide faculty and staff development. Faculty development and enhanced student services are the two most cited activities funded through Title V (Villarreal & Santiago, 2012). Given that UTPA was funded for initiatives in both categories, exploring the Title V program within this institutional context provides a unique opportunity.

Moreover, UTPA has been serving a large number of Latino students since before the HEA established the HSI designation and Title V grants. Exploring the culture of an institution requires placing events and people in a historical context (Tierney, 2008) and of particular importance when studying HSIs is differentiating institutions with long

histories of serving large numbers of Latinos and those with a longstanding PWI context

that recently reached the 25 percent Latino student threshold. Studying the institutional

culture of an HSI that transitioned from a PWI over 30 years ago provides longitudinal

data and opportunity for historical analysis. Additionally, UTPA notes its HSI

designation prominently on the institution's website and vision statement:

> The vision of The University of Texas-Pan American is to be a premier institution
>
> of higher education. As a major, nationally recognized Hispanic-serving institution,
>
> the University will be a leader in addressing the needs of a culturally diverse society
>
> through discoveries and innovations of global significance. (UTPA, 2011)

Some institutions do not publicize their HSI designation (Contreras et al., 2008). Given

the limited prior research specifically exploring culture within the HSI context, it would

be important to study an institution that embraces and publicizes its HSI designation,

rather than an institution that does not identify as an HSI or actively conceals its

designation.

Institutional Documents

In order to explore institutional culture thoroughly, archival materials and historical

artifacts are critical components of data collection (Tierney, 2008). My first visit to

UTPA was spent primarily in the university archives. I spent nearly a week searching for

materials connected to the Title V program and general retention efforts. I had two goals

for my archival research: (1) review general materials in attempts to understand the

history of the institution as well as the physical location and the surrounding political and

economic forces impacting institutional culture and (2) identify key faculty and staff

connected to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Title V grant in order to select their participation in my study.

I reviewed a wide variety of documents such as presidential reports and speeches, newspaper articles, course evaluations, and strategic plans (Table 5). Because very few of the documents I needed to review were digitized, I worked with the university archivist to pull all relevant materials. I utilized a standard form (Appendix B) to interrogate and catalog the archival materials. Additionally, several administrators closely connected to the Title V grant program supplied me with electronic versions scanned from Title V specific documents such as the original Title V grant application, annual reports, and evaluation materials.

Participants

Archival documents yielded a list of approximately 10 faculty and administrators with direct connections to the Title V grant program in a variety of capacities. I also identified a small number of potential participants through searches on UTPA's website. I followed up with these individuals via email communication, outlined my project, and requested in-person interviews for subsequent visits to UTPA. My study included 18 semi-structured interviews that focused on understanding institutional culture's potential influence on the Title V program. I did not have all participants identified before traveling to UTPA for interviews. Several participants shared names and contact information for other key individuals and snowball sampling yielded additional participants (Patton, 2002).

Individual interviews. My primary data collection method was audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 40-120 minutes. During interviews, I

used a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) that allowed me to ask the same key questions of all the participants but also provided flexibility to address emergent topics from each interview. The questions focused on the major themes presented in the frameworks guiding this study related to institutional culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 2008) and explored the Title V program specifically.

Many of my participants had worked at UTPA for over 20 years. Given that they have held a variety of appointments over their tenures, it is very difficult to classify them as an administrator or faculty member. I have created a table that outlines their role in 2003 before the grant was awarded, their connection to the Title V program, and their current appointment. Twelve of the participants had direct connections to the Title V grant program with roles such as principal investigator (PI) and instructors for the grant funded Learning Framework course. These participants were able to provide specific insight into the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of the Title V grant (Table 3). Two participants served as senior-level administrators (President and Provost) during the grant writing and early implementation phases. They were able to provide "big-picture" university goals and explain larger university-wide trends. Six participants were either faculty or administrative personnel with long-standing institutional knowledge. They may have been tangentially involved with the Title V grant, but primarily they provided thoughts about general university retention trends and institutional culture (Table 4).

Data Analysis

Because my data included interview transcriptions, scanned documents and reports, and photos of several documents that could not be scanned, I utilized NVivo Qualitative

Analysis Software to organize my data and create a case record. As described by Patton (2002), the case record is an organized and manageable database that organizes edited pieces of data by topic for navigation during data analysis. The analysis of the information gathered included data-driven analysis (pulling themes from the data) and concept-driven analysis (organizing themes based on my theoretical frameworks) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

As Merriam (2009) suggests, I searched for segments across the data that were responsive to my research question, ensuring the segments were heuristic and could stand alone without additional contextual information. The first round of coding included looking for themes across all interviews and documents. Using constant comparative analysis techniques, I applied my theoretical frameworks to those themes and also allowed any themes outside my framework to develop (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, my data analysis process was both inductive and deductive. By integrating the data from my interviews with my document analyses, I was able to create a "cultural web of meaning" for the Title V program at UTPA (Tierney, 2008, p. 14).

Data Quality

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is often criticized for a lack of reliability and for limited validity because findings cannot be generalized to a larger population (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009). Because this type of research often allows significant room for interpretation, measures to ensure its rigor must be established (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) such as outlining the role of the researcher and potential biases or outlining procedures for accurate documentation.

Validity & Reliability

Gibbs (2007 as cited in Creswell 2009) suggests one way for enhancing validity or credibility includes checking transcripts for errors. I contracted with AudioTranscription.org to transcribe the interviews utilizing their first draft transcript option (not proofread by an independent team). Once I received the completed transcript, I edited using the audio recording. Common errors included misspelling of names or confusion when Spanish phrases or words were used. I then sent all edited transcripts to be checked by each participant. In several cases, I flagged questions in the transcript, particularly around the spelling of UTPA faculty or staff or in cases when the audio recording was inaudible.

Merriam (2009) provides peer debriefing with non-interested parties as another measure to enhance credibility. As a way to peer-debrief several of my initial findings, I submitted a research paper to the Association for the Study of Higher Education's (ASHE) annual conference. My session's discussant provided positive feedback on my findings. Additionally, a colleague presenting in the same session, who also studies HSIs, stated that several of the findings were consistent with the institutions she has explored.

Additionally, I attempted to triangulate using multiple sources of data, particularly interview data collected from people with different perspectives (Creswell, 2009). This was tremendously helpful given that my study requires participants to recall decisions and practices retrospectively. On several occasions, participants provided different accounts of the same taskforce or meeting. Asking multiple participants to reflect on the same committees, programs, etc., allowed me to triangulate information and ask well-

informed clarification questions. Triangulation also involves the use of multiple methods

of data collection to confirm or verify the findings (Stage & Manning, 2003).

Triangulation strengthens the overall design of the study because the researcher does not

rely solely on one particular data gathering method (Patton, 2002). For example, I used

institutional documents to verify comments made by the president to confirm content,

accuracy, and my interpretations.

Finally, I attended to my own biases and position as a researcher. Having

attended and worked at PWIs for my entire academic and much of my professional

career, my knowledge of HSIs comes from a personal desire to learn more about this

institutional type and fueled by my exposure to HSIs in graduate school. I am aware that

my previous lack of experience with HSIs may impact my perspective and biases.

Through journaling and field notes, I recorded my thoughts following visits to the

university archives, interviews, and while editing interview transcripts. Merriam (2009)

described reflexivity as the "critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding

assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationships to the study that

may affect the investigation" (p. 229). Additionally, I must also attend to the fact that

even though I identify as Latina (Mexican-American) and have traveled extensively

throughout the Valley to visit family, I am not a member of Valley community. My

father grew up less than 10 miles from UTPA but moved at a young age to Michigan. I

have a unique perspective given the significant amount of time I have spent in Valley

(insider), but I am not originally from the area and had to negotiate my status as an

insider/outsider (Zinn, 1979). In most interviews, participants would ask about my

connection with the Valley, and I found myself sharing my unique understanding of HSIs and my personal connection to the Valley.

While institutional culture is distinct, I ensured the discussion of my findings included rich, thick descriptions to enhance the possibility of "transferring" the results to other institutional settings (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, I included thorough descriptions of the institutional context and participants in the study. I attempted to provide evidence from multiple sources including interviews and institutional documents.

Ethics

Consistent with Patton's (2002) "ethical issues checklist," I explained the purpose of my project and the methods I was using to my participants when I contacted them for interviews via email (Appendix D). I also provided them with a brief synopsis before our in-person interviews and highlighted how I found them (e.g., a colleague suggested I speak with them, I saw their name on an institutional document, etc.). I made sure participants consented to the use of their interviews in my study and outlined different levels of anonymity using a written consent form (Appendix E). Participants had the choice of using their name or creating pseudonyms. Additionally, they also had the option to use their job title as an identifier.

The consent form also outlined all data management procedures. I secured data electronically on a password-protected computer. I maintained hardcopies of informed consent forms and other confidential materials separate from data files in a secured and locked location. Following each interview, I immediately transferred all audio files to my password-protected computer and erased all files from the recorder.

Finally, several participants asked for updates on my project or a summary of my findings. I promised that I would stay in touch and share with them my dissertation. In order remain an ethical researcher, it is critically important that I keep my promise and send an overview of my project.

Limitations

This study is constrained by several limitations. Merriam (2009) outlines a common critique of case study research and the limited opportunity to generalize. However, Yin (1993) contends that qualitative research with small sample sizes is not necessarily meant for generalization across entire populations; instead qualitative research focuses on transferability and building theory. As with all retrospective studies, not all institutional actors in the time period studied are available to future research. Potentially those missing institutional actors might have added different perspectives and nuances to the study.

Given that this study explores institutional culture and the Title V program at one four-year public HSI, the findings will not extend beyond the campus or unit of analysis (the Title V program from 2003-2008) examined in the study. While this study is bounded by a specific time and context, it provides deeper insight into institutional culture within an HSI context and the Title V program and begins to explore the creation of a new framework for exploring institutional culture at HSIs.

Summary of Methods

This chapter included a discussion of the study's design and the epistemological framework guiding the study. Additionally, a brief description of the institutional context, the rationale for selecting the HSI, and a discussion of the sampling techniques

were provided. The data collection process, data analysis, as well as issues of

trustworthiness were also included.

Chapter 4: A "Perfect Storm:" Institutional Culture at UTPA

Through this study I sought to understand institutional culture's role and influence at HSIs related to securing, evaluating, and sustaining Title V grants. This study was guided by the following major research question: How does institutional culture influence the Title V program across all phases of a grant cycle at a four-year public HSI? To answer this question, I conducted a single-site case study of the University of Texas-Pan American and the campus's Title V grant awarded from 2003-2008. Semi-structured individual interviews and institutional documents related to campus history and retention initiatives provided an in-depth understanding of the university, its retention efforts as well as the Title V grant process.

As a result of my data and concept driven analyses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), several themes emerged. A clear distinction appeared between university context or general background information and other themes; therefore I decided to present the findings in two chapters. Understanding the context from which the other themes emerged is paramount; accordingly, chapter four chronicles the region's educational history as well as UTPA's institutional history with a focus on retention efforts and details the Title V program. The subsequent chapter (Chapter Five) presents emergent themes and analyses that focus solely on the Title V program. Chapter Six, the final chapter, provides my discussion of the findings, implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for future research.

History of Rio Grande Valley and Educational Opportunity

In order to understand UTPA's history, it is critical to examine the region's history briefly as well as the educational opportunity structures for Latinos in the Valley.

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This section comes from a study I conducted during 2012 and 2013. The project was presented at the American Education Research Association's (AERA) Annual Meeting (Villarreal, 2013). Please note, this project utilized oral histories and archival records to begin to understand the unique educational experiences of Mexican Americans in Texas, specifically within the Rio Grande Valley, beginning in the early 1900s through the 1980s. While members across three generations of just one family share their experiences in this project, they give voice to many others with similar educational journeys, many of which are the parents and grandparents of students attending UTPA.

Valley History

Maril's (1989) book, *Poorest of Americans: The Mexican Americans of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas* begins with an overview of Valley history. Original inhabitants were hunters and gatherers from a variety of indigenous tribes. From the mid-1700s until the early 1800s, Spanish colonists arrived in the area in search of gold, land, people, and political and economic power. Following the end of the Mexican War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Anglos flocked to the area in search of "unclaimed land." During the late 1800s, trade between two growing countries, the United States and Mexico, emerged as the dominant activity in the area. Successful merchants invested their earnings in large tracts of land. Ranch owners erected fences to maintain livestock, but the fences also maintained power structures between the ranches and Valley's small towns. By the 1920s, land developers, Midwestern farmers, and Mexican and Mexican-American workers transformed the valley into one of the most productive agricultural regions in Texas, but the Valley's success was rooted in racism, subordination, and segregation.

Segregated Valley Education: 1920s-1940s

Prior to the 1900s, many Mexican Americans were integrated in public schools and some schools hired Mexican American teachers, but after 1900, school officials utilized linguistic and cultural policies to segregate Mexican American children (MacDonald, 2004). Language difficulties, classroom harassment, and racism created barriers to educational attainment for Mexican students (MacDonald, 2004).

Here is the story of one family's educational journey in the Rio Grande Valley. Maria is the matriarch of the family. She was born in 1921 in Mercedes and is the oldest living member of the family. She was one of thirteen children. Maria began school when she was seven and ended when she was thirteen. However, she only enrolled in four years of schooling. That time was never consecutive, and she did not complete formal grades. An aunt and her Anglo husband (a soldier in the Army) raised Maria, because her mother was sick, and her aunt and uncle did not have any children.

In 1925, Maria walked three blocks to get to school. She recalled a large school facility where she attended with other neighborhood children, both Mexicans and poor Anglos. She described negative experiences at Roosevelt Elementary School, the Mexican school in McAllen, Texas, which opened in 1921 to serve first through fifth grades. When asked what she remembered about school, she immediately recalled her Anglo teachers (she called them "Gringas"). English was the only language allowed in school. Fortunately for Maria, the uncle she lived with was Anglo, and he had taught her English when she was young. Many of her classmates did not have the same opportunity; Maria spoke of what appeared to be the equivalent of a dunce cap used when students did not adhere to the school's English-only policy. Teachers forced students to stand in the

front of the class in a hat with donkey ears as punishment for speaking Spanish or misbehaving. It is unclear whether the teachers treated the students differently because they were Mexican; however Maria perceived the punishments to be racially motivated.

Despite enrolling at the age of seven and ending school at the age of thirteen, Maria only completed about three or four years of schooling. Because of relaxed enforcement of attendance policies, limited transportation options, and needing to help the family work, Maria never returned to school or received more than a cursory introduction to elementary school material. She suggested her situation was typical for many of her peers. As many families followed crops north for year-round work, their children missed months and years of school. Non-enforcement of compulsory school attendance laws for Mexican students impacted access to equal educational opportunities (MacDonald, 2004).

Segregated Valley Education: 1940s-1960s

Interestingly, when Maria discussed the school she attended, because poor Anglos were in class with her along with other Mexicans, she did not realize she was attending a Mexican school, a school built to segregate her and others from affluent Anglo students. In many towns, Anglo school administrators utilized vague and sometimes unwritten policies to place Mexican children in separate classes and entirely different schools (MacDonald, 2004). Anglos were unwilling to provide more than rudimentary education for the agricultural workforce and "justified segregation based on the perception that the children possessed deficient English language skills, scored low on intelligence tests, and/or practiced poor personal hygiene" (MacDonald, 2004, p. 118).

When Maria's daughter Juanita began school in the early 1940s, she recognized segregation. Juanita's primary school (grades 1-2) was segregated; Mexican students did not have any interactions with Anglo students. The elementary school (grades 3-5) had both student populations on one campus, but the building was segregated. Juanita also discussed segregation within the Mexican community. Anglos owned all of the ranches and all of the workers were Mexican, earning significantly low wages for hours of hard labor in the Valley sun. Mexicans held a variety of jobs within the community, but there were clear distinctions between those working on ranches or migrant workers and others with higher paying jobs or affluent families from Mexico looking for new opportunities in the United States.

The socioeconomic differences between Mexicans were visible at school: "Even though we were all Mexican, there were some kids that were prejudice, some parents had a little bit of money so they did not want their kids to get involved with kids that came from poor families." Juanita specifically recalled the difficulty some students experienced at lunchtime. Maria would buy bread and salami so the kids could take sandwiches and "fit" in during lunch, but the prohibitive cost allowed for sandwiches on Monday and Tuesday and by Wednesday they would have taquitos (tortillas with beans) for the rest of the week. As she said, "We always sat separate from 'first-class' Mexicans because everyone looked at your lunch and knew [your family's social status]." The affluent Mexicans could afford traditionally Anglo lunch options. So even within the Mexican school, there were clear divisions across class and socioeconomic status. At this time few Mexican Americans persisted to eighth grade, and even fewer continued to higher education (Valdés, 2000). Other administrators claimed that segregation only

occurred in the early grades, but no Mexican high schools appear in the records because the students were not expected to advance beyond elementary school (Garza, n.d.). Juanita is one of two children. Born in 1937 in Donna, Texas, Juanita completed school through the eighth grade. Juanita and her husband live in her mother's house and have one son who was born in 1969. Juanita is retired but worked countless hours at the local newspaper earlier in life to help support her family.

Migrant Education: 1960s

As time went on, segregation policies in the Valley began to evolve from dividing Mexicans and Anglos to separating "regulars" and migrants. In 1963, the State Board of Education created the Texas Project for Education of Migrant Children and modified the school year to six-months, extended daily school hours, reduced the number of holidays, and hired additional teachers to support the large number of students enrolling. A report from the Texas Education Agency's Division of Compensatory Education provides a detailed overview of the characteristics of the migrant child:

> He has the ability to achieve [S]atisfactory when his special needs are met; he is
>
> often shy and may feel unaccepted; he is subject to a marked increase in fears as
>
> he starts school; he experiences more classroom tensions and pressures tha[n] the
>
> English-speaking students; he comes from a patriarchal culture; his native
>
> language is Spanish; he is learning English as a foreign language; his readiness
>
> for reading will come only after he has the oral vocabulary; his concepts will be
>
> limited because his learning experiences at home have been restricted; he is
>
> absent frequently, often because of lack of proper food and clothing; he has
>
> experienced little success; he may be two or more years educationally retarded,

due to his limited knowledge [of] English and/or absence from classes; he may be

mature in the areas of travel and adult association but lacks other experiences

necessary for success in the classroom; his concept of sex and sex roles are

governed by his cultural values and may differ from middle class values; his

parents often receive aid from welfare agencies. (Texas Education Agency, 1967,

p. 7)

This list provides a very limited perspective of migrant children and does not capture the

wealth of knowledge and experiences these students had access to as they traveled to

other parts of Texas and across the country or the economic reality their families faced.

Thelma recalls the differences between migrant families, particularly around education.

Her family's commitment to school impacted the travel schedule; they did not want to

interfere with the school year, "Other migrants would miss months of school and the

children worked in the fields….Once we got there, we never worked in the fields….We

had to go to summer school." Thelma described the local students' fascination with her

ability to speak Spanish and the anxiety she experienced going to school in an unfamiliar

environment. She really loved all the traveling; the many opportunities to explore new

places and meet new people.

Thelma spoke about the within group differences across the Mexican community,

just as Juanita described when she was growing up. There were clear distinctions

between the low income and migrants and the "regulars, the people that were financially

okay to where they did not have to travel up North because they either had a business or

local job." These differences were also apparent at school. At the migrant school,

students had music class, but no instruments. Thelma described a legal size piece of

paper that had piano keys printed on it for students to pretend to play the piano. "That was your instrument….There was only one piano and that was the teacher's piano…. I don't think we learned anything. We never got hands-on practice, unlike the other people that actually had band with real instruments." So when the migrant students joined the rest of the students in high school, they were too far behind to participate in marching band.

Because the two "schools" were on the same campus and shared the same cafeteria, the migrant students saw what happened in the "regular" school. Thelma described hearing band practice or seeing basketball practice, "You could hear what was going on. You could see what was going on….We didn't have that. So by the time I made it to high school, the stuff was available, but you were already too old." She directly connected her experiences with not having access to these opportunities as the reason why all three of her sons played sports and musical instruments while they grew up. Thelma wanted to be sure they had access to the things she did not. She wondered whether or not she would have pushed her sons to be so involved had she not experienced such hardship.

Thelma was thankful for the sacrifices her parents made to give her opportunities within a system that restricted Mexicans. She questioned the rationale for separating students and setting them all on a course for limited success. "It really slowed us down…. I cannot give you any names of the people that might have been in the migrant school with me that did something terrific in their lives…. I can't say that. Not from my class." Thelma shared that many of her classmates had their lives cut short for various reasons. She attributed much of their struggles to the experiences they had growing up in

the migrant school environment. Students that graduated from high school, attended college and went on to become doctors and lawyers were the "regulars." Most of the migrant school students that graduated high school started working immediately after graduation. Thelma is one of Maria's granddaughters and one of Tomé's two daughters (Maria's other child). Born in 1963 in Weslaco, Texas, Thelma and her family served as seasonal migrant farmers when she was growing up. Both of her parents completed some high school, but neither graduated. Thelma completed a high school diploma and worked for nearly 30 years at the Mid-Valley Town Crier, a local newspaper. She is currently unemployed and actively job-seeking.

Bilingual Education: 1970s-1980s

While segregation had formally ended and the migrant school transitioned to a middle school serving all students, Donna Public Schools still mandated English only at school. René spoke mostly Spanish at home, but by kindergarten he knew some English. In first grade his mother signed him up for a bilingual program, but the program ended after three years and English-only policies returned. According to René, as soon as you set foot on campus, speaking Spanish would get you in serious trouble. At this same time, in the early 1970s, large numbers of students were coming from Mexico to the Valley and enrolling in school. René remembered getting in trouble several times for using Spanish at school. He became good friends with some of the recent immigrants and wanted to talk to them. As he recounted, "Growing up I did not understand why I could not talk to them or why we could not have both languages.... [School officials] wanted there to be a barrier, they wanted these kids [to count in enrollment numbers], but they would get pushed aside." Finally by the mid- to late 1970s, the influx of Spanish

speaking students was so large that school administrators could not enforce the English-only policy and permitted both English and Spanish on school grounds. René enjoyed being able to speak both Spanish and English at school and successfully graduated high school. René is Juanita's only son. He was born in 1969 in Weslaco, Texas. René's mother, as noted above, completed the eighth grade, and his father had very little schooling at the primary level. René graduated high school and decided not to go directly to college. He grew up in his grandmother's house and lived there with his parents and then his wife after their marriage in 1994. In 2003, René and his wife moved across town to a house they built, next to his wife's mother's house. René works for the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Summary

Exploring these personal accounts and the long-lasting impacts of racist policies and practices of the past not only provides voice to the marginalized, but also historicizes the current state of Latino education. As Zambrana and Dill (2009) suggest, social and emotional disadvantage over generations can result from historic, economic, and cultural patterns of subordination. While not directly part of my dissertation study, this project provided a way to set the educational context of the Valley and highlight the deep-rooted challenges Latinos in the region faced in gaining access to educational opportunities. Moreover, while some Latinos in the Valley had access to higher education or more directly, UTPA, not all Latinos had similar experiences.

UTPA Background

UTPA's history spans eight decades, six name changes, and expansive growth in enrollment and mission. Edinburg College, as it was first named, was a two-year

community college which enrolled 196 students in 1927, its founding year. The institution was renamed Edinburg Junior College from 1933-1948 to signal the growth of the institution serving as the region's sole provider of higher education. Enrollment in the late 1940s had grown to over 600 students. From 1948-1952, the institution was called Edinburg Regional College and relocated to its current site from several blocks away. In the early 1950s, the institution transformed from a junior college to a four-year university and selected the name Pan American College to "reflect the institution's desire to bridge the cultures of North and South America and to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the university" (UTPA, n.d.) and boasted an enrollment of 1,660 by 1957. Notwithstanding the desire to bridge cultures, the institution's leadership at both the trustee and campus levels was nearly exclusively Anglo, and while the Latino enrollment was growing, it did not reflect the high population of Latinos in the surrounding communities. The economy in the region was driven by long-time Anglo elites.

The 1970s ushered in several major transitions captured by another name change from Pan American College to Pan American University (Pan Am). Shifting student demographics resulted from a growing number of Mexican-American students attending Pan Am, and for the first time, the campus began to reflect the predominantly Mexican-American population of the South Texas region. While the student population quickly approached 50-50 Anglo and Hispanic, that parity did not translate to administrative or faculty positions. "For a Hispanic to come in, it wasn't easy," stated Dr. Miguel Nevárez (for bio sketch see Appendix F) who was hired in 1971 as an Assistant Professor of Elementary Education and served as the Acting Director of Counseling and Testing as well as the Associate Dean of Men. Then in 1972, Dr. Miguel Nevárez received tenure

and served as the co-director of UTPA's first Title III grant. Much of the focus at that time was increasing access and growing enrollment. The institution's growth in enrollment necessitated the development of new student services such as an academic support center and a counseling center,. Some of the very first efforts focused on retention. Dr. Nevárez oversaw these efforts, as he became the Vice President of Student Affairs in 1973. While these student services had campus support and became institutionalized with the assistance of the president at that time, Dr. Ralph F. Schilling, there was substantial push back from the faculty. Older, long-standing faculty at Pan Am often saw student support services as an unnecessary addition to college. Faculty saw the learning assistance center as a place students went to have their homework done for them or their papers written for them. It took a strategic hiring decision and faculty education to help address these concerns. Many faculty did not see the value in student support services or other student affairs initiatives; it took a great deal of effort to change the perceptions of these programs. However, altering opinions about other student support services met much more adversity.

Federal student assistance programs such as TRIO were commonly seen as critical vehicles for identifying and providing services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, yet Pan Am administrators saw these campus-based programs as federal programs with strings attached. Dr. Nevárez inquired when he first arrived at Pan Am and was told, "We don't want federal programs because we don't want them to tell us what to do." Campus administrators did not want "help" from the federal government, and as Dr. Nevárez reflected, change was a difficult process to navigate, "I think it was easier just not to fight it [the status quo] and just go along with it, it was less hassle." It

took a group of faculty and staff new to Pan Am who were student-centered and willing to serve as advocates of not only increasing access, but also creating efforts to retain students to spark change. One of the critical components of this shift involved securing federally supported programs and bringing these efforts to Pan Am.

Because Pan Am refused to apply for federal support, Father Michael Allen, a chaplain at the Catholic student center housed directly across the street from campus, created the Student Center for Social Involvement and secured funding through TRIO to establish the Talent Search program. Under his leadership, they set up financial aid counseling offices and support services in 23 Valley high schools (Allen, 2008). In 1972, Dr. Nevárez partnered with Father Allen, and together they established several federally supported programs on Pan Am's campus such as TRIO and the Migrant Program. Father Allen left his chaplaincy that same year. More and more Latinos came to Pan Am as students and, interestingly, the newly created federal programs served as an avenue to diversify administrative ranks. Many of the campus's early Latino administrators were hired through federal program initiatives, but unfortunately they had limited advancement opportunities. Grant funded offices or programs are not fully institutionalized positions. At that time, the majority of senior administrators were Anglo, but in 1981, Dr. Nevárez became the first Latino and Valley native to lead the institution.

Institution becomes UTPA

In 1989, the institution merged with the University of Texas System and became the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA). While enrollment had been steadily increasing since the institution's inception, the largest growth occurred from the mid-1980s through the mid-2000s, where enrollment jumped from approximately 9,600

to over 17,000. Former provost Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo provided this observation about his

return to UTPA in 1998 as a professional nearly 30 years after completing his bachelor's

degree, "while the university was doing a better job of recruiting students to the

university, it wasn't doing anything to assist them in being successful." He noted the

presence of traditional TRIO programs but highlighted the lack of accountability for

actual student outcomes and the need to re-conceptualize student advising. "[Advising]

was done the same way it had been done when I was there in 1969. It was almost left up

to students advising each other in order to figure out what they needed to be taking or

what things they needed to follow." While not all academic advising efforts fell into

these categories, Dr. Arévalo noted that on the whole, there were opportunities to

enhance campus-wide advising efforts and establish formal retention efforts. Upon his

return he described them as "non-existent."

Moving UTPA Forward

Dr. Arévalo was recruited to the campus to move the institution from an

undergraduate comprehensive institution to a graduate/doctoral granting institution.

Retention became a critical component in that transition, "addressing the academic needs

of students and their preparation was very significant because you couldn't move the

institution if students weren't going to be able to do high quality academic work,

especially at the graduate level." He described the two seemingly divergent issues he had

to address, increasing retention and academic preparation and support of students while

improving the quality of faculty to support both the development of quality graduate

programs and strong academic support to students.

A Competitor. The creation of South Texas Community College (STCC) [now

called South Texas College (STC)], a community college to serve the region, five years before Dr. Arévalo's return, was the first step to elevating the academic preparation of students at UTPA. Driven by advocacy from UTPA administrators and economic shifts from a primarily agriculture-based economy to a more diverse marketplace requiring a skilled and educated labor force, STCC opened in 1993 and took over the majority of remedial education efforts. Prior to the development of STCC, UTPA spent a great deal of resources on remedial education. Dr. Nevárez recalled counting one semester over 60 sections of remedial English. With at least 30 students in each class, that was nearly 1,800 students in one semester taking remedial English, in addition to a large number of students taking remedial math as well. Beyond the cost of providing remedial education, a robust body of research suggests students are less likely to be retained and persist to graduation if they are enrolled in remedial education. With the opening of STCC, UTPA phased out all associate degree programs and in 2000 awarded the last associate degrees.

Title III. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education awarded UTPA a five-year $1.69 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Development Grant. The grant project, titled "Empowering Students for Success" focused on two core areas: (1) enhancing faculty and professional staff members' teaching effectiveness by infusing technology across the curriculum with the goal of improving student retention and graduation rates; and (2) improving students' performance on the ExCET (teacher certification) examination (Powell, 1998).   Dr. Nevárez suggested that Title III provided much needed support for two high-priority items: "As we develop strategies now, particularly to address the problem of retention and graduation rates but also with ExCET, the funding in the Title III grant is going to help us tremendously with these

efforts" (para. 14).   He also committed continued support, after the grant period was to

end: "As a result, these activities over the life of the grant will be institutionalized as

ongoing activities at the university…" (para. 14).

The Division of Enrollment and Student Services. In 2000, the president hired

Dr. John Edwards (for bio sketch see Appendix F) to serve as the Vice President of the

Division of Enrollment and Student Services. In his first year, Dr. Edwards assembled

his division and set several objectives: improve recruitment and increase the number of

incoming freshmen, develop closer ties with STCC, and improve retention and

graduation rates [personal communication]. Early methods to achieve those goals

involved outreach to students to educate them about the role of the offices within the

division and trying to achieve a student-centered focus. Student retention for incoming

freshman began to increase after just a few years with this renewed effort.

Admissions standards. The second formal step in raising student preparedness

involved a major shift from an open admissions policy to the establishment of admissions

standards. Faculty and administrators supported a plan to create ACT requirements and a

joint committee made radical recommendations to instate them immediately. Dr.

Edwards knew that there would be opposition to the change regardless of how the new

standards were implemented but opted for a multi-year approach. ACT requirements

began with a score of 17 and raising it to 19 by the end of a five-year period. Area high

school counselors and principals applauded the university's decision to establish

admissions criteria and suggested it would help them better prepare their students. No

longer could students assume "easy" admissions to UTPA, and K-12 administrators used

that as leverage to encourage students to take more rigorous classes and ensure they were

prepared to meet the new ACT requirements.

Marketing UTPA. The creation of admissions standards also resulted in a major

shift in public perception and academic credibility of the institution. As Dr. Edwards

suggests, "I don't think it was not credible in terms of the actual academic process… but

I think a lot of it just had to do with the fact we were open enrollment, anybody could

show up and go to class." Around this same time, the campus actively engaged in

marketing campaigns and for the first time, invested resources in recruiting and outreach.

The positive changes on-campus became points of pride to share with the surrounding

community. Not only did the campus create brochures and other marketing pieces, but

they also worked closely with the large newspapers in the area to showcase a student of

the week. Prior to the early 2000s, the area papers rarely covered students at UTPA. Dr.

Edwards recounts his frustration: "I got tired of seeing things run on kids from the Valley

who were at A&M or UT-Austin or somewhere else. And they never ran anything on a

kid here." The university wanted to remind students that they did not have to leave the

Valley to go to school and receive a world-class education. They also wanted those that

may have left the Valley to consider returning for school, "[we] want grandmothers and

grandfathers who write their grandsons and granddaughters in Michigan to say, 'Hey,

we've got a great University, consider our University when you start looking….' That's

the sort of reputation you want as a University."

Building student-centered infrastructure. Dr. Edwards also committed himself

to changing the perception of senior administrators and others on-campus. He realized,

that yes, the campus was primarily commuter, but that should not be used as a reason for

not providing excellent opportunities and a college experience: "We were treating them

as if they were just coming out here and going home, and therefore we didn't have to provide anything."

He was disappointed to learn the campus lacked robust health and fitness facilities or programmatic efforts such as intramural sports. He was also shocked to learn UTPA did not have a daycare facility. Based on data from the fall 2000 cohort, 92 percent of first-time, first-year students and 98 percent of all undergraduates lived off campus or commuted, 28 percent of all undergraduate students were 25 and older and the average age of full-time undergraduate students was 22 (UTPA Common Data Set, 2001). Quickly Dr. Edwards's division began to grow on-campus services and programmatic efforts, paying close attention to ensuring a student-centered focus, regardless of whether students lived on- or off-campus.

Outreach initiatives. UTPA also invested a great deal into their surrounding communities through formal outreach programs. University administrators knew that they could not move forward without better prepared students, and students were going to come from area public schools. Unless they brought the public schools along with them, they were not going to be successful. The High School to University Services unit had been in place before Dr. Edwards's arrival at UTPA and served multiple functions aimed at developing better prepared students such as short teacher training and continuing education opportunities, substitute teacher training, and broadening the reach of Advanced Placement (AP). Additionally, a multi-pronged approach to exposing the broader community to the campus also began under Dr. Edwards' leadership. The campus built a state-of-the-art visitor center on campus that served as the "front door and living room of the University;" campus tours originated at the visitor center and rotating

art exhibits provided a great opportunity to invite more than 10,000 area K-12 students to campus and provide early exposure. Summer programs that housed K-12 students on-campus in vacant residence halls not only generated additional revenue but also provided an opportunity to get students excited about college from an early age.

While many of these programs or efforts are commonplace on most large college and university campuses, UTPA lacked many of these foundational components to achieve student success and positively impact the community. Given the region's unique history, UTPA had to spend a great deal of effort navigating the Valley culture. Many families in the Valley do not have college backgrounds, as a result of systemic educational inequities, and the expectation for children to work and contribute to the family regardless of whether or not they attend college is prevalent. Institutions like UTPA have to work very diligently with families to make them understand that going to college is like a full-time job and that working negatively impacts a student's ability to be successful. These family pressures often preclude young people from even thinking about going to college. UTPA worked with districts and families to bring about cultural change and to get young people thinking about college and preparing to be successful in the college environment. Moreover, the institution had to ensure their financial aid policies and practices met students' need and kept these financial and cultural realities at the forefront. Several of the scholarship programs at the university do not allow award recipients to work while attending in order to promote successful persistence and graduation.

An unplanned benefit of one of the student service improvements helped facilitate this change of mindset, if only for several hundred students. Dr. Edwards shared the

story of a student who graduated and credited the child daycare center in playing a big role in her ability to graduate. She said that her young son is already on the path to go to college after spending time on campus and being exposed to the environment. "That is the kind of change-- the cultural change that you want to impart to an area like this." Dr. Edwards recognized that in order to change the Valley's perceptions of college and UTPA, the campus needed to create more opportunities for the community to engage with the institution. His creation of the daycare facility was just one way to provide young children with exposure to a college environment and cue parents of young children to begin planning for postsecondary education. It is important to remember that UTPA's institutional culture is situated within the larger context, the Valley culture.

Academic Affairs. More than raising the academic preparedness and standards of students before they joined the campus community, Academic Affairs recognized the urgency of developing new systems and reforming practices in the academic spaces across the university, drastically altering how the campus supported students after admission. Dr. Arévalo's solution involved placing an academic advisor in each college through the University Retention Advisement Program (URAP). Though a step in the right direction, students were not assigned to this staff member or required to meet with them. Jose Saldivar, a lecturer in the college of education, described his understanding of the URAP program, "they would identify students, maybe – I don't know how they would identify them, but that was [just] one effort, but it didn't seem – you know, it was [just] one person." He went on to say that the URAP advisor's office for the College of Education was tucked away behind stairs and somewhat difficult to find.   He also noted that there was very little communication between the College of Education faculty and

this staff member, "I don't remember them going to faculty meetings except maybe once a semester to kind of tell us, 'Hi, I'm the URAP person.'" Again, while not every college may have operated in this way, a more systematic approach was preferred, but the resources were not available.

Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez. In 2001, Dr. Arévalo appointed Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez (for bio sketch see Appendix F) to Associate Vice President, former Chair of the Educational Psychology department in the College of Education, to help conceptualize, design, and implement student-centered academic support services. In her new role, Dr. Rodriguez surveyed the institution's current efforts and, much like the Provost had noted, the campus's advising system needed a new direction. An advisement center existed on campus, but it served the large number of students enrolled in remedial education. All students, including college freshman, deemed college-ready and not taking remedial education courses, received an assigned faculty member from their academic major or college. Some academic units did a better job than others with advising students, but on the whole, students were not receiving advisement. After she completed her scan of the UTPA environment, she brought together a group of faculty and administrators from across the campus to create a first-year task force to re-conceptualize the university's advisement center and develop an introduction to college seminar course.

Having been a faculty member in the College of Education and with an expansive counseling background, she knew what the UTPA students needed, "particularly Hispanic students who were not college-ready, needed guidance; they needed to be almost taken by the hand and given the information." Dr. Rodriguez recognized that

many students did not have others in their families who had gone to college, or for some students, there was no other person who had graduated from high school. She described the Valley culture towards going to college for these students in this way, "They just didn't know the ropes of how to get into college and how to succeed in college. The public schools were doing the best they could. Counselors were doing the best they could, but they didn't reach everyone." Her solution was a systematically structured advisement process for all students but particularly for incoming freshmen.

Planning. In 2001, UTPA set three over-arching goals: (1) to improve student access and success, (2) to be a state leader in the preparation and production of K-12 teachers, and (3) to become the doctoral research institution in South Texas (UTPA, 2003). In developing these goals, UTPA undertook a comprehensive, collegial process that involved campus stakeholders to determine institutional strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems. Several of the academic weaknesses and resulting problems most relevant to the grant were inconsistent delivery and access to academic advising, underprepared incoming students, and an average time to graduation of eight years (UTPA, 2003). The institutional management weaknesses included lack of technology usage in classrooms and ability of faculty to stay current with new technologies, uncoordinated institutional strategies for assessment, management and intervention for incoming underprepared students, and an advising system that adequately supports students timely progression to degree completion.

The Provost and President at the time were tremendously supportive of developing new student support strategies, and the state-level agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), became increasingly interested in institutions'

retention rates as an indicator of student success. The time was right to convene a core group of faculty and administrators across disciplines to design an effective advisement center to support all students. The Provost heavily invested in the planning stages and financially supported a team of faculty and staff in attending the National Academic Advising Association's (NACADA) annual conference.

The team returned to campus with a skeleton plan and spent the next 18 months tailoring it for the needs of UTPA. While the Provost and other leaders were eager to establish an advisement center, there were not financial resources to bring the ideas to fruition. Dr. Rodriguez recalled that process, "We had a beautiful plan, but no money to implement it. So we kind of – I put it on my desk, I didn't shelve it; I put it on my desk, and I said 'one day we will have the resources.'"

In her new role, Dr. Rodriguez also looked for best practices from other campuses that might work at UTPA and provide greater levels of support for students. She attended a number of first-year experience and retention conferences and learned that a large number of institutions utilized a first-year seminar course to orient students and prepare them with the skills that were necessary for success in college. With the support of the Provost, she pulled together a task force of faculty, staff from the Division of Enrollment and Student Services, and administrators to design a course. They used research, consultants, and leaders in the first-year experience to inform their recommendations.

Southwest Texas State University (SWTSU), an emerging research university with approximately 20,000 students 300 miles north of UTPA, had a similar course already on record with the THECB. The task force worked to align their newly developed course with the Texas State course description for several reasons, most

important of which was the opportunity for state reimbursement if the course was credit bearing. Additionally, Dr. Rodriguez and the task force knew that in order to secure buy-in from faculty and students about the importance of this course, it needed to be credit bearing that counted towards graduation as opposed to an optional seminar course. Dr. Rodriguez described that decision, "I knew that we would never have enough funding to pay for it if we didn't produce semester credit hours and semester credit hours could help us to buy faculty.... We began to develop the course, and, again, had a beautiful plan but no money."

Dr. Rodriguez and her taskforce members proposed well-researched initiatives that addressed the greatest needs of UTPA students: central advising and support as they transition to college. The Provost and President were both very supportive of the ideas but did not have the resources to develop the proposed advisement center or first-year seminar course. Dr. Rodriguez knew that in order to create these programs at UTPA, she would have to secure outside funding. She remained vigilant and looked for opportunities to fund these "great" ideas.

HSI. Many describe the initial discovery of the Title V grant as a fluke. Dr. Rodriguez, serving in a new role, was searching for resources to fund tabled ideas and found a request for proposals from the Department of Education. Another staff member in the Undergraduate Studies office, Ms. Leal, recalls the email announcement, and both are fairly certain the President or Provost would have received notification of the grant program, but neither did, or they never forwarded the information to key campus stakeholders. Dr. Rodriguez shared this, "I had never heard about it [Title V] until I became an administrator, and I started hunting for [funding and resources] myself.

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Otherwise, I may not have known."

Even with their demographics and actual commitment to Latino students, as well as being the recipient of past Title III awards (strengthening institutions program) and other federally funded programs that targeted outreach to minority students or minority-serving institutions, the Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) designation or the Title V program were not terms or programs senior administrators were knowledgeable about.

Given UTPA's 1998 Title III award, the institution could not submit an application for the Title V program until 2003. However, even with the Title III award, UTPA could have still obtained HSI eligibility. Instead, UTPA did not apply for HSI eligibility until 2003 when it applied for the Title V grant. Thelma Leal provided this observation and possible explanation, "I think that they only saw it as: 'If you want to apply for Title V, you need to be HSI eligible.' They didn't really see the opportunities that it [an HSI designation] could open up. They [institutional leaders] just thought: 'Oh, well, we're not interested in applying for Title V, so we're not going to fill out the application.'" She also asserted that complacency might have played a role, "Everybody is, I guess, a little complacent. 'Everybody knows that we're Hispanic' – they didn't understand "just" having that designation, but – all of a sudden, this whole world of opportunities opened up because of the other funding agencies that were specifically targeting HSIs." After UTPA received the designation, the possibilities seemed endless: conferences, additional grants, other specialized programs with a focus on HSIs or MSIs and countless other opportunities for UTPA faculty, students, and administrators to leverage what the institution had already been doing, enrolling and serving Hispanic students.

Proposal. Over a three-week period, Dr. Rodriguez wrote the Title V proposal

and highlighted the significant need for and measureable impact of federal financial

support. A successful proposal required Dr. Rodriguez to translate all the things she

knew about the UTPA to create a compelling case.

Utilizing data, she shared UTPA's faculty and student demographics. In 2003,

UTPA employed 628 faculty members, which included 462 full-time and 166 part-time

or adjunct. Nearly all faculty held a terminal degree or its equivalent, and 74 percent held

a doctorate. There were more male faculty than female, 59 percent and 41 percent

respectively. Nearly half (48 percent) or the total faculty identified as an ethnic/racial

minority: 37 percent Latino, and 11 percent other ethnicity. The student-faculty ratio was

21.7, which at that time was one of the highest among state universities.

Although not part of the official proposal, her thoughts about the UTPA faculty

provided context for the proposed activities as she described the faculty in this way:

"[T]he majority of the faculty and the people who were at the institution really saw

students as all cut from the same cookie-cutter; that there were no differences; that you

were a college student and there's no need to address the needs of students because of

that diversity." She went on to comment on the lack of cultural competency of faculty

and some administrators, "Dr. Arévalo was the first Hispanic Provost that I can

remember. The President was Hispanic, but the Provosts and the Deans of the colleges

were not Hispanic. They did not see, 'the need.' They did not see the Hispanic student

as having other needs, that were different from the 'traditional' college student." UTPA

students are overwhelming low-income and first-generation college students, and over

half of which work at least part-time in addition to attending class. Given the lengthy

time-to-degree average (over eight years), these factors or others once they enroll negatively impact the students' progress.

Richard Treviño, a native of the Valley and graduate of UTPA, had similar thoughts about the campus and its unique student population. He shared the story of families dropping their students off at campus in the morning and picking them up at the end of the day as if it were grade school or students not buying their textbooks, despite receiving financial support to do so. The family might only have one car or use that check for other expenses. Mr. Treviño suggests as faculty and staff, "[W]e need to be always looking at, how can we empower them – we need to give them a toolkit so that they can help themselves. They do want to help themselves, but sometimes they just cannot devote all their time to being students." Dr. Rodriguez argued that those are differences that need to be addressed and she advocated for that support through academics.

As of Fall 2002, the institution's total enrollment was approximately 14,440, approximately 86 percent of the students were Latino, 7 percent White, 2 percent non-resident alien, 3 percent other, 1 percent Asian, and less than 1 percent Black and Native American (UTPA, 2003). During the fall of 2001, over 58 percent of the students entering the university reported that their native language was English, a decrease from the previous fall when 65 percent were native English speakers. The majority of UTPA students were from low-income families (68 percent of Latinos were low-income) , and over 76 percent were also first-generation college students. Financial aid is critical for UTPA students; in fall 2001, approximately 87 percent of the UTPA student population received some form of financial aid. Over half of the students (54 percent) work (both

full- and part-time) while attending school. Almost 13 percent of the first-year students were from migrant farm-worker families.

The six-year graduation rate (based on the 1996 freshman cohort) was 25 percent and the first-year retention rate for full-time students was 62 percent in 2001. During the 2001-2002 academic year, UTPA awarded 2,040 degrees; 1,500 of which were baccalaureate degrees, 431 master's degrees, and 10 doctorates. Hispanic students were awarded 1,718 degrees, accounting for 84 percent of the degrees conferred.

Dr. Rodriguez outlined UTPA's request to support two activities: (1) improve student retention and time to graduation through programmatic and curricular innovations; and (2) provide additional faculty and staff development (Appendix G). Components of the first activity (improved retention and graduation) included the development and implementation of the Freshman Success Seminar (Learning Framework Course), Learning Communities, Academic Advisement, and Assessment of Entering Students. The second activity included support for faculty and staff development focused on research-based instructional practices such as Learning Communities, Cooperative (Active) Learning, Academic Advisement; Critical Thinking, Learning Styles, Assessment, Writing Across the Curriculum, Technology Innovations and Web-Based Instruction, and Curriculum Alignment K-16.

The freshman success seminar task force had designed the Learning Framework course to support students with less than 30 semester hours and prepare them for the transition to a university setting. The proposed course's content focused on the research, theory and application of the psychology of learning, cognition, and motivation to oneself and to one's chosen major/career. Drawing upon Southwest Texas State University

(SWTSU) [now Texas State University] and University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)'s similar courses, the team crafted a three-credit hour course that connected an introduction to college, career exploration, and educational psychology. Jose Saldivar, an instructor in the College of Education, piloted the course. He recalled the awkward exchange just before the spring semester of his first year at UTPA in 2003. His department chair called him into his office and said that Dr. Rodriguez wanted to meet with him about a course, initially called Introduction to Education, which would be the pilot for the Learning Framework course. "I showed up and she said, 'Hello, Jose, good to meet you. We have this course. Right now we call it *Introduction to Education,* but it could be something larger. Here's the textbook, you're teaching class on Monday.'" Without a syllabus or time for course preparation, Saldivar piloted the Learning Framework course during the spring semester in 2003. "I am forever indebted to those students that first semester, because they struggled with it and through it, with me… for awhile we were trying to get our bearings."

UTPA also proposed the expansion of their learning communities as another approach to improving student retention and success. The project was piloted in 1999 with two pairs of freshman English Composition and History courses and since then had grown to eight paired courses in the Fall 2002 semester. While these courses were paired, the curriculum was not truly integrated, and with Title V support, UTPA hoped to support the full integration of curriculum across classes and increase the programs reach (UTPA, 2003). When discussing the elements of the Title V program and why she wrote the application the way she did, she shared this:

I've always believed that the difference in terms of success for students is going

to happen in the classroom with the faculty, and that's who's going to make the

difference. We can have all of these other programs outside. We can give them all

kinds of advisement. We can give them all types of support, etc. But the rubber

meets the road in the classroom, so the faculty had to be involved in that change

in mentality.

Dr. Rodriguez envisioned faculty involvement in multiple areas of the Title V supported

activities.

In terms of advisement and assessment, the proposal outlined support for advising

as students register for the Learning Framework course as well as assigning students to

specific advisors while taking the Learning Framework course. Assessment funds would

support the development of an instrument to assess the needs of first-time, full-time

students (UTPA, 2003). The faculty and staff development activity was designed for

those involved with the Learning Framework course, but other faculty or staff across

campus would be invited to participate in professional development seminars as well.

The proposal also included a robust evaluation plan for each activity annually over the

course of the grant.

After Dr. Rodriguez began the grant application, a colleague in the Office of

Sponsored Projects offered to hire a consultant to assist with the application. Over a

three-week period, Dr. Rodriguez wrote the proposal; the consultant reviewed it and

provided feedback, and the proposal for a five-year multi-million dollar grant to provide

seed money for Learning Framework and Faculty and Staff Development was submitted.

The office eagerly waited for confirmation. The application had been received and was

under review, but after some time passed, the Department of Education sent notification that the application did not comply with the page limit and did not advance to the screening process. After several frustrating weeks, the Department of Education contacted UTPA, as well as a number of other institutions, and notified them that conflicting information had been released. They had two weeks to edit and resubmit the materials. At the same time, UTPA received the directive to edit and resubmit their proposal, Dr. Rodriguez was out of the office for six to eight weeks for extended leave. Mild panic set in for Ms. Leal and others asked to trim the application nearly 50 pages, secure all authorized signatures, and resubmit the document in such a short amount of time. They were able to meet the new deadline and submit the revised proposal.

The quick turnaround time between the RFP "discovery" and submission deadline was the first hurdle. Then, the second hurdle came when the team received notification that their proposal had exceeded the 100-page limit and would no longer be considered. Thelma Leal, a research analyst who worked closely with the HSI designation and proposal submission processes, recalled the back and forth conversation between her office and the consultant prior to submission about the exact number of pages allowed and whether or not appendices were included in the "official" count. UTPA was not the only institution that did not comply with the page limit.

Implementation. In a short amount of time, the team received notification that the Department of Education awarded UTPA a Title V grant. The Office of Undergraduate Studies provided much of the administrative support for grant development, but after securing the grant, staffing the Title V office became the priority (Figure G). Dr. Rodriguez served as the overall Project Director; she wrote the grant

proposal and oversaw the implementation of the project. Dr. Ricardo Perez served as the Project Co-Director, and he was responsible for the day-to-day management of the Title V Project. At the time Dr. Perez served as Interim Chair of the Department of Health and Kinesiology. During his 29 years at UTPA, Dr. Perez had extensive experience with programmatic and curricular innovations. Moreover, he was highly respected by the university community. Dr. Rodriguez also selected Activity Directors, Dr. Rebekah Hamilton (English) and Dr. Michael Weaver (History) to administer the Learning Framework course as well as the learning communities collaboratively. Dr. Hamilton had been heavily involved in designing the Learning Framework course prior to the institution's receipt of the grant and had extensive experience working with incoming students who are underprepared. Dr. Weaver had been strong proponent of learning communities and served in a leadership capacity as the reach of learning communities expanded. In the Title V office, his role was to oversee the development and management of learning communities.

Marta Lopez, the Director of the University Retention Advisement Program (URAP) was also tapped to serve in the Title V office. She reported to Dr. Hamilton and supported the Learning Framework implementation and assisted with facilitating professional development activities. Thelma Leal, a research analyst originally hired to provide data support for the institution's student learning outcomes assessment, quickly assumed a great deal of tracking and data analysis for the Learning Framework course. A new position was created to coordinate Learning Framework course scheduling and other class logistics. Dr. Rodriguez hired Belinda Reyes to serve in this capacity.

Coincidentally, right as the Title V grant activities got underway, Dr. Nevárez

retired and Dr. Blandina "Bambi" Cárdenas began her tenure as the seventh president of

UTPA. She came from the University of Texas at San Antonio, an HSI approximately

250 miles north of UTPA, where she served as the Dean of College of Education and

Human Development. Upon her arrival, Dr. Cárdenas set up meetings with her

administrative team and some of her first questions to Dr. Rodriguez upon arrival were,

"How big was our Advisement Center and how many advisors do we have?" Dr.

Rodriguez vividly remembers the conversation, "I looked at her and I smiled and I said,

'none.' And she says, 'What do you mean, none?' Then I said, 'We don't have an

Advisement Center.'" Dr. Rodriguez highlighted the fact that the center at that time only

served students in developmental education but did not provide advising to the general

student population. This news shocked Dr. Cárdenas, and she worked to earmark

financial resources to support a new advising center. She successfully allocated

additional resources to combine with the portion of Title V money earmarked for

advising activities and institutionalized financial support for an advisement center.

Challenges. The initial proposal for the Learning Framework course named

current faculty members from each of the colleges as instructors. Knowing that faculty

were extremely knowledgeable about their topical areas and teaching in their disciplines,

but less proficient in teaching incoming students who are not college ready, Dr.

Rodriguez ensured the grant substantially supported professional development. They

brought in outside consultants to train the faculty in research-based, best instructional

practices such as critical thinking, cooperative learning, assessment, and brain-based

learning. The original cadre consisted of seven faculty from across campus who

volunteered and were really interested in the new course and providing new students with

support. Others saw the course as a vehicle for recruiting students into their programs.

UTPA offered the course for the first time in Fall 2004 and required all incoming

students to enroll in the course. The course continued in a similar fashion until Spring

2005.

Early in Spring 2005, the institution began preparing for their reaffirmation of

accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on

Colleges (SACS) set to take place in 2007. During this process, Dr. Rodriguez and her

team discovered that according to SACS regulations, since the Learning Framework

course was credit bearing and housed in the educational psychology department, any

faculty teaching the course were required to have at least 18 graduate credit hours in

educational psychology. Several of the original faculty members teaching the course

already met the requirement or were able to take several courses to ensure compliance,

but other instructors would need to be hired that met the educational psychology

requirement and were prepared to work with first-year students, many of which were

first-generation, low-income students needing additional support during the college

transition. Many of the new instructors were from a variety of fields and disciplines and

had backgrounds in Educational Psychology, Learning Theory, and Bilingual Education.

This new cadre of faculty exclusively taught the Learning Framework course and

managed several sections a semester with 20-30 students. All sections used a

standardized syllabus and textbook with some flexibility for faculty to tailor the course

for their college or the needs of their particular students. The faculty cohort met weekly

and used that time to provide updates from their courses as well as feedback for future

syllabus modifications.

While the grant and eventually the Academic Affairs unit funded the instructors, they were housed across campus in offices within academic units. They were subject to space constraints within their buildings and frequently had to navigate office moves or the usage of shared resources. The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences is incredibly supportive shared Dr. Kelly Morales, one of the original lecturers, who has been teaching Learning Framework since 2004. "I am one of the lucky ones [Learning Framework instructors]… Even though they keep moving me – this is my fourth or fifth office – I have a great office and every department is very friendly with me." Dr. Morales also highlighted how she is able to work closely with her colleagues in the college and frequently invites different department representatives to speak about their various programs and majors.

Using the Learning Framework course as an opportunity for major and career exploration is just one of the three main functions of the course. First and foremost is the goal to have students understand the psychology of learning, motivation, and cognition, and then translating that knowledge into practice, helping them become better students. The third part of the course does include some general skill development around time management, note taking, and other college navigation information.

Although the administrators and instructors involved with the Learning Framework course were heavily committed to making the course academically rigorous and a beneficial tool for all students, the course faced much adversity. One of the biggest challenges the instructors faced were the perceptions of the course held by other faculty members. Several of the instructors described the need to differentiate the Learning Framework course from a general college success seminar that "just" taught study skills

or strategies. Marcy McQuillen started teaching the course in Fall 2005 and described

the negative perceptions and subsequent interactions she had with misinformed faculty,

"Most of the people at the university who didn't know what the class was about made the

assumption it was just the study skills class, a pass/fail that you would find at the time at

the community college." Other faculty members saw the Learning Framework

instructors as academic advisors. Marcy McQuillen described encounters with professors

who say to her, "'You teach that class. I have a student that needs advising. Can you talk

to them?' I'm not an advisor. 'Well, you know, you can help them with that kind of

stuff, right?'" Many of the instructors shared similar experiences and had to navigate

faculty misperceptions of their role.

There was also confusion about how the Learning Framework course was created

and why it was a required course for all incoming students. Any changes in the general

education requirements were supposed to be approved by vote of the faculty of the

university and as Dr. Samuel Freeman described, "We [faculty] left the university one

spring; the next fall we came back to discover that this had been imposed on the

university in violation of policy." Dr. Freeman, Learning Framework's most vocal critic,

had chaired the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee from 1999-2001 and during his

tenure, they revised the core curriculum, reducing it from 60 to 48 hours. One of the

proposed changes from the committee was a required general education course that

provided some similar features of the Learning Framework course. As Dr. Freeman

described it, the course would have been divided into three, five-week, skill-based

segments: study skills, writing skills, and library and research skills; bringing together

librarians, the English department, and other campus partners to prepare students for

success in their core courses. James Langabeer, the Vice President of Business Affairs at the time, did not support the creation of the course. It would have required the institution to provide the funding, so the proposed course did not come to fruition. Dr. Freeman did not see some of the key components of the proposed introductory course in the Learning Framework course and saw the course as an administrative overstep. While not all faculty shared Dr. Freeman's perspective, many did. As Dr. Weaver, one of the Title V activity directors noted, "A legend evolved on campus that the class was created by the administration, which is true, but that the administration simply decreed it into existence without out any faculty input. And I've heard a lot of people, including people in the faculty senate, say that that is the case and it is just absolutely not true." Marcy McQuillen, one of the Learning Framework instructors, described how this mentality translated into her experience, "I feel kind of homeless because they [other faculty] don't see us as a part of the university… it's [Learning Framework] just something that assistant vice-provost put together."

Finally, as the grant cycle ended, the course met its toughest challenge yet, another state-level decision that had a trickle down effect. The THECB decided to adjust total credit hour requirements; the minimum number of credit hours (120) became the revised maximum, forcing many institutions in the state of Texas to redesign their degree programs. UTPA students had been averaging approximately 150 credits, not counting remedial courses, so this cut was substantial. While the faculty had not been wholly on board with the Learning Framework course, because of hoops they believed administrators jumped through to make the course required of all students, many saw the benefits of the course or decided against an uphill battle with UTPA administrators. The

decision by the THECB provided new fuel for growing discontent and many advocated

for cutting the Learning Framework course. By leveraging the faculty senate and the

most vocal opponent of the Learning Framework course, Title V administrators were able

to re-evaluate the course's mandatory status and establish a criteria system, which

identified the most vulnerable students and required them to take the course their first

semester at UTPA. Dr. Freeman provided this argument for establishing criteria and the

need to get academically prepared students out of the course by creating a false sense of

academic rigor, "[they] are going to be turned off by it and maybe turned off by

college…. They take that course and they think college is a joke."   The changes had

positive outcomes for all interested parties; students with strong academic preparation,

defined as a 19 or higher on the ACT and graduating at least within the top 25 percent of

their class, received a provisional exemption. As long as they completed 12 credit hours

with at least a C average their first semester, and maintain those grades across 24 credits,

they were permanently released from the course. These negotiations appeased campus

constituents, eased the burden on overtaxed instructors, and allowed more students access

to the course material and additional support.

The Provost had successfully squelched the original financial concerns about the

future of the course after the grant funding ended. He began institutionalizing the

Learning Framework course from the beginning and the majority of instructor salaries,

the course's biggest expense, were coming from the institution, but the Learning

Framework instructors still did not feel secure. Jose Saldivar described the concerns in

this way, "Every year it felt like we were fighting for our lives…, and every time the

word of budget cuts came out, reducing hours, or graduation requirements, things like

that, Learning Framework was the first thing to go on the chopping block." Saldivar

recalled using multiple methods to highlight the positive impact of the Learning

Framework course.

Evaluation. The Title V office conducted a survey each semester of the grant to

gather student feedback, and generally, at the beginning, students did not see the value of

the course or questioned why they were required to take the course. By the end of the

semester, most students had a very different tone after realizing the benefits of the course

and the transferability of the course's content. Whenever the course came under scrutiny,

countless students were willing to address the president or provost and speak on behalf of

the course and the positive impact it had on their college experience.

The numbers provided compelling insight as well. Ms. Leal, responsible for the

data analysis, shared several findings. Students enrolled in Learning Framework were

performing better than those not enrolled. For example, students enrolled in both

Learning Framework and English 1301 (Rhetoric & Composition I) performed better

than those exclusively enrolled in English 1301. These findings also extended to student

in development education courses as well. Students taking Learning Framework at the

same time actually did better in those courses as opposed to those that just took the math

courses. As part of their reaffirmation, SACS independently found similar results; if

students passed Learning Framework, they were more likely to be successful in their

developmental math as well, nearly 11 times more likely to pass the math course.

Learning communities. The Title V program also paired the Learning

Framework course to two other core courses to create Learning Communities. Dr.

Weaver, the Title V Learning Communities coordinator shared his perspective, "While

the Title V program was in place, the number of learning community classes fairly steadily increased." At its peak, he noted there were approximately 30 pairs, or approximately 60 classes, participating in the program. Moreover, while the emphasis of Title V was on freshman and sophomore core curriculum classes, some faculty also tried advanced level classes and they went well. Overall, a large number of faculty were involved in the program and excited about the opportunity.

Interest was growing, but the goals of the president and institution halted the progress and sustainability of the Learning Communities. Given its past as an open access institution with a limited number of graduate level programs, UTPA faculty had engaged in some research, but in most departments teaching and service were paramount. Approximately halfway through the Title V grant cycle, Dr. Cárdenas took a preliminary step to help faculty escalate their research agendas. Her goal was to transform UTPA into a research university, and the first step was to create more time for research activities. She adjusted all tenure-track and tenured faculty from a 4-4 teaching load, to a 3-3 teaching load. To make sure the institution could still cover all the classes, the president simultaneously moved all of the lecturers from a 4-4, to a 5-5 teaching load. Many faculty welcomed the change, but the Learning Communities became an unintended casualty.

"The learning community program was collateral damage," Dr. Weaver suggested. He went to note that many of the tenured and tenure-track faculty participating in the learning communities were only teaching one survey class a semester, many of which were taught in a learning community. When they gave up a course, many chose to give up the core class to work with graduate students and undergraduates in their

major. Simultaneously many of the lecturers suddenly saw a 20 percent increase in their workload and could no longer teach learning community courses. There was no additional compensation available or special recognition for faculty teaching learning community classes, so when the workloads shifted, the learning communities were no longer sustainable.

Leadership. Although the data for the Learning Framework course was compelling, many of the course's instructors and other institutional leaders credit the success of the Title V program to Dr. Rodriguez's commitment to the course and her unique understanding of UTPA's students. Former Provost, Dr. Arévalo, recognized her counseling background, significant experience as a faculty member at UTPA, and extensive knowledge of students' needs as assets to her success. "She was very well prepared to help design what eventually was put together. So I think she was unique in that regard."

In addition to the formal professional development sessions the Title V grant supported, Dr. Rodriguez mobilized the new cadre of Learning Framework instructors to be part of her team pushing for change. Everyone commented, frequently without prompting, about how involved Dr. Rodriguez was with the day-to-day management of the grant's activities. Marcy McQuillen recalled this about Dr. Rodriguez's role, "She just set it up in a way that made it easy for us to come in and do our job and feel a part of it to where we wanted to do more." Dr. Rodriguez was transparent with her team about challenges the grant activities faced as Mrs. McQuillen stated, "She was very honest with us – how it's going, what we've accomplished, what we need to accomplish, what they're saying, you know, threatening to terminate this project. She was honest with us from the

beginning. I think that really made a difference." Her leadership motivated the instructors to be active participants in making the Learning Framework course better and work as a team to provide feedback and ensure continual improvement; "We were doing research…. It wasn't just about teaching the class. We were also totally involved in the entire program itself," Marcy McQuillen commented.

Thelma Leal shared, "When she started [the Title V grant] she had 25 years under her belt, so she knew how to deal with faculty… she'd always say, 'Thelma, you need to pick your battles.'" Belinda Reyes echoed a similar sentiment, "People on campus respected her, the work that she did." Both Ms. Leal and Ms. Reyes believed that Dr. Rodriguez's hands-on approach to the grant and its activities and her role as a leader made the grant a success. Dr. Rodriguez described herself as a fighter, "I was involved in meetings with faculty, chairs, others; trying to 'sell' the idea and the concept, it was difficult. It was difficult because not everyone believed in it."

Reflecting on the success of the program, despite the number of battles she and her team fought, Dr. Rodriguez shared that "involvement, understanding, and support" from senior administrators was essential to ensuring a grant such as Title V really makes a difference: "And that's what we had, from the President, to the Provost, and then of course, my role as Associate Provost was important in the direction of this whole thing."

Dr. Rodriguez's commitment to students and her passion for ensuring their success drove her to do a lot of heavy lifting with the Title V program. Dr. Arévalo, the Provost during the planning and early implementation phases of the grant described her as the conceptualizer and cheerleader, who successfully guided the development and actualization of additional student support services, coordinated though Academic

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Affairs. He was clear that Dr. Rodriguez's unique skill set as a former faculty member and college-level administrator with extensive knowledge about working with Hispanic students and navigating campus politics made her great fit for the position.

Even though Dr. Rodriguez had great ideas for addressing the needs of UTPA students and the support of senior administrators, in the end, it all came down to availability of resources. When asked if some of the initiatives such as the Learning Framework course would have been supported if there had not been a Title V grant, Dr. Arévalo shared this, "I think we were going to do them, probably not at the scale that the grant allowed us to be able to.... I think this just helped us to do it a lot faster." He went on and suggested that the Title V sparked change across UTPA's campus, "The Title V grant just really acted as a critical impetus for the university refocusing some of what it was doing…." Dr. Arévalo cautioned that some universities talk about being student-centered and how they want to help students be successful, but then their practices do not reflect that goal or they do not do anything different. In his opinion, the Title V grant funded activities were not just lip service, "but was definitely beginning to do something different at the university that had a very positive impact."

Others on campus noted Dr. Rodriguez's dedication to the Title V program, and frequently described it, using their words, as her "baby." An interesting choice of words to describe a Latina's commitment to her job and UTPA students, particularly, given that she spent the majority of her life in her career, was not married, and did not have children of her own. She described her 35-year career at UTPA in this way, "I never felt like I missed anything because I was loving what I was doing. It was just my passion. It was my whole purpose in life, practically. And that's what I wanted to do." She dedicated

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her life to helping her siblings get their education and now assists their children, her nieces and nephews, through K-12 and into higher education.

There is no measure for the amazing synergy that permeated UTPA and the subsequent far-reaching influence on the entire region as the 21st century began. Not one person, program, or initiative can take credit for moving the university and its surrounding areas forward. A "perfect storm" of institutional actors, decision-making practices, and political climate came together at the "right" moment and re-envisioned the future of UTPA.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Institutional Culture at a HSI

In Chapter Four, I present UTPA's institutional history, highlighting retention efforts and providing an overview of the university's journey with receiving the HSI designation and the Title V program. In Chapter Five, I discuss my analysis and emergent themes. Because I used both inductive and deductive data analysis techniques, I will first arrange themes based on elements from the two frameworks I used as my framework for exploring culture at an HSI (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 2008), followed by emergent themes. In the sixth and final chapter, the discussion will focus solely on institutional culture at HSIs and UTPA's Title V program. I will outline my suggested framework for exploring institutional cultures at HSIs as well as implications for policy and practice and make recommendations for future research.

External Environment

Kuh and Whitt (1988) provide a comprehensive view of the external environment and propose that it is the first layer of analysis. They suggest that colleges and universities are entrenched within and influenced by a larger culture and the society as a whole. Further, they describe the culture as the sum of parts or subcultures such as regional, economic, or political forces that interact in different ways to shape the environment. Institutions are continually evolving in response to interactions with the surrounding environment or members of those subcultures (Tierney, 1988).

Groups or agencies (e.g., governmental, professional, occupational, or accreditation associations) as well as other political and economic organizations or realities may influence colleges or universities. Additionally, given a large percentage of students, nearly 80 percent (NCES, 2011), who attend college in their home state, the

culture of the surrounding communities or state (depending on the type of institution and the student demographics) influence the students who attend that institution and make up the surrounding communities. Finally, Kuh and Whitt (1988) suggest that multiple factors influence institutions of higher education, and the impact may vary based on the institution's characteristics. Nonetheless, factors such as "economic conditions, societal attitudes… the experiences and expectations of an institution's constituents (religious or ethnic sponsors, occupational or professional interest groups), and the institution's place in the economic and organizational hierarchy of American higher education" (p. 44) all shape an institution's culture in different ways.

UTPA's Title V

The external environment, such as governmental agencies and accreditation associations (Kuh & Whitt, 1988), influenced UTPA's application efforts, implementation plans, and goals for institutionalizing their Title V supported activities. Decisions and regulations from the Department of Education, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) all impacted various stages of the Title V program.

Planning. UTPA faculty and staff prepared multiple proposals for a first-year seminar course. Both when the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (1999-2001) and Dr. Rodriguez's team (2003) drafted plans for a course introducing students to college and UTPA, senior institutional leaders (President, Provost, and Vice President of Business Affairs) would not provide the funding to create the course as proposed. In order to receive funding from the THECB, the course needed to be credit bearing. Drawing upon a course already approved at another Texas institution (SWTSU), Dr.

Rodriguez and her team developed a course grounded in educational psychology in order for students to earn academic credit and thereby receive state-level funding for the course. A THECB policy shaped the content of the course, but also the economic reality that UTPA could not finance a student success course without academic credit hour support served as an external driver.

Application. Dr. Rodriguez received assistance from a consultant familiar with Department of Education and Title V with editing and submitting the final application materials. Instead of receiving confirmation that UTPA's materials had been successfully received, Dr. Rodriguez's staff were sent notice that the application was over the page limit and was not be considered for the next stage of the review process. Several weeks later, the Department of Education contacted UTPA, as well as a number of other institutions, and alerted them of conflicting information. Because some materials disseminated and several workshops conducted by the Department of Education had incorrect page limits listed, UTPA and other schools that went over the page limit, had two weeks to edit and resubmit all materials. Dr. Rodriguez's staff (as she was out for medical leave) trimmed the application nearly 50 pages, secured all authorized signatures, and resubmitted the document.

The Department of Education's discovery and acknowledgement of this misinformation and willingness to receive revised applications is an external force that greatly impacted UTPA's Title V program. Had the institution been disallowed from submitting an edited application, the Title V program explored would not have been funded. It is difficult to speculate the specific implications of such a decision, but UTPA

retention and student success initiatives likely would look very different without an infusion of money to seed several key programs.

Implementation. Once the grant was awarded, another force from an external entity impacted UTPA's Title V program. For the first year (Fall 2004-Spring 2005), the Learning Framework course functioned as outlined in the original proposal; current faculty members from each of the colleges served as instructors, with some additional professional development to prepare them to teach incoming students that frequently needed additional support. An external entity, an accreditation agency, disrupted that plan during the spring semester in 2005. According to SACS regulations, any faculty members teaching the Learning Framework course was required to have at least 18 graduate credit hours in educational psychology, given the course's academic home in the educational psychology department. The discovery of this regulation drastically changed faculty-student interactions; faculty from across the university with distinct disciplinary backgrounds could no longer teach the Learning Framework course and expose students to their field or majors in their school. Several of the original faculty members teaching the course already met the requirement or were able to take several courses to ensure compliance, but other instructors had to be hired that met the requirement. These new faculty were hired at the lecturer level, and the majority of their course loads were the Learning Framework course. While the new instructors were prepared to or provided additional professional development to work with first-year students, many of which were first-generation, low-income students needing additional support during their college transition, they had to navigate departmental or college level politics and did not have the same level of institutional knowledge as some of the original Learning

Framework faculty. The SACS regulations greatly impacted the guidelines for Learning Framework instructors and altered how the course was delivered.

Institutionalization. Finally, as the grant cycle was ending, another state-level decision had a trickle down effect. The THECB decided to adjust total credit hour requirements; the minimum number of credit hours (120) became the revised maximum, forcing many institutions in the state of Texas to redesign their degree programs. Up until this point, the Learning Framework course had been mandatory, and while not all faculty members liked the course, most saw some benefit or decided against challenging senior university administrators. The THECB decision provided new fuel for growing discontent and many advocated for cutting the Learning Framework course at the same time as the federal funding through the Title V program ended.

In order to ensure the institutionalization of the Title V program, Dr. Rodriguez created a committee to re-evaluate the course's mandatory status. She purposely invited Dr. Freeman, the strongest opponent of the Learning Framework course, to help establish a criteria system. The result of these negotiations appeased both faculty and administrators; (1) students who were most likely need additional support were enrolled in their first semester, (2) the course was still available for students that experienced a challenging first semester as they could enroll in the spring if their GPA or earned credits dropped below the set threshold, and (3) course loads for lecturers were reduced. This external decision had the potential to suspend the entire Learning Framework course and influenced the institution's ability to institutionalize the course that had been shown to make a difference for student success at UTPA.

Summary. Kuh and Whitt's (1988) description of the external environment

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provided the lens from multiple external organizations, and decisions or policies

originating within these entities were found to have influenced the Title V grant

application and implementation phases and as the grant cycle ended. First, UTPA did not

meet the application page specifications and nearly lost the opportunity to initially apply

for the grant. Then after a year of the program, an accrediting agency served as an

external force shaping changes in faculty teaching the course to ensure compliance with

SACS regulations. And finally, as the grant cycle ended and UTPA moved to fully

institutionalize the Learning Framework course, a mandate from the THEBC, the state-

level governing body for colleges and universities, threatened the campus's ability to

sustain the course and provide the resources to all of its incoming students.

Institution

Kuh and Whitt's (1988) second layer of analysis is the institution. This layer is

comprised of numerous different institutional components, such as mission,

organizational saga, or academic programs. Moreover, the college or university's history

and the unique interactions between campus constituents and deeply held beliefs or

guiding principles shape the institution and its internal environment. Tierney's (2009)

framework of organizational culture includes several institutional focused items, such as

mission and information. He suggests that the definition and articulation of an

institution's mission and whether or not it is used as the basis for decisions are critical to

exploring institutional culture. Moreover the level of agreement across members of the

campus community about the institution's mission should be noted. Tierney (2009) also

includes information in his framework, specifically asking what constitutes information

at an institution, who has information, and how is it disseminated. Collectively, these

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two frameworks provide a comprehensive lens through which an institution, as a component of institutional culture, can be examined.

UTPA's Title V

UTPA's history, saga, and mission (Kuh & Whitt, 1988) influenced the institution's application efforts and implementation plans for Title V. UTPA's geographical location and student demographics as well its commitment to serving the region influences various aspects of the Title V program.

Planning. Valley-born residents and transplants alike recognized the institution's majority-minority demographics and critical role UTPA played in providing educational opportunities for the region's high concentration of Latinos but securing the HSI designation did not seem to be a priority. In 1998, the Department of Education awarded UTPA a Title III grant through the "Developing Institutions" program. UTPA could not simultaneously have both grants; 2003 was the first year the campus was eligible to apply for Title V; however, HSI eligibility documents were available in 1998, and the institution may have missed opportunities for additional financial resources during those five years. This institution's "historically HSI" status that began long before the federal government conceived of a grant program or designation greatly influenced the institution's ability to see itself as an HSI or request additional resources to serve a "unique" student population.

Beyond UTPA's longstanding unofficial HSI status, the institutional saga in which UTPA began as a community college and shifted to a regional comprehensive institution without admissions criteria influenced the campus culture prior to the first Title V grant process. UTPA's legacy greatly influenced the implementation of retention

initiatives and required multiple layers of interventions, such as establishing admissions criteria, centralizing and formalizing academic advising, and shifting student and general campus services to utilize more student-centered approaches. The extensive transitions the institution was undergoing also called for many campus constituents to be involved in task force work such as the first-year task force led by Dr. Rodriguez. The larger institutional conversation about retention and the first-year taskforce's work to investigate best practices and create initial plans for interventions, specifically a first-year seminar class, laid the foundation for a strong Title V application. Further, by piloting the Learning Framework in Spring 2003, it allowed Dr. Rodriguez to outline a comprehensive course and present initial data.

Implementation. The institution's history and mission influenced the planning phases of the Title V program but did not seem to play a role in the application phase. However, as the Department of Education awarded UTPA the Title V grant and implementation was underway, a significant leadership change with the goal of advancing the institution considerably altered the mission and vision of UTPA and changed the direction and feasibility of several of the Title V supported initiatives. Dr. Cárdenas was brought to UTPA to begin moving the university from a regional comprehensive institution with a focus on teaching to a doctoral-granting research institution. Her previous institution, University of Texas-San Antonio, had also undergone a similar transformation.

Dr. Cárdenas changed the teaching load policy in order to reflect UTPA's renewed focus on research. As a result, the learning communities, a portion of the Title V program, were no longer viable. Tenured and tenure-track faculty taught fewer courses

and most transferred their introductory courses, many of which had been targeted for participating in learning communities, to lecturers. Lecturers now teaching additional courses did not have the dedicated time to coordinate and implement courses within learning communities. The university phased out the learning community concept, which ironically had a place in UTPA's transition. In order to sustain graduate programs and further research agendas, in order truly propel UTPA from a teaching focus to a research university, there must be a student population prepared to participate in graduate education. Given the Valley culture and educational realities in the region, UTPA had to develop and mentor their undergraduates for education beyond a bachelor's degree.

Summary. Kuh and Whitt's (1988) description of the institution itself as another important entity to explore when studying institutional culture illustrated the role of institutional mission and history. UTPA's institutional saga and mission were found to have influenced the Title V grant most directly during the planning and implementation phases. UTPA's history and mission played an extremely important role in shaping the need for retention interventions such as those proposed by the Title V project. Moreover, the institution's somewhat seemingly competing priorities of providing additional support and educational enrichment through learning communities, but then ratcheting up faculty research productivity and transferring more work to adjuncts forced the dissolution of learning communities.

<div align="center">

Individual Actors

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Faculty, students, and administrators are active participants in an institution's culture; "All institutional agents participate in constructing a coherent picture of which is going on in the institution" (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 51). The extent to which these

institutional agents identify with the institution, share or make meanings with others, are

knowledgeable about institutional history or traditions may vary based on their proximity

or length of time on campus (Kuh & Whitt, 1998). Individuals across all levels of the

university can shape institutional histories or give meaning to particular events or

programs on a campus. Tierney's (1988; 2008) framework of organizational culture does

not address individual actors directly but indirectly through two categories: (1) strategy:

how are decisions made and by whom? (2) leadership: who are the leaders, are there

formal and informal leaders, and what is expected of them?

Given UTPA's history as an open access institution, retention had never been the

focus. Psychology professor Dr. James Aldridge described it in this way, "Our

philosophy was 'give everybody a shot,' which is a commitment to lack of retention."

More than being open access, the public four-year institution did not challenge

stereotypes or lack of media attention, used its primarily commuter student population as

an excuse for not providing some functions associated with a large regional

comprehensive university, and was plagued by generational differences between faculty

members. If not for faculty and administrators tackling some of the deep-rooted issues

and shaping new recruitment and retention practices, progress and change was unlikely.

New Administrators

Approximately five years before Dr. Rodriguez submitted the grant application

for Title V support, UTPA hired several senior leaders, each committed to student

success and extremely influential in redefining the campus's recruitment and retention

efforts. Dr. Arévalo, originally from the Valley, returned to his alma mater to serve as

Provost. The first Latino chief academic affairs officer, Dr. Arévalo established a writing

center, centralized advising, and investigated the high number of developmental education sections. During his eight-year tenure, Dr. Arévalo oversaw numerous academic initiatives aimed at increasing retention and better preparing UTPA's students for post baccalaureate educational opportunities as well.

Within two years of Dr. Arévalo's appointment as Provost, the president hired Dr. John Edwards to serve as the Vice President of the Division of Enrollment and Student Services. Within this newly merged division, Dr. Edwards oversaw UTPA's recruitment, financial aid, and student affairs. After 10 years at UTPA, Dr. Edwards, "known as the 'ideas man' at UTPA," left his mark on all corners of the campus (Fagan, 2010). His involvement whether in conceptualization or implementation is credited for countless programs and facilities such as the Valley Outreach Center, a partnership with leading corporations, which provides admissions, financial aid and other information to Valley students interested in postsecondary education and the Distinguished Speakers Series, which provides students the opportunity to hear and interact with national and international leaders (Fagan, 2010).

Dr. Edwards also helped develop and utilize the University's Visitors Center as the campus's living room; its most popular exhibit to date, "A T. Rex Named Sue," drew more than 50,000 visitors, many of whom were area school children (Fagan, 2010). Furthermore, Dr. Edwards's student-centric approach motivated him to help launch the UTPA Transfer Center, Veterans Service Center, Scholarship Office, and Migrant Student Services Office. "Edwards said he is most proud of his role to start the Child Development Center and Wellness and Recreational Sports Complex." In Edwards's opinion, "The Child Development Center has enabled probably several hundred students

with children to graduate more readily than they would have been able to without that service… 'I would like to see more. I always like to see improvement – increased numbers, better ways to do things, better processes to make things easier for students'" (Fagan, 2010).

While neither worked *directly* with the Title V program, Drs. Arévalo and Edwards helped move academic and student affairs forward at UTPA. Their desire to improve the student experience and overall retention at UTPA laid the foundation for Dr. Rodriguez's team, and collectively they influenced many programs, facilities, and decisions.

Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez

Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez had always been concerned with ensuring students had access to resources and were adequately supported. An article in the campus newspaper captured Dr. Rodriguez's passion for assisting others, "For Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez, making sure students are well prepared to enter and complete college successfully is not a job, it is a way of life" (Fagan, 2010). Drawing from her personal experiences navigating high school and college as a first-generation college student and then when she became a high school English teacher in the Valley, she recognized that "knowledge is power…. That's what I needed to do to help kids, give them the information they needed." For her, this translated into helping her younger siblings with their homework and providing assistance to community members eager to send their children to college. She continued this work as a faculty member and college-level administrator and then had the ability to enact large-scale change when she became the associate vice president for Undergraduate Studies.

Having worked at UTPA for more than 25 years before beginning her tenure in senior administration, Dr. Rodriguez was very knowledgeable about UTPA students and their needs, yet still she set out to learn more through several task forces that brought together faculty and staff from across the institution. Both she and other senior leaders charged the task forces with exploring retention strategies and identifying several key interventions that would better support students at UTPA.

The first-year task force developed several strong programs and made recommendations that would greatly impact students, but unfortunately there were not financial resources to support the initiatives. Dr. Rodriguez knew she had to put the ideas into practice and began searching for outside funding sources. Her staff stumbled across the Title V program, and she worked quickly to apply. After several setbacks, UTPA ultimately received the federal grant and under her leadership the Title V program was able to contribute to bettering UTPA's retention rates.

Title V Staff

Most saw Dr. Rodriguez as the champion for the Title V program; she was fully committed and engaged in all aspects of securing and implementing the grant, and she served as the face of the project to entities across campus. However, she employed a dynamic staff that assisted across all phases of the project and influenced the Title V program in various ways.

Learning Framework Instructors. The faculty members teaching the Learning Framework course are the most visible remnants of the Title V program. Jose Saldivar piloted a course in Spring 2003 which evolved into the Learning Framework course. Eleven years later Jose and several other original instructors still teach five sections of the

course each semester. Marcy McQuillen, the Learning Framework instructor for the

College of Arts and Humanities, hired to begin teaching in Fall 2004, had been working

as a communication teacher in a Valley high school. She spoke with fondness about her

unique opportunity to "follow" some of her students from high school to college and

continue to support them. McQuillen also described course management and

implementation; early on everything was micromanaged, but as time when on and the

instructors became more familiar with the course content and the challenges students

navigated, they became more active in editing course content, selecting textbooks, and

coordinating other initiatives for the entire Learning Framework team. The group would

meet weekly and discuss challenges and successes with the course or share how they

handled certain situations. Dr. Rodriguez was also very transparent with the instructors

about the negative opinions across campus about the Learning Framework course and the

issues they might confront. Her involvement got them invested, "She [Dr. Rodriguez]

was honest with us from the beginning. I think that really made a difference, because

then we were doing research. 'What can we do?' It wasn't just about teaching the class.

We were also totally involved in the entire program itself." By editing and developing

content, making connections among faculty and specific academic units, and helping

students navigate their first year (and many times subsequent years) at UTPA, the

instructors shaped the Learning Framework course and contributed greatly to the

program's success.

     Administrative Staff. Dr. Rodriguez's first hire after being appointed the

Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Studies was Thelma Leal, a research analyst.

In order to move the institution forward, Dr. Rodriguez knew she had to examine the data

and ensure her decisions were informed by data. Ms. Leal assisted with data collection,

analysis, and presentations of key findings. Interestingly, Ms. Leal first discovered the

Title V program and shared it with Dr. Rodriguez. She also took responsibility for

completing the institution's eligibility documents and has served in that role since 2003.

Moreover, Ms. Leal's was responsible for providing data on the Title V program. Her

analysis and presentations were invaluable in making a case for maintaining the Learning

Framework course following the end of the grant. Ms. Leal played a critical role during

all stages of the Title V program.

Most Vocal Opponent

Dr. Samuel Freeman, a faculty member in the political science department, was

the Learning Framework's most vocal opponent. Along with the University Curriculum

Committee (UCC), he had proposed a similar course to provide students with an

introduction to the library and research practices, reading and studying skill development,

and a focus on enhancing writing skills. He wanted students to have a strong foundation

as they transitioned to UTPA. Unfortunately, there was not funding for the course his

team developed. Several years later, the institution received Title V and funded the

Learning Framework course, a "watered down" version by Freeman's estimation, of the

course the UCC had proposed. He was also frustrated by the shared governance policies

that were "violated" in making the course required for all students. He remained a vocal

opponent of the Learning Framework course, and as the grant cycle ended, Dr. Rodriguez

involved him in the process of establishing criteria to identify at-risk students to target for

enrollment in the course and a temporary exemption plan for students with stronger

academic preparation. While he was not able to adjust the course content or infuse the

curriculum with some of his more "rigorous" material, he was appeased by the fact that academically talented students were conditionally exempt and less likely to be "turned off" by the "Kumbayah" and holding hands classes he perceived Learning Framework course to be. His opposition shaped how instructors spoke about the class. They had specific instructions to never use the phrase "student success seminar"; it was always Learning Framework. Dr. Freeman's legacy of opposition lives on, as students are still exempt from the course through the criteria he helped established as UTPA institutionalized the course.

Summary. Kuh and Whitt (1988) as well as Tierney's (1988; 2008) frameworks outlined leadership and individual actors as essential components to explore when examining institutional culture. Several influential administrators, faculty, and staff members emerged as having substantially shaped the Title V program. Whether it was the program's conception, implementation, evaluation, or changes to the program that remained after the official grant cycle ended, multiple faculty and staff members committed to student success were involved with the various stages of the Title V program.

<center>**Additional Themes**</center>

Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney's (1988; 2008) frameworks provide multiple layers for exploring institutional culture and suggest that colleges and universities are dynamic, and constantly changing; however, the frameworks did not allow for that fluidity. UTPA has drastically evolved in the last 20 years, and the frameworks did not fully capture those changes.

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Campus Transformations

UTPA transitioned from an open access institution that awarded associates and bachelor's degrees to a regional comprehensive university with several graduate programs, and finally an emerging research institution that is doctoral degree granting (though still somewhat limited). The institution's retention rate in the late 1990s was less than 60 percent, and through countless initiatives, programs, and policy modifications, the campus's retention rate is over 75 percent.

Moreover, a noticeable shift occurred after 2003 and the campus's designation as an HSI. Notwithstanding UTPA's 40-year legacy of educating a large proportion of the Valley's Latino population, the HSI designation provided a way to describe what the institution had been doing for years and bring state and national recognition to the successes of UTPA despite access to limited resources. The document that best captured this drastic shift was the President's Report, a biennial progress report designed to highlight the institution's significant developments and accomplishments from the last two years and preview the upcoming two years. Dr. Nevárez released the first report in 1983. Over the course of his presidency, he published eight other reports, each approximately 30-40 pages, but it was his final report in 2003-2004 that looked very different from previous reports. On the inside front cover, page two of the report, there was a list of national rankings; the majority were data from Hispanic Outlook Magazine, touting UTPA as the institution graduating the most Hispanics in particular majors or disciplines (Appendix I). While these successes should be documented and celebrated, the word Hispanic had not appeared in the previous four reports. The contrast was stark, but I did not get much clarity when I asked Dr. Nevárez about the new content. He

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agreed that the tenor for his final report was likely different but that the change was not connected to the HSI designation or Title V award; it was something the campus wanted to highlight. Dr. Rodriguez shared her opinion on the matter and suggested it was a combination of the HSI designation, institutional actors, and the changing environment for Hispanics nationally that sparked new conversations and opportunities. Dr. Rodriguez stated, "We were designated as an Hispanic-serving institution, and before then, there had not been any either national or state recognition that these institutions were – they had a different mission." The national and state recognition of HSIs as institutions serving predominately large Latino student populations, many of whom were first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds with varied educational preparation, who were benefiting from unique interventions before admissions and once enrolled was significant. The designation allowed UTPA to highlight the work they had been doing before the Title V grant and with extremely limited resources. Moreover it was a way for the institution to push back at the state level around meeting specific benchmarks of recruitment and retention.

Transformational Leaders

Both Dr. Edwards and Dr. Rodriguez were transformational leaders at UTPA. As Bass (1985) described, both administrators needed to understand UTPA's culture before contributing to change. Dr. Edwards arrived in Edinburg and had to first understand the institution and Valley culture, and while Dr. Rodriguez had been on campus for a number of years, she had to adjust to a new role with a different sphere of influence. After both learned more about their roles, they were able to assist with realigning UTPA's culture with a new vision for student success and helping establish many of the mechanisms such

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as admissions standards and the learning framework course, through which UTPA

adjusted its norms and values. Dr. Edwards and Dr. Rodriguez significantly altered the

course of student success at UTPA. Both were able to motivate support staff and create

buy-in for their transformational ideas. While neither worked as a singular change agent,

it is difficult to imagine the campus without their involvement.

Race and Ethnicity

Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) do not explicitly provide a way

to describe the unique role of race and ethnicity in the various layers of institutional

culture. Each framework alludes to values and briefs or cultural norms of the

surrounding communities but does not specifically address race or ethnicity. When

exploring institutional culture at HSIs as well as other MSIs, it is critical that race and

ethnicity are central to the examination, particularly since these institutions are defined

and designated based on either a historical mission to serve certain racial and ethnic

student populations. Exploring the racial and ethnic make up of the external environment

as well as the individual actors and student subcultures provide very important

perspective. Moreover, understanding race and ethnicity within the context of the

institution's history is critical, particularly for population-based MSIs.

Race and ethnicity emerged as themes across all of the layers of analysis, but

given the salience of the theme, I would argue when exploring institutional culture within

an HSI context, exploring race and ethnicity explicitly is important. In reflecting on the

her role in contributing to the success of Latino students from her home community and

at UTPA, Dr. Rodriguez suggested this, "I think that, in order for these things to succeed

[retention efforts like Title V], we need Hispanic educators in administrative positions

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[higher education]….It's a whole different mindset when you do understand [common personal experiences]…. A lot of people would say that we're coddling them, that we don't think they can. That's not it!" She saw her work as leveling the playing field for first-generation college students and working against academic tracking or guidance counselors pushing many Latinos in the Valley towards vocational programs or military service. Many did not have parents with college-going experience or knowledge of how to navigate the process, so she highlighted the importance of ensuring there are administrators that understand the Valley culture and the student experience at UTPA.

Despite the need for a more racial and ethnically representative administration, Dr. Edwards illustrated that transformational leadership at UTPA did not require Latino heritage or an intimate knowledge of the Valley. Dr. Edwards's commitment was to student success, regardless of race or ethnicity, and he demonstrated a willingness to help change the culture of not only UTPA but also of Valley high schools.

Summary

While Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) capture most elements of institutional culture, when exploring Title V within an HSI context several other categories emerged that need to be addressed. Having a framework that includes race and ethnicity as well as one addressing a campus in transition is critical within the ever-changing HSI population. My proposed framework is outlined in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications & Conclusion

This study explores how institutional culture at HSIs influences Title V programs related to securing, evaluating, and sustaining Title V grants. This chapter begins with a brief summary of the findings presented in Chapters Four and Five. What follows is a discussion of the findings and how they support or differ from previous research on institutional culture, HSIs, and Title V. I then briefly turn to a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that informed the study, as well as additional frameworks that could be helpful in examining Title V and HSIs in the future. Finally, the chapter concludes with limitations of the study, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Findings

At the end of the 20th century, UTPA struggled to shed the undesirable perceptions about its institutional culture. The negative epithet, "Taco Tech," was a remnant of another institution, an associates degree-granting, *open* access institution, seen as a close to home option to appease the families of the Valley's academically talented students or the only option for those underprepared or without access to institutions further away. Changes in leadership across several key units on campus and an increased commitment to bettering the retention rates and academic success of UTPA students were catalysts for broad institutional transformation.

External Environment

By exploring UTPA through the lens of institutional culture as outlined by Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008), I identified several ways in which institutional culture shaped and influenced the Title V program. Several external forces

jeopardized Title V supported activities and forced Dr. Rodriguez and her team to react to

new mandates from the state by way of the THECB or unanticipated regulations from the

regional accreditation agency. Moreover, these outside forces required changes to the

program requiring the hiring of additional instructors but also served as a way to re-

evaluate the need for all students to enroll in the Learning Framework course and target

limited resources as the Title V grant cycle ended for students that were more likely to

experience challenges in transitioning to UTPA.

Research exploring the influence of external forces for HSIs specifically is scant;

however, these findings align with previous research (e.g., El-Khawes & Walker, 2001;

Lane & Brown, 2004) that highlights the unique political and regional forces that impact

institutions of higher education.

Institution

Applying for Title V was just one of the approaches institutional leaders

employed as they sought to move the campus and region forward. It is difficult to

attribute all of the positive outcomes UTPA experienced to Title V supported initiatives

without considering other crosscutting efforts such as establishing admissions criteria,

involving K-12 schools as partners in better preparing students academically, exposing

students to UTPA and college-going during summer camps or other on-campus activities

in elementary and middle school. But the Learning Framework course, learning

communities, and additional professional development for faculty contributed to the

overall transformation of UTPA and were influenced by the institutional culture.

The Title V program required designation as an HSI. The process seemed like

merely a formality for UTPA, but it provided a new way to describe what the institution

had been doing for years, serving the surrounding community which just happened to be predominately Latino. Despite "being an HSI" for nearly 20 years before congressional hearings first highlighted the need to provide institutions educating large numbers of Latinos with additional financial resources, UTPA did not identify their mission as unique or as serving Latinos specifically. More than the Title V grant, the "official" HSI designation helped campus leaders understand their reality and served as a turning point for the institution and the way it described itself. With the designation and Title V grant, there was state and national recognition of the role the institution played in student success and enhancing the region; the HSI designation provided a common language, a way for UTPA to identify and describe itself so that others outside of the Valley might understand. For the first time, UTPA saw their unique population as an asset and spoke with pride about the campus and its student population. Having access to additional resources and other federal programs that targeted MSIs provided an opportunity for UTPA to collaborate and market its programs and students in newfound ways.

Given the fast-growing number of institutions, diversity in type (public or private, 2-year or 4-year), and varied composition of faculty, staff, and students at HSIs, it is difficult to explore institutional sagas or campus histories. In-depth qualitative studies would be required of all HSIs in order to learn more about changes in patterns or beliefs, academic programs, or mission.

Individual Actors

Faculty and staff at UTPA were committed to student success and were the lifeblood of the Title V program. They leveraged their years of experience and knowledge of the UTPA student population as they participated in strategic planning

efforts and brainstormed new interventions. They developed networks and partnerships

across campus and influential leaders emerged. A wide variety of staff members

representing administrative professionals through the ranks to senior leadership played a

role in shaping aspects of the Title V program. Additionally, many of them served and

contributed with an ethic of care and a desire to empower students to achieve (Dayton et

al., 2004).

Theoretical Frameworks

Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney's (1988; 2008) frameworks for analyzing

institutional culture informed the conceptualization of my interview questions and

selection of participants in addition to guiding the exploration of documents. Two gaps

emerged when using these frameworks to explore institutional culture at an HSI. First,

neither addressed an environment in transition. Whether that is a drastic change in a

campus's external environment or a mission shift that completely alters the direction of

the institution, Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008) are really meant to

explore stable institutional cultures. Because UTPA had been an HSI by definition since

the early 1970s, I did not anticipate finding a more recent shift (the early 2000s) that

greatly influenced the Title V program. The second item that neither framework seemed

to address fully was the relevance of race or ethnicity within all layers of analysis.

Particularly in an HSI environment that originated as a PWI, the race and ethnicity of

institutional decision-makers, the general composition of the student population, and the

values and mores of the surrounding community are all robust aspects of the institutional

culture. Finally, both frameworks are presented in list format; given the nested and

dynamic nature of institutional culture, I felt the need to combine elements of both

frameworks and draw from Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological model to create a model that more closely resembled the institutional culture within this HSI context.

An ecological model to explore subcultures. Renn and Arnold (2003) applied Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological model to explore peer culture within postsecondary environments (Figure 1). Bronfenbrenner's ecology model consists of microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems linked together in "a system of nested, interdependent, dynamic structures" (1993, p. 4). The four systems describe the interrelated networks of interactions that create an individual's ecology.

Renn and Arnold (2003) place the student in the center of the model. In the first layer, the microsystem, interactions take place between friends and classmates in a variety of settings such as student organizations, classes, or jobs in the microsystem. College students are surrounded by interacting and sometimes competing microsystems of academic, social, family and work life that greatly impact their experiences within an undergraduate context. The interactions between multiple microsystems are situated within the mesosystem.

The two outer systems, exo- and macro-, describe indirect relationships and larger societal forces that shape experiences located within the inner most systems. Renn and Arnold (2003) define the exosystem as the "setting not containing the individual that nevertheless exerts influence on his or her developmental possibilities" (p. 272). For example, federal and institutional policies that help shape the campus environment in which the students do not exist but are placed and forced to navigate. The macrosystem represents the most distant level of environmental influence, situating the micro-, meso-, and exosystems within a given culture or social structure. Renn and Arnold (2003)

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include historical trends and events, social forces, and cultural expectations in their macrosystem.

This framework provides a visual representation of an environment by outlining several layers of external forces and policies and places students at the center. It, however, does not suggest how these different forces impacting student peer culture may overlap or influence each other; they appear to be discrete categories.

Institutional culture at a public four-year HSI. Drawing from Renn and Arnold's (2003) adaption of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological model and the two frameworks used to inform this study, Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney (1988; 2008), I have created a nested model (Figure 2) that seeks to illustrate the dynamic interactions within and across layers, the deep cutting external forces (i.e., economic, government, accreditation, etc.), and the importance of situating all layers within a racial/ethnic context. For the purposes of this project, Title V is placed in the center circle; however if exploring the influence of institutional culture on another program or student population were of interest, those entities could be placed in the center.

The outermost layer represents the region where the institution is located. As Kuh and Whitt (1988) describe, the cultural norms, history, and social forces of the surrounding community are part of the institutional culture. In this study, the outer layer represents the Valley and the unique racial, cultural, and social context of a region that over the last 100 years has shifted from an agricultural region controlled by Anglos to a predominately Latino population that did not see a Latino middle class emerge until the late 1970s.

The second layer is the institution itself (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). This layer includes the institution's mission, history, academic programs, and other artifacts that shape the campus. UTPA, the university explored in this study, has just over 80 years of history and institutional saga, but the campus's evolution from a small two-year degree granting college to an emerging research university has been substantial. Moreover, the institution's recent (in 2000) transition from open access to admission criteria also changed a lot for the campus. Together these large-scale shifts have greatly influenced institutional culture.

Within the institution there are individual actors: faculty, staff, or administrators who shape institutional culture (Kuh & Whitt, 2003; Tierney, 2008). The legacy of how these actors interact within or make meaning of experiences across the institutional context influences culture. For this study, individual actors influenced nearly all aspects of the Title V program: discovering the program, analyzing student data, drafting the application, selecting new books for the Learning Framework course, and establishing new criteria for enrolling in the Learning Framework course. Individual actors are central to discussing the successes and challenges of the Title V program and if not for their role, the Title V program would not exist. Additionally, several key administrators emerged as transformational forces impacting change across multiple layers including the Title V program specifically, the institution and beyond.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) discuss the outermost layer as the external environment, consisting of federal, state, and local contexts in which the institution is situated. I would argue that those forces permeate the various layers and depending on the type of external entity may influence all layers but in different ways, or the external forces may only

reach the region layer and not trickle down to the individual actors. In my model, they are depicted by arrows that may transition deep into the Title V program such as the accreditation requirements impacting the "type" of instructor for the Learning Framework course or mandates from the Texas Legislature through the THECB changing the core curriculum and threatening to institutionalization of the Learning Framework course.

Finally, while Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney's (1988; 2008) frameworks suggest race and ethnicity may impact institutional culture by way of other elements in their analysis such as through the culture of the external environment or the values of the students. However, race and ethnicity emerged as critical components across all layers of institutional culture at UTPA; from the surrounding region where the institution is located to the senior level administrators and decision-makers, race and ethnicity mattered. Therefore I chose to place race and ethnicity in a crosscutting layer in which the rest of the model is situated. This modified framework more accurately addresses the unique institutional culture at HSIs and could easily be adapted to explore other MSI contexts.

Implications

Given the changing demographics and the exponential growth in the number of HSIs, it is essential that policymakers and administrators thoroughly understand the Title V program and the important role it can play in advancing a "Hispanic-serving" mission. The data collected in this study revealed significant findings with implications for policy and practice.

Policy

Having in-depth information about how an individual campus interfaces with the Title V program is valuable for multiple reasons. Beyond providing insight for other

HSIs, this information is also particularly helpful for the Department of Education and creates opportunities to focus outreach efforts. Despite having been a past recipient of a Title III grant, many institutional leaders at UTPA, a school with a Latino student enrollment close to 85 percent did not know about the HSI designation or the multiple funding opportunities connected to the designation. How many other institutions are missing out on grant programs or initiatives that can serve as seed money for transformative programs? It is critical that the Department of Education ensures institutions are familiar with eligibility requirements and federal grant programs.

Additionally, the Department of Education has an opportunity to minimize the confusion around HSIs (as well as other percentage-based institutions). The multiple HSI lists make identifying and researching these institutions tremendously challenging. It would behoove the Department of Education to create an "official" HSI list as well as a Title V eligible list each year. Without a formal list, there is little consistency about the number of HSIs each year or which institutions meet the requirements. The issue is further exacerbated when researchers choose to include or remove Puerto Rico or for-profit institutions in the analysis. Based on the federal definition, all two and four-year non-profit institutions in the United States (which includes Puerto Rico) with at least 25 percent Latino population should be included on HSI lists and when speaking about the universe of HSIs.

As the Latino population continues to grow, the number of institutions that qualify for the HSI designation is likely to continue to grow. A campus with over 85 percent Latino population for the last 30 years is starkly different than a campus reaching 25 percent Latino population within the last year. Policymakers eager to move the needle

on access and success for Latino students might look at HSIs with over 50 or 75 percent Latino population as a separate tier, historically Hispanic-serving institution (HHSI) as several other scholars have suggested (Cortez, 2011), that compete for federal support separate from institutions with 25 to 50 percent or increasing the required enrollment from 25 percent to 50 percent (Espino & Cheslock, 2008). An infusion of money to a campus that is a majority Latino has the opportunity to influence Latino student success in a very different way compared to a campus attempting to target a student population.

At the state level, higher education coordinating boards, state legislatures, etc. must be mindful about how changes to policies at the state level have a trickle-down effect. Decisions made outside of individual campus contexts may actually undermine programs and initiatives aimed at addressing similar problems such as time to degree or retention rates. Additionally, as more states look to performance-based funding models, it is critical that they consider institutional culture and the influence it can have on institutional efforts aimed at increasing retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

Practice

The findings in this study provide insight into the Title V program cycle for institutions considering applying for funding or those with active Title V grants looking to institutionalize their grant funded initiatives. It is critical that colleges and universities consider their institutional culture as they attempt to apply for additional resources through Title V or other targeted programs to support the growing Latino population on their campuses. How might a history as a PWI influence the campus support services available or who is involved with the grant's administration? How might external forces such as accreditation or decisions from state government influence the implementation or

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institutionalization phases of the grant? UTPA's unforeseen challenges provide a wide-range of examples from which other institutions might brainstorm possible preventative measures or responses. UTPA utilized the Title V program in concert with other large-scale initiatives to change the institutional culture around retention and student success drastically. Institutions might consider how best to fold in Title V supported initiatives with other planned changes to transform the campus and propel student success.

This study highlighted the unintended consequences of a policy change. While moving UTPA towards doctoral granting and emerging research institution status, faculty-teaching loads shifted and the learning communities were no longer viable. As transitions occur between administrations or universities move in different directions, a comprehensive review of current programs and policies potentially impacted by those proposed changes would prove helpful. Having enough time or notice to conduct these investigations may not always be an option and sometimes it is difficult to anticipate all ramifications of decisions. Administrators willing to make proactive changes to systems or programs already in place and engaging those across campus show foresight and a willingness to involve others and avoid top-down directives. Facilitating and securing institutional buy-in is critical to the success of administrative tasks.

Lastly, this study highlights the importance of recognizing the sphere in which colleges and universities operate. Cultural, environmental, and political forces impact institutions across different layers and have the ability to move through layers and exert influence on student success and other support programs. Long gone are the ivory towers where institutions can make decisions removed from their state or local context.

Future Research

There are multiple opportunities for further exploration of Title V. This project can easily be replicated to explore other colleges or universities. It would be valuable to continue to refine the proposed model for analyzing institutional culture at HSIs by exploring diverse HSI settings with varied demographics in different regions of the country. This study would look very different at a community college in the Midwest, a private institution in Puerto Rico, or an HSI with just 25 or 26 percent Latino student population.

Secondly, there are opportunities for quantitative or mixed methods inquiry to supplement rich, thick qualitative accounts of Title V experiences. While Pineda did not find the Title V program to increase access and success for students across a population of HSIs, digging deeper into institutional level data around Title V supported activities would add additional understanding to campus specific explorations of Title V.

Much of UTPA's current retention efforts can be traced back to Title V grant and initiatives. Several UTPA faculty and administrators suggested that the campus would not have realized the gains in retention rates without the Title V grant. It would be interesting to explore campuses that successfully secured Title V grants compared to those that applied and were not successful.   Exploring these institutions through in-depth case studies highlights important nuances and better prepares campuses for the competitive application process.

Finally, given the current fiscal climate, knowing more about the impact of these grants within specific institutional contexts is important. The current definition of HSIs and changing demographics would suggest the exponential growth in the number of

HSIs, a growth that far outpaces the growth in Title V funding. This research combined with the work of other scholars exploring HSIs may be helpful should Congress change legislation to reduce federal support or look to create discrete categories within the HSI designation.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, I set out explore the Title V program at a four-year public HSI in Texas and examine the role of institutional culture across the grant cycle. I found that institutional culture at UTPA did in fact influence how the Title V program (2003-2008) was conceived, implemented, and institutionalized. I was afforded the opportunity to engage with committed faculty and staff who want nothing but the best for their students and commit their life's work to ensuring more students receive a quality college education and the chance to better their and their family's circumstance in the Valley and beyond.

However, I did not anticipate finding a campus in transition. I learned a great deal about the influence of multiple forces driving the campus from its open access roots to admission standards with the ultimate goal of developing doctoral-granting programs and a research institution. Secondly, given the large Latino student population, I did not consider the importance or potential impact of the federal HSI designation. I was shocked to find out that nearly instantly, the designation gave UTPA leaders an opportunity to talk about their student population and mission in a way that was not available prior their formal recognition as an HSI. Additionally, despite previous knowledge of the area's racial history, I had not reflected on how race and ethnicity played out on the UTPA campus and the unique dynamics of a majority Latino student

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population being taught and led by a majority Anglo faculty and administration.

The Title V grant program not only infused over $1.6 million into UTPA's campus from 2003 to 2008, but the programs it funded, alongside other campus efforts, helped shape the institution's retention strategy and drastically impacted overall retention rates. Given the interconnectedness of policy changes, programmatic initiatives, and administrative shifts, it would be difficult to attribute UTPA's success to just one person, policy, or program, but certainly the Title V program and the individual actors stewarding the process contributed to advancing student success. Moreover, while the first-year retention rate saw substantial gains as a result of targeted efforts, persistence rates across subsequent years, time to degree, and graduation rates all still warranted interventions and attention. Additional infusions of resources are critical to move UTPA fully into the 21st century and support the desire to establish it as a research institution.

As I was completing data collection, the Texas legislature approved a ground-breaking merger that combines the talent, assets, and resources of University of Texas Brownsville, University of Texas Pan American, and the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC). The institution, named University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, will span the entire Rio Grande Valley with a presence in each of the major metropolitan areas of Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, and McAllen. The new university, which is eligible for funding from the Permanent University Fund[3], will also be home to a medical

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[3] "PUF" is the abbreviation for the Permanent University Fund, a public endowment established in 1876 by the Texas Constitution that receives revenues and earnings on investments from land in West Texas to support institutions in the UT and Texas A&M systems. The new South Texas university is specifically made eligible for access to the PUF by the law recently passed by the Texas Legislature and signed by Governor Perry. Neither UTPA nor UTB were

school (About Project South Texas, 2013). This new institution is positioned to become the largest, if not, one of the top three leading HSIs in the country. UTRGV is aiming to transform not only student success but overall quality of life in the region. Should this new institution apply for Title V support, there will be multiple layers of institutional culture analysis required.

Finally, Title V is meant to be an infusion of resources, and in order to continue to make a difference for Latino students, colleges and universities must be willing to invest and link Title V programs with other initiatives. Interestingly, the creation of the HSI designation has created an economic motivation for emerging HSIs, those with student populations 15-24 percent Latino. In a survey of representatives from 176 emerging HSIs (Santiago & Andrade, 2010), several respondents noted that the additional resources connected to the Title V program impacted recruitment goals and practices for Latino students. Additionally, Santiago and Andrade (2010) also found institutions motivated to increase Latino enrollment as a commitment to ensuring their institution's enrollment reflects the population of the institution's service area, region, or state. While these motivations might not necessarily compete, this study illustrates the importance of considering the influence of institutional culture on Title V and the potential unique issues surrounding campuses in transition or recent regional transitions.

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eligible for PUF funds as individual institutions (Frequently Asked Questions, 2013).

Table 1

A Framework of Organizational Culture

Environment:
   • How does the organization define its environment?
   • What is the attitude towards the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

Mission:
   • How is it defined?
   • How is it articulated?
   • Is it used as a basis for decisions?
   • How much agreement is there?

Socialization:
   • How do new members become socialized?
   • How is it articulated?
   • What do new members need to know to survive/excel in the organization?

Information:
   • What constitutes information?
   • Who has it?
   • How is it disseminated?

Strategy:
   • How are decisions arrived at?
   • What strategy is used?
   • Who makes decisions?
   • What is the penalty for bad decisions?

Leadership:
   • What does the organization expect from its leaders?
   • Who are the leaders?
   • Are there formal and informal leaders?

Tierney (1988; 2008) p. 30

Table 2

Changes to Allowable Activities from 1994-2008

Allowable Activity	1994-2008	Allowable Activity	2008-present
1	Purchase, rental or lease of scientific/laboratory equipment	1	Purchase, rental, or lease of scientific/laboratory equipment (same)
2	Construction, maintenance, renovation, and improvement in classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities	2	Construction, maintenance, renovation, and improvement of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities (added purchase or rental of telecommunications technology)
3	Support of faculty exchanges and development, curriculum development, academic instruction, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in field of instruction	3	Purchase of library materials (i.e. books, periodicals, technical and other scientific journals) (original #4)
4	Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material	4	Support for low-income students including outreach, academic support services, mentoring, scholarships, fellowships, and other financial assistance (changed language; original #5)
5	Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success	5	Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, faculty research, curriculum development, and academic instruction (changed language; original #3)
6	Funds and administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management (removed)	6	Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance education technologies (original #10)
7	Joint use of facilities (i.e. laboratories/libraries) (removed)	7	Collaboration with other institutions of higher education to expand certificate and degree offerings
8	Establishing or improving a development office to strengthen or improve fundraising efforts (removed)	8	Other activities proposed that – (A) contribute to carrying out the purposes of this part; and (B) are approved by the Secretary as part of the review and acceptance of such application (original #14)
9	Establishing or improving an endowment fund (removed)		
10	Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance learning academic instruction capabilities		
11	Establishing or enhancing a program or teacher education designed to qualify students to teach in public elementary and secondary schools		
12	Establishing community outreach programs encouraging elementary and secondary school students to develop the academic skills and the interest to pursue postsecondary education (removed)		
13	Expanding the number of Hispanic and other under- represented graduate and professional students served by the institution (removed)		
14	Other activities proposed that contribute to carrying out the purposes of this title; and (B) are approved by the Secretary as part of the review and acceptance of such application		

Villarreal & Santiago (2012)

Table 3

Demographic Summary of Title V Individual Actors

Name	Race/Ethnicity	Title in 2003	Role within Title V	Current Title	Rationale for Interviewing	Start Year
Rodolfo Arévalo '69	Latino	Provost	Supervised Dr. Rodriguez	President, Eastern Wash. University	Institutional leader	1998
Samuel Freeman	Anglo	Assoc. Professor, Political Science	Opposed Learning Framework course	Assoc. Professor, Political Science	Title V opposition/ institutional background	1980
Rebekah Hamilton	Anglo	English Dept.'s Lower Division Coordinator	Faculty Activity Director	Director, University Writing Center	Title V	1989
Thelma Leal	Latino	Research Analyst, Undergraduate Studies	Stumbled across the designation/ data	Research Analyst, University College	Title V	2002
Marta Lopez	Latina	Director, URAP	Staff Activity Coordinator	Assoc. Director, University Advising Center	Title V/UTPA retention efforts	-
Marcy McQuillen	Latina	H.S. Teacher, Comm, Donna I.S.D	Learning Framework Instructor	Lecturer, Undergraduate Studies	Title V	2004
Kelly Morales	Anglo	Lecturer, English	Learning Framework Instructor	Lecturer, Undergraduate Studies	Title V	1994
Ana Maria Rodriguez	Latina	Asst. VP, Undergraduate Studies	Title V Project Director	Retired	Title V	1973
Belinda Reyes	Latina	Staff, University Retention Program	Program Coordinator Learning Framework	Program Coordinator, University College	Title V	2000
Jose Saldivar	Latino	Lecturer, Education	Pilot course/ Learning Framework Instructor	Lecturer, Undergraduate Studies	Title V	2002
Richard Treviño '80	Latino	Exec. Director, Student Support Services	Recruitment & retention task force member	Exec. Director, Learning Assistance Center	UTPA retention efforts	-
Michael Weaver	Anglo	Interim Dept. Head, Modern Languages & Literature Dep.; Assoc. Professor, History	Faculty Activity Director	Asst. Dean, College of Arts & Humanities; Assoc. Professor, History	Title V	1992

Table 4

Demographic Summary of General Individual Actors

| Name	Race/ Ethnicity	Title as of 2003	Current Title	Rationale for Interviewing	Start Year
James Aldridge	Anglo	Professor, Psychology	Professor, Psychology	Institutional background	1977
John Edwards	Anglo	VP, Division of Enrollment & Student Services	Retired	Led UTPA retention efforts	2000
Kristen Croyle	Anglo	Asst. Professor, Psychology	Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education & Dean, University College	Current retention efforts	2002
Laura Grabowski	Anglo	Lecturer, Computer Science	Asst. Professor, Computer Science	Institutional background	1983-2003; 2009
Wendy Lawrence Fowler	Anglo	Vice Provost, Research & Sponsored Projects	Professor, Computer Science	Institutional background	1990
Miguel Nevárez	Latino	President (exiting office as grant was awarded)	President Emeritus	Institutional leader/ background	1971

Table 5

Overview of Institutional Documents

Name	Year	Type	Rationale	Document Location
President's Annual Report	1983	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
President's Annual Report	1983-1984	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
President's Annual Report	1985-1986	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
Academic Strategy: Vision 60 Building for Excellence toward the Year 2000	1988	Strategic Plan	Institutional background; goals; mission	Institutional archives
President's Report (1989-1994)	1989-1994	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
Agency Strategic Plan for the 1995-1999 Period	1994	Report	Institutional background; goals; mission	Institutional archives
Final Report of the Enrollment Management Task Force	1995	Report	Institutional background; retention efforts	Institutional archives
President's Report 1995-1996	1995-1996	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
Enrollment Management Council: Enrollment Management Plan	1996-1998	Report	Institutional background; recruitment & retention efforts	Institutional archives
President's Council Planning Conference: Environmental Scan	1997	Notes from planning session	Institutional background; SWOT analysis	Institutional archives
President's Report	1997-1998	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
President's Report	1999-2000	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
President's Report	2001-2002	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
President's Report	2003-2004	Report	Institutional background	Institutional archives
University Budget	2002-2008	Budget Documents	Title V spending	Institutional archives
Institutional Mission Statements	2003	Review of all mission statements	Institutional background; mission	Institutional archives
Title V Application	2003	Application	Title V	Staff provided
Title V Performance Reports	2003-2008	Reports	Title V	Staff provided
Title V Communication	2003-2008	Emails	Title V	Staff provided
Other Title V Documents	2003-2008	i.e., Learning Framework Instructor job posting, agendas for trainings and	Title V	Staff provided

|		meetings; attendees lists for professional development workshops		
Newspaper Articles (online and paper)	1980s-present	i.e., Title V, individual actors connected to Title V, retention at UTPA	Institutional background; individual actors; Title V	Institutional archives; online

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Model as Applied to a Postsecondary Environment
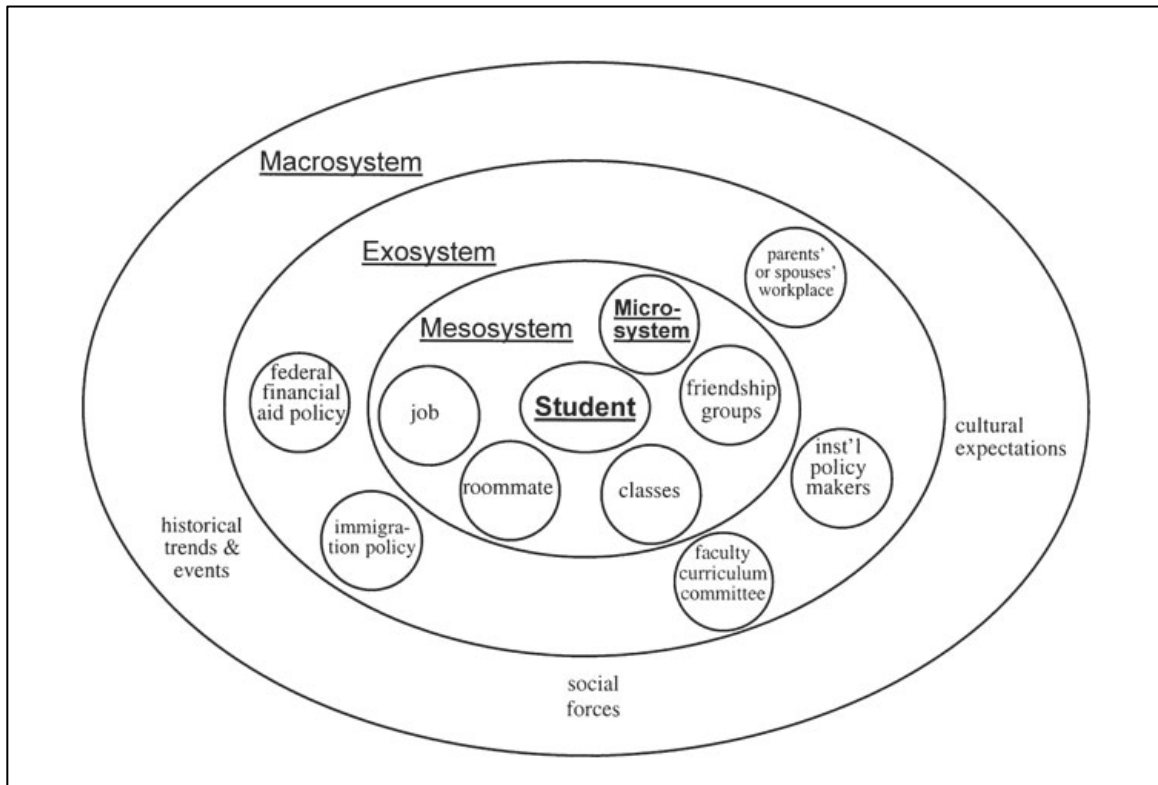
Renn & Arnold (2003)

Figure 2

A New Framework for Analyzing Institutional Culture at HSIs
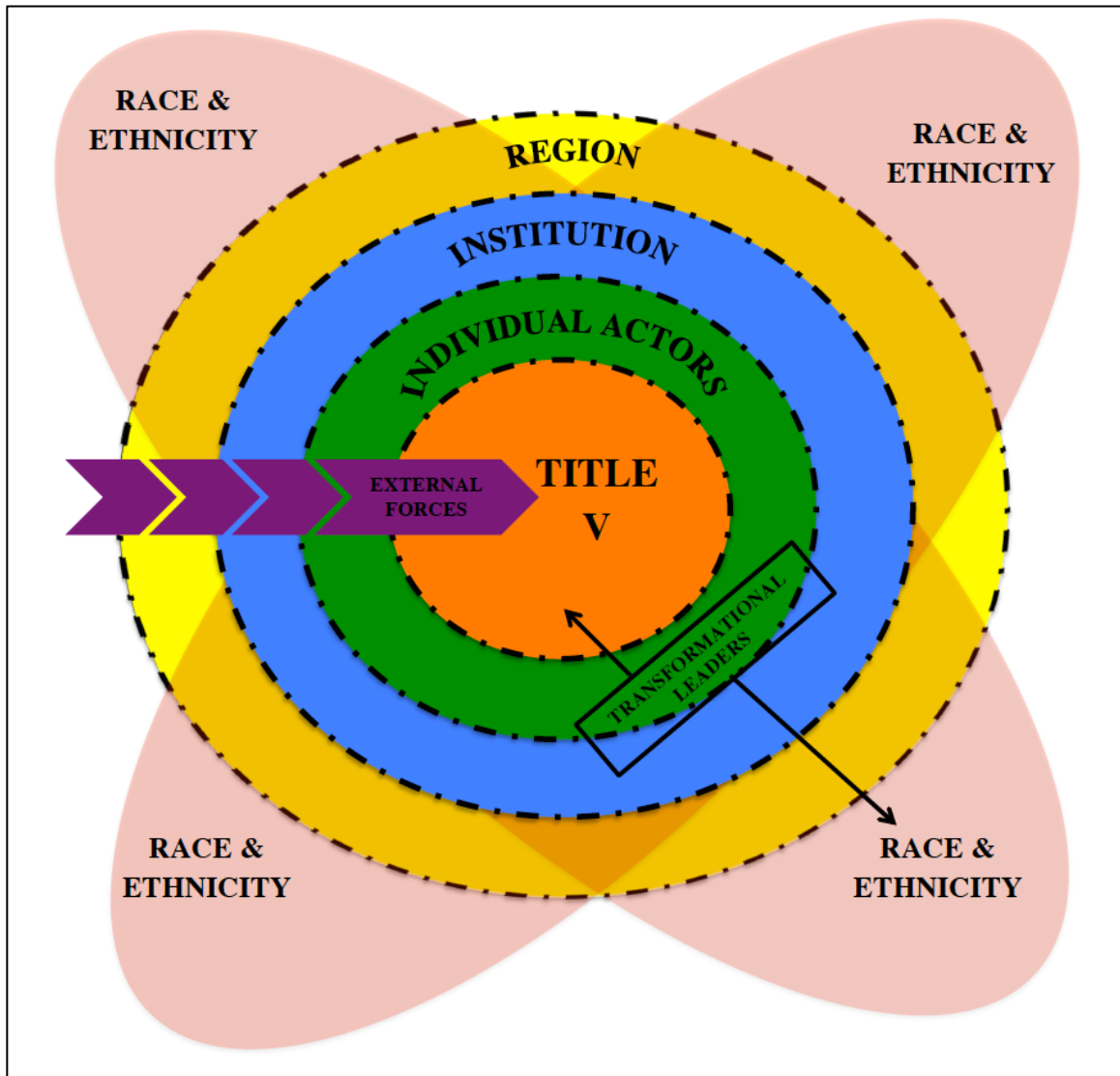
Adapted from Kuh & Whitt (1988), Tierney (1988; 2008), and Renn & Arnold's (2003)

Adaptation of Bronfenbrenner (1993)

Appendix A
Eligibility Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program

Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.,* unless otherwise noted.
Source: 64 FR 70147, Dec. 15, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General
§606.1   What is the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program?
The purpose of the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program is to provide grants to eligible institutions of higher education to—
(a) Expand educational opportunities for, and improve the academic attainment of, Hispanic students; and
(b) Expand and enhance the academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability of colleges and universities that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic students and other low-income individuals complete postsecondary degrees.
(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101)

§606.2   What institutions are eligible to receive a grant under the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program?
(a) An institution of higher education is eligible to receive a grant under this part if—
        (1) At the time of application, it has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students;
        (2) It provides assurances that not less than 50 percent of its Hispanic students are low-income individuals;
        (3) It has an enrollment of needy students as described in §606.3(a), unless the Secretary waives this requirement under §606.3(b);
        (4) It has low average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student as described in §606.4(a), unless the Secretary waives this requirement under §606.4(c);
        (5) It is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to be a junior college or to provide an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree; and
        (6) It is accredited or preaccredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that the Secretary has determined to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered.
(b) A branch campus of a Hispanic-Serving institution is eligible to receive a grant under this part if—
        (1) The institution as a whole meets the requirements of paragraphs (a)(3) through (a)(6) of this section; and
        (2) The branch campus satisfies the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) of this section.
(c)   (1) An institution that receives a grant under the Strengthening Institutions Program (34 CFR part 607) or the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (34 CFR part 608) for a particular fiscal year is not eligible to receive a grant under this part for that same fiscal year, and may not relinquish its grant under those programs to secure a grant under this part.

(2) A Hispanic-Serving institution under this part may not concurrently receive grant funds under the Strengthening Institutions Program, Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program, or Strengthening Historically Black Graduate Institutions Program.
(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101a and 1101d)
[64 FR 70147, Dec. 15, 1999, as amended at 66 FR 1263, Jan. 8, 2001]

§606.3   What is an enrollment of needy students?
(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, for the purpose of §606.2(a)(3), an applicant institution has an enrollment of needy students if in the base year—
      (1) At least 50 percent of its degree students received student financial assistance under one or more of the following programs: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work-Study, and Federal Perkins Loan; or
      (2) The percentage of its undergraduate degree students who were enrolled on at least a half-time basis and received Federal Pell Grants exceeded the median percentage of undergraduate degree students who were enrolled on at least a half-time basis and received Federal Pell Grants at comparable institutions that offer similar instruction.
(b) The Secretary may waive the requirement contained in paragraph (a) of this section if the institution demonstrates that—
      (1) The State provides more than 30 percent of the institution's budget and the institution charges not more than $99.00 for tuition and fees for an academic year;
      (2) At least 30 percent of the students served by the institution in the base year were students from low-income families;
      (3) The institution substantially increases the higher education opportunities for low-income students who are also educationally disadvantaged, underrepresented in postsecondary education, or minority students;
      (4) The institution substantially increases the higher education opportunities for individuals who reside in an area that is not included in a "metropolitan statistical area" as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and who are unserved by other postsecondary institutions; or
      (5) The institution will, if granted the waiver, substantially increase the higher education opportunities for Hispanic Americans.
(c) For the purpose of paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary considers "low-income" to be an amount which does not exceed 150 percent of the amount equal to the poverty level as established by the United States Bureau of the Census.
(d) Each year, the Secretary notifies prospective applicants of the low-income figures through a notice published in the Federal Register.
(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101a and 1103a)

§606.4   What are low educational and general expenditures?
(a)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, for the purpose of §606.2(a)(2), an applicant institution's average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student in the base year must be less than the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student in that year of comparable institutions that offer similar instruction.
      (2) For the purpose of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the Secretary determines the

average educational and general expenditure per full-time equivalent undergraduate student for institutions with graduate students that do not differentiate between graduate and undergraduate educational and general expenditures by discounting the graduate enrollment using a factor of 2.5 times the number of graduate students.

(b) Each year, the Secretary notifies prospective applicants through a notice in the Federal Register of the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student at comparable institutions that offer similar instruction.

(c) The Secretary may waive the requirement contained in paragraph (a) of this section, if the Secretary determines, based upon persuasive evidence provided by the institution, that—

    (1) The institution's failure to satisfy the criteria in paragraph (a) of this section was due to factors which, if used in determining compliance with those criteria, distorted that determination; and

    (2) The institution's designation as an eligible institution under this part is otherwise consistent with the purposes of this part.

(d) For the purpose of paragraph (c)(1) of this section, the Secretary considers that the following factors may distort an institution's educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student—

    (1) Low student enrollment;

    (2) Location of the institution in an unusually high cost-of-living area;

    (3) High energy costs;

    (4) An increase in State funding that was part of a desegregation plan for higher education; or

    (5) Operation of high cost professional schools such as medical or dental schools.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101a and 1103a)

§606.5   How does an institution apply to be designated an eligible institution?

(a) An institution applies to the Secretary to be designated an eligible institution under this part by first submitting an application to the Secretary in the form, manner, and time established by the Secretary. The application must contain—

    (1) The information necessary for the Secretary to determine whether the institution satisfies the requirements of §§606.2, 606.3(a), and 606.4(a);

    (2) Any waiver request under §§606.3(b) and 606.4(c); and

    (3) Information or explanations justifying any requested waiver.

(b) An institution that wishes to receive a grant under this part must submit, as part of its application for that grant, an assurance that when it submits its application—

    (1) Its enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students is at least 25 percent Hispanic students; and

    (2) Not less than 50 percent of its Hispanic students are low-income individuals.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1101a and 1103)

Appendix B
Written Document Analysis Form

Title of Document

[ ]

Type of Document
- ☐ Advertisement
- ☐ Letter
- ☐ Memorandum
- ☐ Report
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Map
- ☐ Census Report
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Other: [ ]

Date(s) of Document (Published)

[ ]

Date(s) of Document (Updated/Modified)

[ ]

Author(s) or Creator(s) of Document (Title/Position)

[ ]

Brief Overview of Document

[ ]

Primary Audience of Document

[ ]

Secondary Audience of Document

[ ]

Purpose of Document

[ ]

Does Document Address External Environment?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If External Environment Addressed, In What Areas?
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Economic
- ☐ Surrounding Community
- ☐ Other: [ ]

Other Notes on External Environment

[ ]

Does Document Address Internal Environment?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If Internal Environment Addressed, In What Areas?

☐ Historical Background

☐ Mission

☐ Faculty

☐ Staff

☐ Students

☐ Leadership

☐ Policies

☐ Other: [ ]

Other Notes on Internal Environment

[ ]

Does Document Address Title V Program?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If Title V Program Addressed, How?

◯ Application

◯ Implementation

◯ Evaluation

◯ Sustainability

◯ Other: [ ]

Other Notes on Title V

[ ]

Researcher Reaction to Document

[ ]

Explanation Document from Institutional Leader (if necessary) (Text, Leader Name/Position)

[ ]

Lack of Explanation of Document from Institutional Leader (if necessary) (Text, Leader Name/Position)

[ ]

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Appendix C
Interview Protocol

Basic Demographic Questions

- What is your current position at UTPA?

- How long have you been in your current position?

- What previous positions have you held at UTPA, if any?

- How would you identify yourself in terms of social identity categories such as race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender identity, sexual attraction/orientation, class, or any others you might identify?

Historical Background

- Can you briefly provide some historical background about this campus and how it has changed since you have been here?

External Environment

- How would you describe UTPA's surrounding environment?

- Does the surrounding environment influence UTPA? If so, how?

Internal Environment

- How would you describe the current mission of UTPA?

- How is the mission articulated on a day-to-day basis?

- Is the mission used as a basis for decisions? If not, what is?

- Who makes institutional decisions?

- How would you describe UTPA faculty/staff/administrators?

Title V Program

- Who was involved with the original Title V grant application process?

- How did UTPA conceive of the programs outlined in the original application?

- How was program sustainability thought about during the application stage?

- How would you describe the implementation process?

- How did program sustainability shift after the implementation process?

- How was the program evaluated?

- Now that the federal funding has ended, how is the program sustained?

- What is the long-term plan for the programs originally funded through Title V?

- Has UTPA applied for other Title V grants? If so, what programs were

  highlighted for funding?

Greetings UTPA Faculty/Staff Member,

My name is Rebecca Villarreal and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. My dissertation focuses on institutional decision-making at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and the U.S. Department of Education's Title V Grant Program.

I am conducting a single-site case study exploring University of Texas-Pan American's Title V program awarded from 2003-2008. I traveled to Edinburg in February and had opportunity to meet with Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez and several others involved with the Title V program.

I am gearing up for another trip later this week and I am hoping to chat with other administrators that worked at Pan Am during the grant or who may have been involved with other retention efforts. I would love to set up a time to meet with you if your schedule allows. I will be in town March 21-March 26. Please let me know if you would be willing to chat with me. I would greatly appreciate any assistance you can provide.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Villarreal
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Administration
University of Maryland

Project Title	Institutional Culture at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Institutional Decision-Making and Title V
Purpose of the Study	You are being asked to participate in a study exploring one four-year public HSI's culture qualitatively, specifically looking at institutional decision-making around the Title V program. By speaking to current institutional leaders and those involved with the original Title V grant process, the study hopes to gain insight into how Title V proposals are crafted and then implemented. You are being invited to participate in this research project because you are a faculty, staff member, or administrator with knowledge of UTPA culture or the Title V program. This project is being conducted by Rebecca Villarreal, doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park as part of her dissertation under the direction of Noah D. Drezner, Ph.D.
Procedures	You will be asked to participate in one or two 60-90 minute interview(s). You will be asked interview questions about UTPA culture, decision-making, and the Title V program. For example: How would you describe the current mission of UTPA? How did UTPA conceive of the programs outlined in the original application for Title V funding? The interview(s) will be audiotaped. Your name, job title, and institution will be noted by the investigator.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. The nature of this research will focus on your perspectives and opinions about your experiences as a faculty, staff member, or administrator. You are in control of what you want to share.
Potential Benefits	The nature of this research will focus on your perspectives and opinions about UTPA's institutional culture, decision-making, and the Title V program. You may not benefit directly from this research.
Confidentiality (part I)	The information collected will be identifiable, but identifying your role at UTPA is a central feature of understanding UTPA and the Title V program. The student investigator plans to use participant name, job title, and attribute quotations. Participants will have the opportunity to: 1) correct or amend transcripts of the interview, 2) ask that portions of the interview be off the record, or 3) request that their name and/or job title not be identified. All transcribed and the electronic files will remain saved as password-protected files on the investigator's office computer. All related documents or paper files will be stored in investigator's office in locked file cabinets. The investigator will be the only person with access to audio files and transcriptions in order to minimize any potential loss of confidentiality. No later than ten years after the research has been completed all audiotapes of the interviews will be destroyed, transcripts shredded, and electronic files deleted.

Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact the student investigator, Rebecca Villarreal by e-mail at rvillarr@umd.edu or via telephone at 248.494.1122, or study advisor Noah D. Drezner, Ph.D. by e-mail at ndrezner@umd.edu or via telephone at 301.405.2980.
Participant Rights	*If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount Hall** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.
Audio Recording	____ I agree to have the interview audiotaped ____ I do not agree to have the interview audiotaped
Confidentiality (part II)	____ I agree to have quotations attributed to me by name and job title ____ I agree to have quotations attributed to me by job title and would like to use the following pseudonym in place of my name ____ I do not agree to have quotations attributed to me
	If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]**	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

Appendix F
Key Participant Bio Sketches

John Edwards was born in West Texas and attended the University of North

Texas where he received a bachelor's degree in social studies. He went on to receive a

master's in American History from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M

University-Commerce) and a doctorate in American History and American Literature

from Texas Tech University. Dr. Edwards served as a lecturer and instructor in history

courses at several institutions and worked in university administration in undergraduate

admissions. He was the founder of two new positions, Director of New Student Relations

in the Recruitment Office at Texas Tech and then the Founding Director of Enrollment

Management at Texas A&M University-Commerce. He served as the Dean of

Enrollment Management at Texas A&M University-Commerce before transitioning to

UTPA at the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services. While he had not

worked with large Latino populations at his previous institutions, he noted he had worked

with African American communities; "I was in East Texas, which did not have a

Hispanic population, but did have a large African American population, primarily from

the Dallas region." At Commerce he coordinated several programs and initiatives "to

bring African Americans kids from the ghettos there out on our campus for summer

projects and several of those programs were successful. We had kind of a mindset when

we came here that we could do something similar." He did not experience culture shock

in his move to the Valley; "No, because, you know, I treat people just as people, that's

the way it is and so there was not culture shock…. I came from a family that was pretty

poor, and I have always been of the view that if you give people an opportunity, they're

going to be successful." Dr. Edwards went on to say that, "Many of them, and it is

certainly true that the Hispanic students from the Valley, many of them know what hard work is, and if you know what hard work is, then you can apply that hard work ethic to your studies, and they're going to be successful."

Miguel Nevárez was born and raised in McAllen, Texas. He attended Texas A&I (now Texas A&M) in Kingsville where he received a bachelor's degree in Agriculture. He went on a receive a Master's from Michigan State University in Elementary Education and then a doctorate from New York University in Science education. He taught and served as a principal in the McAllen Independent School District before being hired as an Assistant Professor of Elementary Education, Acting Director of Counseling and Testing, and the Associate Dean of Men in 1971 at UTPA. Dr. Nevárez received tenure and moved up the ranks of Student Affairs. From 1976 to 1981, he was the Vice President for Student and University Affairs, and then in 1981 he was selected to lead UTPA as President. Dr. Nevárez served as President from 1981 until 2004 when he retired from the presidency and returned to the classroom as a Professor in the Educational Leadership program at UTPA.

Ana Maria Rodriguez began her professional career as a high school English teacher in a South Texas school district. Many of her students faced difficult situations at home, and her desire to better assist fueled her desire to return to graduate school and pursue a masters and doctorate in counseling. She received her master's degree from UTPA, her doctorate at the University of Houston, and then she returned to UTPA to teach teacher preparation courses in the College of Education. Dr. Rodriguez began her
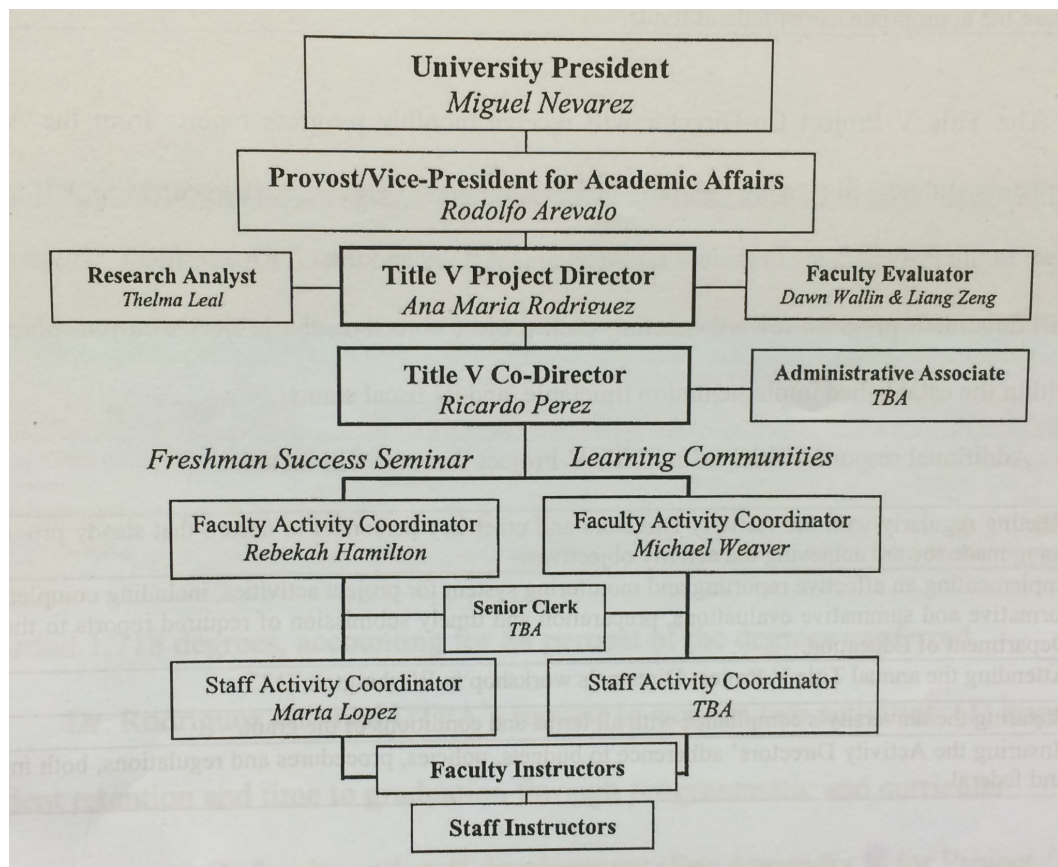
work in university administration within the College of Education, and then Dr. Arévalo

selected her to join the senior university administration team as senior vice provost for

Academic Affairs for Undergraduate Studies. In her role, Dr. Rodriguez spearheaded

several programs and initiatives aimed at improving student access and success at UTPA.

After a professional career of 46 years, 10 years in public schools, and 36 years at UTPA,

Dr. Rodriguez retired. After receiving an award for serving the institution for 35 years,

she left the stage and thought to herself, "Oh my God, where has my life gone? And

what have I missed?" Her passion for helping students was life. She recalls, "Frankly, I

never felt like I missed anything because I was loving what I was doing. It was just my

passion. It was my whole purpose in life, practically." Though she did not have a family

of her own, her nieces and nephews are her "adopted" children, and she has helped many

of them navigate the college-going process.

Appendix G
Title V Activity Descriptions

1. **Improve Student Retention and Time to Graduation Through Programmatic and Curricular Innovation –** This activity will provide Freshman Success Seminars, Learning Communities, Academic Advisement, and Assessment of Entering Students. Key measures include improving first-year retention and reducing the time to graduation.
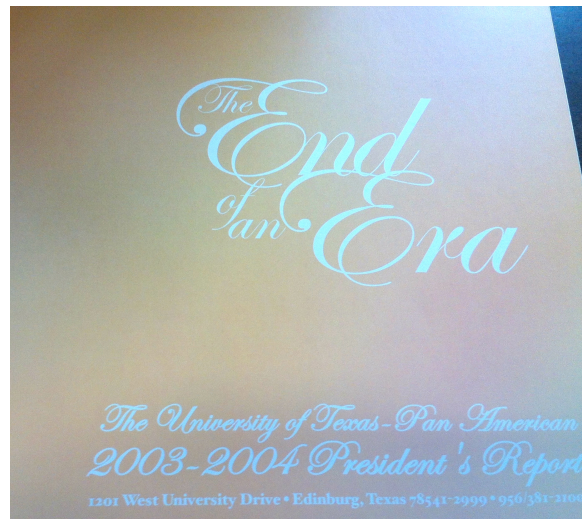
2. **Faculty and Staff Development –** This activity will focus on instructional practices in the following areas: Learning Communities, Cooperative (Active) Learning, Academic Advisement, Critical Thinking, Learning Styles, Assessment, Writing Across the Curriculum, Technology Innovations and Web-based Instruction, and Curriculum Alignment K-16.

Appendix H
Title V Staffing Overview

UTPA (2003). Title V Application

Appendix I
President's Report (2003-2004)

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