ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to understand how faculty, staff, and administrators at a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution perceived the organizational culture and organizational change process. Hispanic Serving Institutions are a rapidly growing institutional type. This qualitative single-institution case study sought to understand how faculty, staff, and administrators at a HSI perceived the organizational culture and the organizational change process as a newly designated HSI. Twenty employees who were classified as faculty, staff, or administrators participated in individual interviews where they were asked to share their knowledge and understanding of the HSI designation and how they believed the designation was being perceived by individuals at the institution as well as how they believed the designation impacted the work that is being done on campus. During the data analysis process, four themes were identified: 1) Existing Diversity, 2) Awareness to Action, 3) Institutional Culture, and 4) Funding. These themes provided insight on recommendations for other institutions seeking the HSI designation as well as recommendations for future research initiatives related to HSIs and the organizational change process.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Maxwell, who saved me when I needed it most, and was the best friend I could have ever asked for. I also dedicate this dissertation to those before me whose bravery and sacrifices helped make this dream become a reality. I am forever grateful.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so grateful and overwhelmed with joy for accomplishing this milestone. For most of my life, I have known that I wanted to receive a doctoral degree. This dissertation is a dream realized. This would not have been possible without my family, friends, and extensive support network who have poured into me over the course of my life.

To my Mom, Dad, and brother Phillip. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for inspiring me to be my best self, challenging me to be better than I hoped I could be, and loving me unconditionally.

To my better half, Tobin. Thank you for holding down the fort over these past few years. For making sure that I always had a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on, food, and clean clothes. Your constant energy and positivity always kept things in perspective and put a smile on my face. I love you very much. Can’t wait to celebrate by getting that dog soon!

To my Cohort X family. I could not have asked for a better group of classmates, friends, and family to share this journey with. They say that the doctoral process can be a lonely one, but I am so blessed to have gone through the process with each one of you. Times in class and social moments at the Capstone Hotel will all be memories that I will cherish forever. Special thank you to Tina, Lou, and Bella for hosting me in their home on several occasions. And thank you to Brooke for holding me accountable the last couple of months.
Thank you to my Chair, Dr. Karri Holley, and my committee members Dr. Breaux, Dr. Bumpus, Dr. Laanan, and Dr. Major. Each of you has had a tremendous impact on my journey as a student and I am forever grateful. A special thank you to Dr. Holley for her constant availability, wisdom, and patience. There were many times when I thought I was writing garbage, but you always provided a more positive spin and perspective.

To my LEAD Scholars family. Thank you for being so supportive when I decided to begin this journey. Your motivation and support every time I jumped through a “hoop” was very much appreciated. A special shout out to Dr. Whitney Watkins for guiding me through this process. Your mentorship was splendid! Thank you to other members of the UCF family including Dr. Hopp, Ms. Tammie Nadeau, and Ms. Belinda Hyppolite. Thank you all for helping me to get through these last few months of this journey. Thank you to Dr. Preston who recommended the program to me, and later realized he mixed it up with another program. One of the best mix-ups ever!

Special thank you to my friend Destinee Lott who allowed me to enjoy my love of reading, but also held me accountable to make sure I was writing. Thank you to Chanda Postell for her regular check-ins and constant friendship. Thank you to Olivia Escalona and our Tuesday lunch dates. Thank you to Marissa Corrente for making sure I stayed out of trouble over the years. Thank you to my best friend, Meghan Costanzo who always inspire and motivates me even from halfway around the world. Thank you to Meg Sunga for your friendship and overall awesomeness that always puts a smile on my face. Thank you to my DAC ladies—Brittney Hill, Dana Scott, Emily McQuade, Kari Hicks, Kelsey Peterson, Leslie Peterson-Cook, Mary Charlotte Fumagali, Ramsey Robinson, and Traci Deen—for your love and support over the past three years.
Thank you to the participants of this study for taking the time to provide your knowledge and insight. This dissertation would not have been possible without you. I would also like to thank my editor, Matt Fifolt, for working magic on this dissertation. There are so many other people who have impacted me along this journey. I am grateful for each and every one of you and will hopefully be able to thank you in person.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Higher education has seen tremendous growth in enrollment over the past several decades. Between 2004 and 2014, enrollment in higher education increased from 17.3 million to over 20 million students (NCES, 2016). A large contributor to the growth in enrollment is the increase in enrollment of students from underrepresented groups including African American and Hispanic/Latinx\(^1\) students. From 1984 to 2004, the number of minority students enrolled in college increased from 1.9 to 4.7 million or approximately 146% in comparison to an increase of 15% amongst white undergraduate student enrollment (Li, 2007). Over the last two decades, Hispanic/Latinx undergraduate enrollment rates have experienced the largest growth of approximately 237% (Salinas & Lozano, 2017; Li, 2007). Between 1976 and 2015, the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students enrolled in higher education increased from 4% to 17% (NCES, 2018). While the previous growth in Hispanic/Latinx students in higher education has remained relatively localized to states in the western and southeastern United States, shifting demographics and enrollment trends show an increase in states and regions that have not historically had significant populations of Hispanic/Latinx students.

\(^1\) Throughout this document, the terms Hispanic and Latino/x will be used together and interchangeably. The term Latinx began emerging primarily on online platforms in 2014 as a way to provide a more inclusive term for this of Latin descent (Salinas & Lozano, 2017). When directly quoting another’s work, the language will match that of the author. When expressing my own thoughts, the terms Hispanic/Latinx will be used. In the spirit of diversity and inclusion, Latinx will be utilized in this paper.
Since 1992, Hispanic Serving Institutions have been recognized under an expanded version of the Higher Education Act, and have been allocated annual funds to assist in serving their diverse student population. This institutional type has grown steadily over the past several decades. In 1984, there were approximately 58 institutions designated as HSIs throughout the country (Li, 2007). There are now over 470 designated HSIs that educate over 60% of all Hispanic undergraduate students (Cuellar, 2014; Excelencia in Education, 2016; Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Murphy, 2013; Santiago, 2012). Figure 1 shows the steady rate of growth of the number of HSIs over the past 20 years, with the vast majority of the growth occurring within the past ten years. While the term Hispanic Serving Institution implies that these institutions were created to serve this specific demographic of students, institutions attain the designation upon reaching a set enrollment number of undergraduate Hispanic/Latinx students. Because the designation is driven and attained based on enrollment numbers, this leaves open the question of what it means to serve Hispanic/Latinx students as it has yet to be clearly defined.

**Changes Over the Years**

**Growth in HSIs**

(1994-95 to 2014-15)

Research Questions

As one of the fastest growing demographics in the United States and an increasingly large proportion of students engaged in higher education, the education of Hispanic/Latinx students is one that must be studied by more researchers. Organizational culture is one aspect of higher education that is not always considered as it has traditionally been examined and researched in the business realm. Organizational change, which can be difficult to implement due to its frequently lengthy process, is a vital step in addressing and changing an organization’s culture.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore organizational culture and change at a HSI through the perspectives of faculty, staff, and administrators. Through purposeful sampling, interviews, and document analysis, this study identified how the status of being a HSI was observed and understood by faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as how the designation of the HSI status was embedded in the institutional culture.

The main research question that guided this study was:

*How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?*

Sub-questions included:

1. *How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?*
2. *What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?*
3. *How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?*

Through a single-institution qualitative case study approach, I explored the organizational culture and organizational change process at a large public, four-year, newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution in the southeast United States. Through individual interviews with faculty,
staff, and administrators, along with document analysis, I sought to gain the perspectives from institutional employees on how they perceived the organizational culture and the organizational change process resulting from the new designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

**History of HSIs**

The first working definition of a Hispanic Serving Institution was proffered in 1992 as part of the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Under Title III of the Higher Education Act, *Strengthening Institutions Program*, HSIs were defined as “accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment” (Galdeano et al., 2012, p. 159; Laden, 2001; Nuñez, Hurtado, & Galedano, 2015). In the Reauthorization Act of 1998, HSIs were placed under Title V, also known as the *Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program* (Santiago, 2006). Under this program, HSIs are eligible to apply for grants to aid in their institutional development to better meet the needs of their student demographic.

Unlike other minority serving institutions, most HSIs started as Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) that slowly became HSIs due to shifting student demographics. Of the 470 HSIs that are currently in existence, only three of them were established specifically to serve Hispanic/Latinx students (Santiago, 2006). This is what sets HSIs apart from other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal colleges, which were founded for the explicit purpose of serving those demographics of students. Through the passage of the Higher Education Act, Title V, HSIs are now eligible to apply for grants to aid in their growth and to provide more opportunities for Hispanic/Latinx students.
The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 expanded the ways in which HSI funding could be utilized. These new activities included: the creation of innovative course design to aid in the retention of students in their core coursework, programs to aid in the facilitation of students successfully transitioning from two to four-year institutions, and programs to aid in financial literacy for incoming students and their families (Nuñez et al., 2015). As a whole, the funding requirements stipulated for HSIs are broad enough that they allow institutions to allocate funds in generalizable ways.

During their early growth period, HSIs were concentrated in states in the southwestern United States as well as Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Over time, the number of institutions that were designated as HSIs, and in particular emerging HSIs, has seen steady growth not only in institutional numbers but also geographically as more are beginning to emerge in states that have not previously had large Hispanic/Latinx populations. During the 2016-2017 academic year, 492 institutions met the enrollment definition of a Hispanic Serving Institution. This number amounts to 14% of all higher education institutions in the United States. As shown in Figure 2, of the 472 HSIs, 24% are public four-year institutions, 44% are public two-year institutions, 27% are private not-for-profit four-year institutions, and 4% are private not-for-profit two-year institutions (Hispanic Serving Institutions 2015-2016, 2017). Figure 3 also shows that many Hispanic/Latinx students are also located at relatively small institutions with regard to overall student enrollment. While two-year community colleges comprise a majority of HSIs, four-year institutions still comprise over fifty percent of all HSIs. HSIs are also concentrated in specific geographical areas, specifically California, Texas, and Puerto Rico, although this regional concentration is expected to change as more institutions in areas outside of these states are designated as emerging HSIs.
In addition to the over 470 Hispanic Serving Institutions currently in existence, there are also over 330 emerging HSIs. These institutions are defined as those whose Hispanic/Latinx undergraduate population is between 15% and 24% (Excelencia in Education-Emerging HSIs 2016-2017, 2018; Garcia, 2012; Santiago, 2012). Twenty-two percent of emerging HSIs are public four-year institutions, 31% are public two-year institutions, 44% are four-year private not-for-profit institutions, and 2% are private not-for-profit two-year institutions (Excelencia in Education-Emerging HSIs, 2016-2017, 2018). Compared to current HSIs, where just over 50% are four-year institutions, two-thirds of emerging HSIs are four-year institutions. As compared to the 21 states that currently have HSIs, 37 states have emerging HSIs. And more significant, of the 37 states that have an emerging HSI, 17 states have no current HSIs in the state, meaning that these institutions could become the first HSIs in each of these states. From a policy perspective, this statistic means that 17 states are seeing a significant shift not only in their student demographics but in the demographics of the people in their states. From a planning perspective and organizational culture and change perspectives, understanding the nuances of the HSI designation is imperative for administrators located at these emerging HSIs to ensure the institution is prepared for the changing student demographics, and that they are implementing the appropriate measures to ensure student success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th># HSIs</th>
<th>% of HSIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public, 4-year or above</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public, 2-year</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit, 2-year</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>492</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Breakdown of HSIs by institutional type.*
Minority Serving Institutions

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Combined, these institutional types educate over 20% of all students enrolled in higher education in the United States, with the majority of these being students of color (Gasman & Conrad, 2013). In 2014-2015, there were approximately 700 federally designated MSIs, enrolling 4.8 million students or 28% of all undergraduate students enrolled in higher education in the United States (Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017). MSIs are defined either by their history or enrollment of minority students in the undergraduate student body (Li & Carroll, 2007).

Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 identified a specific set of accredited institutions that were founded prior to 1964 and whose mission was to educate African American students. TCUs are also designated by law through the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. Since both HBCUs and TCUs are defined by law, the numbers of these institutions cannot increase unless Congress approves additional institutions (Li, 2007). HSIs differ from

Figure 3. Enrollment number of Hispanic/Latinx students at HSIs.
HBCUs and TCUs. While HSIs are also recognized by law, their recognition is numbers driven, not mission driven. Thus, the number of HSIs can grow regularly while HBCU- and TCU-designated institutions cannot.

HSIs are the largest and fastest growing postsecondary institution type serving underrepresented groups in the United States (Nuñez et al., 2015). Unlike other MSIs, HSIs are uniquely identified. HBCUs and TCUs were predominately established for the sole purpose and mission of educating specific demographics of students. The needs of their student body are highlighted and addressed in the mission statements of the institutions as well as through the services, resources, and ethnic composition of faculty and administrators. HSIs, conversely, are institutions that were already in existence and achieved their HSI designation upon reaching the federal eligibility requirement (Galdeano et al., 2012). Unlike HBCUs and TCUs, the organizational culture of HSIs were not intentionally created to serve a diverse student demographic. This distinction makes the institutional culture for each institution different, as the purposes for which they were founded are different and unique. While all HSIs fall under the umbrella of MSIs, the ways in which they serve their student bodies are foundationally different.

Student Experience at MSIs

Students who attend MSIs often face a myriad of challenges in gaining their college degrees. As compared to their white counterparts, they are more likely to be low income, first generation, and academically disadvantaged (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005). Previous authors investigating student success found that students who attended HBCUs were more likely to develop skills needed to function in the greater society, including confidence, motivation, ambition, and the ability to thrive in competitive environments (Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, & Leegwater, 2005; Fleming, 1984).
In a study of factors that contribute to the success of Latino students, Torres and Zerquera (2012) found that student services, culture specific curriculum, faculty and administrator engagement, community integration, and embracing diversity were key aspects to effectively supporting Latino students. These are aspects that emerging HSIs and newly designated HSIs should focus on as their student body continues to diversify. As opposed to being located in peripheral or specialized offices and departments that focus on underrepresented populations, services must be imbedded in all aspects of the institution. Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) stated, “Institutions must move beyond offering stand-alone support programs” (p. 353). Assigning specific departments or individuals to address needs of diverse populations will do nothing to change the organizational culture if those programs are not embedded throughout it. With regard to administrator engagement and impact, Torres and Zerquera (2015) found that practices with the most significant impact on HSIs were those that started with senior administrators. The more invested the campus leaders were in ensuring a shift in campus culture, the more likely it was to happen.

Campus culture plays an integral role in student success, but if institutions are unaware of their changing student demographics they will be unprepared to make instrumental organizational changes. In a study on awareness of organizations to their HSI status, Torres and Zerquera (2012) measured the readiness of “potential HSIs” located in states that had growing “Latino enclaves” (p. 271). In this study, the authors examined the level of “institutional readiness” related to changing demographics at 19 institutions. The authors reported that eight of the 19 institutions were “unaware,” meaning that they had little mention of diversity in their institutional mission, lacked programs designed to support diverse populations, and had little to no mention of outreach to the community (p. 271). This lack of awareness suggests that
institutions are not considering the growth of the Latino community around their institution nor making strategic plans to better prepare for the impending enrollment shift. Lack of planning and preparation could prove to be problematic as census data have already shown that Hispanics are the fastest growing and youngest minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Failure to proactively prepare institutional measures now will result in reactionary initiatives in the future.

Torres and Zerquera (2012) outlined collective work that has been completed to identify best practices to successfully serve Latino students:

These successful HSIs are those that focus on student success through improving student services to better support Latino students, developing a curriculum that better aligns with student interests, having leaders who are proactive in developing a commitment to Latino student success, partnering with their surrounding communities including high schools and other postsecondary institutions, and embracing diversity while enhancing campus climates for diverse populations. (p. 264)

Student services, culture-specific curriculum, faculty and administrator engagement, community integration, and embracing diversity were identified as key elements to effectively supporting Latino students.

Cultural challenges represent one of the barriers that many students face, in particular first generation students. Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez & Plum (2004) interviewed administrators and students to explore their experiences working at and attending a HSI. One of the overarching themes the authors identified was cultural challenges. Status as a first generation student either provided high expectations and motivation to complete or low expectations (Dayton et al., 2004). Gender differences also contributed to challenges students faced, with Latino women encountering traditional cultural barriers with regard to taking care of familial
responsibilities instead of completing schooling. The role of family was identified as a challenge for all Hispanic/Latinx students struggling to balance family and school obligations. On one hand, attending school close to home allows them to remain at home while attending college and have a family support system nearby. On the other hand, proximity can create challenges to academic achievement as students are in the same environment where family obligations persist, potentially adding pressures to students and their academic pursuits (Dayton et al., 2004).

When reviewing the role that faculty and administrators should play at HSIs, the results of the study by Dayton et al. (2004) were equivocal. Some students suggested that the demographics of faculty and staff should reflect the demographics of the students. Having diverse administrators provided individuals who could relate to the experiences of current students. Having diverse faculty and staff might also aid the institution when political issues arose as they were able to act as pseudo consultants and provide insights on empathy, responsiveness, and identifying campus needs. Other students did not believe that the demographics of the faculty and staff impacted their success at the institution (Dayton et. al., 2004).

In a study of community college students who matriculated to four-year institutions and graduate school, Dowd, Pak, and Bensimon (2013) found that institutional agents played an important role in helping students navigate through the collegiate process and “influenced them to achieve their full academic potential” (p. 21). Lundbery and Schreiner (2004) noted that the relationship between students and instructors had a positive effect on student learning, with the frequency and quality of interactions between faculty and students having a positive impact on Hispanic/Latinx student GPAs.
Factors of Student Success

Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified six principles to improve undergraduate education. These principles are: encourage contact between faculty and students, develop cooperation among students, utilize active learning and provide timely feedback, communicate high expectations, emphasize time on task, and respect diversity and ways of learning (p. 2). As previously discussed, student success depends on the level of academic engagement students receive as well as their ability to apply what they learn to situations outside of the classroom. Respecting diversity in all aspects does not divide students, but instead creates an environment that is inclusive and supportive of student success.

Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006) reported on postsecondary student success. In the report, the authors identified five major theoretical perspectives that lead to student success: sociological perspective, organizational perspective, psychological perspective, cultural perspective, and economic perspective. The sociological perspective is closely linked to Tinto’s (1993) interactionalist theory and the transition from high school to college where students must leave behind their old identities and assimilate into the new university culture. Academic and social integration are individual yet interrelated aspects of success because both are needed for students to persist. Social networks provide a critical means of support for students. Berger and Milem (1999) observed that students who were most likely to persist were those whose values and norms closely matched with the dominant culture on campus. Kenny and Stryker (1996) found that family support was a primary means of support for underrepresented students.

Organizational perspectives are those structures that are thought to impact student performance, such as institutional size and selectivity and faculty-student ratios (Kuh et al,
Psychological perspectives include those that explain self-efficacy and self-concept as well as locus of control, either internal or external. Cultural perspectives suggest that students from underrepresented populations encounter challenges that make it difficult for them to take advantages of university resources to aid in their overall success. Additionally, being first generation or a minority on a dominant culture campus leads to an uncertain sense of belonging. Lastly, economic perspectives describe the motivations students have for attending college and perceived benefits upon graduation (Kuh et al, 2006).

**Problem Statement**

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of the institutional culture and the organizational change process by faculty, staff, and administrators at a recently designated Hispanic Serving Institution. In the 2010 U.S. Census, Hispanic/Latinx were identified as the fastest growing minority group, now comprising over 16% of the population (Galdeano et al., 2012; U.S. Census, 2011). Previous census data indicated “Latino children under the age of 5 made up approximately 19% of the total U.S. population of children” (Torres & Zerquera, 2012, p. 260). Although Hispanic/Latinx individuals comprise over 16% of the population, they account for only 7.5% of all bachelor’s degrees awarded (Gasman et al., 2008).

As demographics continue to shift in the United States, the influx of college bound Hispanic/Latinx students is projected to increase. Between 2011 and 2022, there is a projected increase of 7% for white students enrolling in higher education. The projected increase for Hispanic/Latinx students is 27% (Hussar & Bailey, 2013). Anticipated enrollment by Hispanic/Latinx students is a public policy issue as only 19% of Hispanics age 25 and older had achieved at least an associate’s degree compared to 40% of the general U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). As the Hispanic/Latinx population continues to grow, it will “become the
workforce that drives the economy…if a quality education is provided” (De los Santos & Cuamea, 2010). Thus, it should be a central interest to policy makers and educators alike as educating the youngest and fastest growing demographic is vital to overall success both in and outside of higher education. When analyzing the role that higher education will play in educating these children, it is important to understand educational trends impacting Hispanic/Latinx students as well as the emergence of HSIs.

Challenges of HSIs include serving a significant population of students that has historically been underrepresented in higher education (Nuñez et al., 2015). The number of HSIs has grown largely in response to the growing population of college-going Hispanic/Latinx students. Much of the responsibility to educate this demographic of students has been isolated to specific regions of the United States. However, as the growth of emerging HSIs has shown, more institutions are meeting the designation of HSI, challenging their existing organizational culture.

As HSIs enroll a significant number of Hispanic/Latinx students, understanding how these institutions identify with or create an organizational culture and identity committed to Hispanic/Latinx student success is imperative. The designation of HSI can be problematic in that it is solely based on enrollment numbers and has little to do with the success of the student. Currently, there are no true assessments or evaluations being conducted to better understand the ways in which these institutions are serving their students. This distinction suggests that these institutions are more Hispanic-enrolling than Hispanic-serving (Garcia, 2015).

Additionally, organizational culture is important to student achievement. Organizations that have a culture that appreciates, and values community have higher student satisfaction and retention rates (Kuh, 2002). Student departure can be explained by student failure to navigate between their own culture and the culture of the institution (Tinto, 1993). This idea of
conforming to an institution and its predominate institutional identity is problematic because it puts the onus of change on the student rather than the institution. It is important to understand how institutions facilitate a change of culture and identity at the organizational level, and how internal agents of the organization perceive those changes.

With regard to understanding organizational culture and HSIs, Santiago (2012) stated a “critical mass of students motivates an institution to change how it operates to better serve these students” (p. 163). This statement can be interpreted to mean that until institutions reach the qualifying designation of HSI, little may be done to proactively change the institutional culture and resulting identity. However, organizational culture and organizational change take significant amounts of time to implement. Waiting until critical mass has been reached will further delay institutional readiness for projected changes. Research on HSIs has largely focused on student sense of belonging, understanding the HSI designation, enrollment trends, transition to college, degree attainment, and identity development of students. Much of the existing research on the role that organizational culture has had on student success has looked at the phenomena from the perspective of white and African American students. Little research has focused on additional minority groups, including Hispanic/Latinx students. By analyzing organizational culture and change, this research explores the role of faculty, staff, and administrators in creating an organizational culture through organizational change that creates the necessary environment to aid in Hispanic/Latinx student success.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual frameworks used in this study are organizational culture and organizational change. Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) study on organizational culture was employed as it focuses on organizational culture related to higher education. The basis of this theory is that
there is an external force that causes the institution to respond. The external force with regard to this study is the shifting demographics of the surrounding community, leading to changing student demographics of the selected research site. Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) Five Core Change Strategies framework was used to better analyze the various aspects of an institution that impact change efforts. This framework provides a guide for how organizational change should be facilitated if it is to occur effectively. This framework focuses on employees within an organization thus serving as a robust framework with which to understand the perspectives of faculty, staff, and administrators.

**Significance of the Study**

Hispanic Serving Institutions are currently located in 19 states and Puerto Rico. However, emerging HSIs are located in 35 states as well as Washington, DC (HSIs, 2015-2016; 2018). As PWIs enroll more Hispanic/Latinx students, many of them still retain and implement structures and programs that do not reflect or serve the shifting demographic of students (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). The ways in which Hispanic/Latinx students perceive their institution is important to their success, retention, and graduation.

The success of HSIs is significant to numerous stakeholders. For faculty, staff, and administrators who work at these institutions, this research can better enable them to create a culture and organizational identity that best serves this population of students. Better understanding the culture of the institution and the ways in which students perceive it, will provide insights into how the practices and policies that are present at the campus are contributing to overall student success. This research will be helpful to students as it approaches the topic from an organizational perspective to focus on what the institution is doing to meet the needs of students rather than students assimilating to existing institutional policies.
This research will also assist current and emerging HSIs to understand the methods that are being utilized at the organizational level to encourage student success at the institutional level. As the youngest and fastest growing population, Hispanic/Latinx individuals will continue to become a growing demographic and increasingly comprise the U.S. workforce. Leaving this demographic behind or leaving the responsibility to educate them to a small group of institutions is not an option. The need to educate diverse students is most evident at broad access institutions where the majority of students have been underrepresented in higher education. However, the success of these institutions relies on the education of all of its students (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, & Cuellar & Arellano, 2012).

**Conclusion**

Few studies on HSIs come from a perspective of implementing organizational change and creating a culture that embraces the HSI designation (Cortez in Hispanic Serving Institutions textbook, 2015). This research sought to understand organizational culture, climate, and change from a positive or strengths-based approach as opposed to a deficit-based approach, with a focus on faculty, staff, and administrators. Focusing on this population as participants will provide a perspective from those that are tasked with creating an organizational climate and culture that encourages student success. In Chapter 2 I will discuss in greater detail the extant literature on organizational culture and organizational change. These two concepts served as the frameworks that informed this study. In Chapter 3 I will outline the methodology used to facilitate the research, describe the site selected, provide an overview of participants, and further discuss how the frameworks informed the interview protocol.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty, staff, and administrator perceptions of organizational change and their overall organizational culture in a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Organizational culture is often deeply imbedded within an organization, making organizational change difficult to implement and sustain. The exploration of faculty, staff, and administrator perceptions and understanding of organizational change efforts were guided by the following questions:

1. How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?

2. How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?

3. What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?

4. How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?

This literature review is divided into two main sections to provide information that underscores the need for this study. The first part describes the various factors that promote student satisfaction and persistence, with a focus on minority students. The second section
focuses on literature related to organizational culture and organizational change in higher education.

The conceptual frameworks guided this study are Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) Organizational Culture framework and Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) Five Core Change Strategies Framework. Using an organizational culture framework provides a better understanding for the various nuances that shape an organization’s culture and how employees at various levels within the organization perceive organizational culture. The framework on organizational change will provide a guide for how institutions implement change within their organization and how that change is perceived and interpreted.

**Latinx Student Success**

Numerous studies have been conducted discussing the relationship between organizational culture and student success (Dumay, 2009; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). These studies describe the impact of culture on student achievement and student perceptions of their institutional environment. However, very few studies have explored the role that faculty, staff, and administrators play in creating this culture or their perceptions of their roles in facilitating organizational change. To better understand these roles, it is first necessary to examine the factors that contribute to student persistence and students’ interpretation of organizational culture.

Kuh (2001) identified six factors for creating a success-oriented campus culture: (1) clarify institutional values and expectations; (2) conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the student experience inside and outside of the classroom; (3) use good practices in teaching, learning, and retention programs; (4) tie the curriculum to the students lived experiences; (5) remove obstacles to student success; and (6) determine the effects of peer groups on retention
decisions (pp. 32-36). Kuh (2001) stressed the importance of all faculty, staff, and administrators having the same understanding of the institution’s values and expectations so that there is a consistent and accurate message sent to prospective students. This message to prospective students should match the message and culture of the institution once students arrive on campus.

Institutions must also regularly assess the student experience both inside and outside the classroom. While most institutions regularly collect data on incoming students and graduating students, more efforts should be made to focus on students in their second year and beyond. While many initiatives focus on first year success and the first-year experience, socialization does not end after the first year (Kuh, 2001). Peer groups, living arrangements, and changing of majors are all things that occur after the first year lending credence to continual evaluation. Additionally, freshman retention rates and institutional graduation rates are rarely similar. Therefore, additional efforts should be made to develop a better understanding of the numerous factors that occur while a student is enrolled that contribute to or detract from overall student persistence and success.

Within the classroom environment, Kuh (2001) recommended that faculty members, academic advisors, and other personnel that work directly with students help them navigate the campus resources that will aid in their learning. Additionally, promoting a culture that has an ethic of care for all students and their ability to succeed at the institution can contribute to overall student success. Faculty members can also enhance the student experience by connecting classroom learning to real world experiences. This can be achieved through cooperative experiences or service-learning opportunities that allow students to apply what they have learned in the classroom. Faculty can remove obstacles from their courses by ensuring that the curriculum has a clearly articulated goals for learning. Kuh (2001) also emphasized the
importance of reviewing courses that have high rates of failure and withdrawal to determine if adjustments can be made to aid in student success.

Enrollment of Hispanic/Latinx students in higher education has increased over the years. This increase in enrollment is significant as it is changing the demographics of colleges and universities across the United States. While there are 472 HSIs across the country, there are almost an equal amount (323) of emerging HSIs, and this number is expected to increase as the Hispanic/Latinx population increases. As this demographic of students becomes more prevalent on college campuses, the need for understanding aspects of the institutional culture that contribute to or hinder student persistence and success will be increasingly important.

Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, and Rosales (2005) found that university comfort, social support, and self-beliefs for Latino/a students had a significant influence on student persistence with social support and university comfort being the strongest indicators of persistence. Individual variables, including perceived social support from peers, perceived mentorship, and perception of the university’s environment, had the strongest predictive value regarding non-persistence (p. 215). The support of peers and social support is important; if a student does not have a familial or personal culture that matches that of the institution, their peer group is able to aid and support them in navigating the various dimensions of the institutional environment. Lack of a peer group or a social group with which the student connects will increase the likelihood of student departure (Attinasi, 1992). Kuh (2001) found that institutional cultures with a commitment to celebrating community had higher rates of satisfaction and retention. Strong communities were defined as those that valued and incorporated diversity, had strong internal communication, and created a culture of trust and teamwork. Kuh (2001) also discovered that
formalized mentorships with faculty members contributed to a positive view of the university environment.

Another factor that contributes to students’ overall success is campus climate. In a study on racial climate and degree attainment, Museus, Nichols, and Lambert (2008) found that Latina/o student experiences and satisfaction with the campus racial climate was directly related to degree attainment. Climates that were supportive of diversity and inclusion increased the likelihood that a student persisted to completion, while those that lacked a supportive, diverse campus climate showed the opposite.

**Organizational Climate**

One aspect of organizational culture is organizational climate. Organizational climate is that which is perceived by members of the group. It is the effect after a member is socialized to the organizational values (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993; Owens, 1995). Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey (2014) defined organizational climate as “the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected” (p. 362). Erhart, Schneider, and Macey (2013) identified the following five key themes that are incorporated in the definition of organizational climate:

1. Theme 1: Organizational climate emerges through various means including leadership, communication, and training

2. Theme 2: Climate is not derived from the actions, but instead the experiences and meanings these actions produce

3. Theme 3: Organizational climate is based on shared experiences and meanings amongst units or organizations
4. Theme 4: Shared experiences and their meanings derive from natural actions within organizations and the work environment.

5. Theme 5: Organizational climate is not an evaluation of the work environment but a description of people’s experiences at work and the meaning they attach to those experiences. (pp. 285-286)

An organization’s climate and the atmosphere in which it functions affects everything that is happening within the organization (Freiberg, 1999; Roueche & Baker, 1986; Thomas, 2008). Although studied separately, organizational culture and climate are closely linked as the climate of an organization cannot be fully understood without a thorough knowledge of the culture of the organization. As it relates to diversity, previous authors have shown that an organizational climate that supports diversity leads to better performance among underrepresented groups. McKay, Avery, and Morris (2008) observed that gaps in performance between different racial groups were smaller when the organization was more supportive of diversity. Gonzales and DeNisi (2009) also found that racial/ethnic diversity was positively related to an organization’s performance when its overall climate was viewed as positive or supportive of diversity. Campus climate is important to student success and is one component of overall organizational culture.

Institutional Responsibility and Student Success

To understand the impact of organizational culture on students and their perceptions of the institution, Kuh (2001) stated:

institutional culture helps students make meaning of various events and activities, teaches them some important information about what the institution stands for and how it works,
and encourages them to perform in ways that will enable them to succeed academically and socially. (p. 25)

Kuh (2001) further noted that when institutions recruit students whose values align with the institution’s values and culture, then those students will be more likely to persist. However, the author also outlined several issues that challenge this notion. Among them is the increasing number of large, state-supported institutions that are designed to provide access for an increasing number of students. Kuh (2001) posited “in an increasingly pluralistic world such institutions have opted to be almost value-neutral except for core academic principles such as honesty and intellectual freedom” (p. 25). Additionally, the author noted that institutions of this size tend to have multiple subcultures among students and administrators, making it difficult to identify or create one cohesive organizational culture. Increasingly, institutions face challenges in meeting the needs of varying stakeholders, which often results in adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing different populations with different needs. While institutions cannot control external pressures or the changing demographics of students, they can control how they respond to these changes.

Astin’s Model of Student Involvement

Astin’s (1984) Model of Student Involvement is divided into three components: inputs, environment, and outputs. In this theory, institutions of higher education have little control over the inputs (i.e., students) and the unique traits students bring with them to the university setting, such as race, culture, socioeconomic status, college preparation, and perceptions of higher education, among others. However, institutions do have control of the outputs, which are impacted by the environment that institutions create. The environment is shaped by the members of the organization: faculty, staff, and administrators. The type of courses offered, quality of
faculty, advising available for students, engagement opportunities both in and outside of the classroom, as well as alert programs for students in jeopardy of leaving or being removed from the institution are all ways in which institutions create environments for student success. The environments that institutions create through their culture and identity have far-reaching implications for student success. Thus, it is important to better understand how institutions create a culture that fosters student success. Moreover, it is important to understand how institutions create a culture that fosters student success when that culture involves organizational change due to a shift in changing student demographics or other external pressures.

**Institutional Mission**

An organization’s mission is also an important variable in revealing the culture of the institution. An organization’s mission is “one of the most visible and powerful articulations of the culture and usually relates to values and meaning for a campus and provides guidance for people to act” (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006, p. 152). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates (2005) stated, “the mission establishes the tone of a college and conveys its educational purposes, whether based on religious, ideological, or educational beliefs, giving direction to all aspects of institutional life, including the policies and practices that foster student success” (p. 25). Organizational missions guide institutional strategic planning efforts, with employees spending a great deal of time determining the content of the mission. Institutional missions can be divided into two categories: espoused missions and living or active missions. Espoused missions are those that institutions have, however, the mission does not guide the work that is conducted at the institution. Living or active missions are those that guide all actions and policies at the institution (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006).
When the mission of the institution matches the actions that are carried out by the institution, there is mission agreement or mission consistency. Fjortoft and Smart (1994) defined mission agreement as the level of agreement by members of an organization regarding the understood purpose of the institution. Mission consistency refers to the level of congruence between the espoused mission of the institution and the activities that take place at the institution. Mission agreement is imperative as it relates to organizational culture and organizational change. Organizational change cannot effectively occur if perceptions of the culture, or, more specifically, perceptions and understanding of the organizational mission, are inconsistent. One important factor to note is that organizational missions are often constant. Rather, the organizational mission acts as a set of broad guiding principles for the institution to follow. Strategic plans, however, are updated regularly and provide a more visible and accurate depiction of how the mission and values of the organization are carried out. While it is beyond the scope of this study, understanding the mission of the institution will be informative in understanding perceptions of organizational culture and ongoing institutional change.

**Organizational Culture**

**Organizational Culture Defined**

Despite being a widely researched topic, organizational culture is a difficult concept to define because of its many nuances. Culture is comprised of the unstated and unseen rules and assumptions of how an organization operates and governs (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Schein (1990) stated that culture is defined as what a group learns over a period of time. As culture is repeated and shared, it gains meaning and thus legitimacy as the accepted culture within the organization. Culture consists of symbolic elements within an organization including values and mission (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Kuh & Whitt, 1998; Schein; 2010). Culture can be deeply
imbedded within the framework of an organization, it can guide the functions and actions of the organization, and it can be perceived differently at various levels of the organization. There are many definitions of culture that are widely accepted in the literature on organizational change management.

Schein (1984) offered the following definition of organizational culture:

[a] pattern of basic assumptions that a group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 3)

With regard to organizational culture and higher education, Tierney (1988) observed that organizational culture is “reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it” (p. 3). Author of studies on organizational culture and subsequent culture typologies have utilized this definition to direct their inquiries into culture.

Smart and St. John (1996) defined organizational culture as an important aspect in improving managerial and organizational performance. If the culture of an organization is poor, there are opportunities to determine the factors that are contributing to the culture and ways for managers to improve them. A strong organizational culture tends to yield strong organizational performance. Similarly, Vallett (2010) and Harrison and Carroll (2006) noted that an organization’s culture helps its members understand their organization and can have a large impact on the outcomes of the organization.

Peterson and Spencer (1991) defined organizational culture as “the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that
members have about their organization or its work” (p. 142). This definition sheds light on an important aspect of culture: it is not always visible or tangible but instead indiscernible, frequently difficult to define, but widely understood and accepted. Schultz (1995) defined culture as the “beliefs, values, and meanings used by members of an organization to grasp how the organization’s uniqueness originates, evolves, and operates” (p. 5). Similarly, Geertz (1973) stated:

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (p. 5)

Tierney (2008) interpreted this statement to mean that organizational culture is not something that can be looked at through a narrow lens or through one aspect of an institution, but instead from a broad perspective, analyzing all aspects of the organization as well as an individual’s perceptions of the web itself. In this sense, perceptions of organizational culture vary among members of an organization. Perceptions of an institution may be viewed one way by faculty and an entirely different way by administrators. Tierney (2008) deduced that organizational culture is the study of “particular webs of significance within an organizational setting” (p. 25).

The field of organizational culture emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as researchers sought to analyze factors that contributed to organizational successes and failures. Geertz (1973) suggested that traditional culture “denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). The emergence of organizational culture as a specific field of study came from the intersection of various fields of social science that were asking the same questions
regarding how organizations functioned (Schein, 1990; Vallett, 2010). Researchers were unable to find resolution or understand the best way to begin thinking about the question primarily because they were attempting to study an organizational phenomenon where the “concept” to explain the variations in behavior had not yet been discovered (Schein, 1990).

Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) noted that organizational culture has become one of the major domains of organizational research and one of the most actively researched subjects (p. 458). Much of the early research on organizational culture was related to corporations and businesses with the assumption that it could be applied across all types of organizations. Researchers such as Schein (1990) and Tierney (1988) challenged this notion and stressed the importance of studying organizational culture as it related to institutions of higher education. This is an important distinction because unlike corporations, the inputs and outputs of institutions of higher education are people. This creates a very different dynamic in that there are many more stakeholders with influence over what occurs within higher education. As the study of organizational culture has continued, it has transitioned from being used as a mechanism to describe an institution to a method to aid in organizational improvement (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a).

Kuh (2001) noted that organizational culture “affect(s) a wide range of activities, ranging from the quality of the student experience to such disparate functions as budgeting, fundraising, faculty reward systems, and teaching and learning approaches” (p. 24). Culture is something an institution has as well as something that it does to set itself apart from other institutions and impact the students and the institution as a whole. Culture has performance (Kuh, 2001). Organizations display their organizational culture through marketing materials, stories, and values. At the heart of all organizational actions is an underlying reinforcement of the organizational culture. Schein (1990) stated that the main purpose of studying organizational culture was to solve the basic
problems of organizational survival and adaptation to the external environment while simultaneously managing the internal environment to ensure its ability to adapt to the external environment.

In addition to Schein’s assessment of the difficulties of studying organizational culture, others have questioned the feasibility of studying a university as one unified entity, dismissing the subcultures within it (Silver, 2003). Silver (2003) noted that the symbols and myths that are shared by members of the organization may not be important for the entire institution, which highlights complexities based on institutional size or connections between those within the institution. At its core, members of the organization that comprise and ultimately determine the culture. External forces or funding changes create a volatile environment that could lead to culture shifts within organizations (Sporn, 1996). The people who determine the culture of an organization, the ways in which they are socialized, and the effect that culture has on climate are all important factors.

Levels of Culture

Organizational culture can be analyzed from three levels: artifacts, values, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1984; Schultz, 1995). Artifacts are the things that people observe when entering an organization, such as the physical layout of space, the ways in which people address each other, and dress codes, as well as institutional mission, philosophy, and strategic plan. Schein (1990) stated that one of the challenges of artifacts is that they are “palpable but hard to decipher accurately” (p. 111). This suggests that observers can see and feel something about an organization, but not understand why it is that way. The artifact level is divided into five different categories: physical manifestations, language, stories, technology, and visible traditions. Physical manifestations includes the physical architecture of the institution, the
physical arrangement of offices, decoration or art around the institution and in offices, and dress code. Artifacts are things that can be seen at an institution. Language refers to the ways in which individuals communicate with each other, whether it be via phone or email, and the overall sound level of the organization. Is it a vibrant space such as a student activities office or a quiet space like many senior administrative offices? Slogans and even uses of various acronyms tell a story of the institution’s culture.

Stories are the ways in which an institution recounts its history. The stories that are told as well as the stories that are not told all shed light on the institution’s culture. Access to useful and necessary technology as well as support for maintaining technology demonstrates the institution’s value on innovation. Lastly, visible traditions such as those within the leadership team or within offices are aspects of the artifact level of organizational culture (Schultz, 1995). Unlike artifacts, which are seen and observed, values are those things that members of an organization use to interpret and understand situations and actions within the institution as either good or bad (Schultz, 1995).

Values are understood through surveys, interviews, and questionnaires of an institution’s espoused values, norms, or philosophies. Interviewing individuals within an organization can provide the narrative from those within the organization regarding why certain things happen the way they do. Lastly, basic assumptions are those deep fundamental aspects of an institution that are often invisible yet guide how people interpret and think about things (Schein, 1992). Basic assumptions are aspects of an organization that are never questioned, but simply understood.
Leadership and Organizational Culture

Schein (1990) posited that it is the job of the president of leader of an organization to create and manage its culture. Bolman and Deal (1984) noted the role that organizational leaders play as “mythological” or ceremonial heads of the organization. The power of the organization resides at the top of the organization, thus the leader controls all of the mechanisms needed to change the culture. The leader’s job is to navigate the volatility in the external environment. External influences must be considered and channeled in such a way that they do not interfere with the attainment of internal goals (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). The leader’s role in creating or managing culture will vary greatly based on the maturity of the organization. However, within higher education, which is always changing and evolving due to external influences, all leaders at some point will have to manage or reinvent their organization’s culture.
Culture creation is how a leader models culture for members of the organization. The behavior and values the leader models are identified by the members of the organization and then internalized and accepted as their own values and assumptions (Schein, 1990, p.115). Thus, culture is learned. The manners in which individuals are socialized into an organization, by whom, and what they are told regarding the values of an organization, informs how they should behave (Tierney, 2008; Weidman, 1989). The moment an individual enters an organization they are being socialized through formal and/or informal orientation. Socialization may also include onboarding processes in which senior administrators or college leaders set the tone for the culture of the organization. The process of socialization is a way to preserve culture and thus is socially constructed (Gonzales, 2002). The socialization process happens in a variety of ways both formally and informally, reconstructing, self-enhancing, and in groups or individually (Schein, 1990). The manner in which new employees are on-boarded or trained is a method in which institutions demonstrate what the organization values.

**Organizational Culture Typology**

Berquist and Pawlak (2008) identified the following six cultures of the academy: (a) collegial culture, (b) managerial culture, (c) developmental culture, (d) advocacy culture, (e) virtual culture, and (f) tangible culture. Each of these “cultures” addresses the “educational mission, vision, values, and purposes” as well as the roles that faculty, staff, administrators, students, and key stakeholders play in shaping the culture (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. x). The *collegial culture* is one that values faculty and the research they conduct. At these institutions, much of the power and influence lies with the faculty. The *managerial culture* values fiscal responsibility, strong management, and supervision and is focused on creating and measuring
specific institutional goals. Emphasis is placed not only on the education of students but ways in which educational attainment can be quantified (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008).

The developmental culture “finds meaning primarily in the creation of programs and activities furthering the personal and professional growth of all members of the higher education community” (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 73). The developmental culture focuses on the development of faculty, service to others, and a well thought out and impactful curriculum. The advocacy culture “finds meaning primarily in the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures for the distribution of resources and benefits in the institution” (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 111). This culture emerged from the inability of the managerial culture to meet all of the needs of faculty and staff. This culture is different from the managerial culture in that characteristics of it, such as academic freedom and collective bargaining, strive to create a more fair and equitable distribution of resources across the institution.

The virtual culture “finds meaning by answering the knowledge generation and dissemination capacity of the postmodern world” (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 147). This culture embraces new technologies, challenges, virtual education, and education that focuses on addressing global and societal needs. The tangible culture “finds meaning in its roots, its community, and its spiritual grounding” (Berquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 185). This culture reflects both old and new cultural types. The importance of the local community, history, institutional identity, and, to a certain extent, religious affiliation, all serve as important attributes of the tangible culture type. According to Berquist and Pawlak (2008), all organizations reflect a combination of multiple cultures. Within larger organizations, it is possible to see each culture manifested within subcultures. Importantly, organizational leaders must be mindful of the
various cultures within their organization and how these cultures interact or collaborate with one another to achieve the overarching goals of the organization.

Prominent researchers on organizational culture and typology include Bolman and Deal (1991) and Cameron and Ettington (1988) among others. Each set of researchers created typologies to better describe institutional types. Bolman and Deal (1991) identified four organizational types: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The structural frame focuses on the architecture of the organization, emphasizing goals, formal roles, and relationships. The human resource frame presents the organization as a family with individuals having unique goals, needs, skill sets, and limitations. The prevailing notion behind the human resource frame is to tailor the organization to meet the needs of the individuals. The political frame is characterized by competition and the need for power and resources. Organizations are viewed as coalitions of individuals and interest groups. Finally, the symbolic frame emphasizes cultural change as the key to organizational transformation. Rituals, stories, heroes, and myths are prevalent in the symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

Researchers have identified different types of cultures as well, including strong versus weak cultures and internally versus externally focused cultures. Sporn (1996) defined strong cultures as those that have a high level of congruence between the goals and values of an organization and its members. Weak organizations, on the other hand, are those that have loose connections between the overall culture of the organization and its members as well as individual cultures within the organization, leading to contradictions between each. Internally focused organizations are those that place concern on what is taking place within the institution and the internal dynamics, whereas externally focused organizations focus on the external development
of the institution, placing focus on the mission statement, organizational goals, and adaptability of the institution (Sporn, 1996).

**Organizational Effectiveness**

Organizational effectiveness is closely aligned with how an institution is living and carrying out its mission. Clearly defined missions are essential to the well-being of an institution. Institutions with high levels of mission agreement are perceived by employees to be more effective than those with low or medium levels of agreement (Fjortoft & Smart, 1992). Mission agreement is the “level of consensus among organizational members regarding their view of the purpose of the organization” (Fjortoft & Smart, 1994, p. 431). Mission consistency is how the aligned the organizational activities and stated mission statement are.

Cameron and Whetten (1981) determined that organizational effectiveness is an on-going process that varies between organizations in their earlier stages as compared to more mature organizations. Organizations in their earlier stages have more concern over acquiring inputs and individual effectiveness whereas mature organizations focus more on outputs and goal attainment. Cameron (1978) identified nine dimensions of organizational effectiveness including student, faculty, and staff satisfaction, academic development, system openness and interaction, and organizational health. In identifying these dimensions, Cameron also discussed the difficulty in measuring institutional effectiveness as institutions cannot demonstrate high levels of excellence in each of them.

When seeking to understand cultural satisfaction and climate, colleges should engage in periodic cultural audits. These audits are necessary to keep up with the changes in faculty and administration, student demographics, and the mission of the organization due to external forces (Deem, DeLotell, & Kelly, 2015; Gappa et al., 2007). These audits are imperative if institutions
are to gain a better knowledge of their organizational culture as their organizational composition changes.

**Kuh & Whitt’s Organizational Culture Framework**

Much of the research conduct on organizational culture was conducted from a business perspective and within business organizations. Kuh and Whitt (1988) developed a framework to study organizational culture that would account for the complex natures of colleges and universities as well as the multiple competing components that shape and create an organization’s culture. The framework is comprised of four layers of analysis: (1) the external environment, (2) the institution itself, (3) subcultures within the institution and within subcultures, and (4) individual actors and roles.

**External Environment**

An institution is one part of a much larger environment which includes regional cultural components, economic influences, social influences, and occupational influences, among others (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Institutions are influenced by external stakeholders and the external environments in which they are located. External groups include numerous groups and agencies that “have an interest in and influence on higher education (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 42). The ways in which resources are allocated has an effect on what occurs at institutions. For example, performance based funding has a significant impact on how institutions allocate their resources across the institution and its programs and services.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) described how perceptions of the purpose of higher education have shifted over the years, from an institution to acquire greater knowledge to institutions to advance oneself and achieve economic well-being and social status (p. 43). Perceptions of the purpose of higher education affect how university administrators conduct their work. The media also has an
impact on higher education, as demonstrated in recent years with the rise of student activism and an increase in campus speakers from fringe ideologies. These occurrences influence students who attend the institutions as well as the administrators in how they react to and handle these situations. The environment also shapes the behaviors of faculty, staff, and students at the institution. Institutions can become immersed with the surrounding community and its needs, or isolate itself as its own entity. While none of these factors directly influences an organization’s culture directly, they shape and influence the collective institutional culture.

The Institution

The next aspect of the framework is the institution itself. An institution’s culture “evolves over time, shaped by patterns of routine interactions among students, faculty, institutional leaders, alumni, and other constituents” (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 45). To understand an organization’s culture, it is imperative that one know its history. Encompassed within the layer of the institution are five additional components: (1) Saga, (2) Academic program, (3) Distinctive themes, (4) Organizational characteristics, and (5) Other factors.

Saga. Kuh and Whitt (1988) defined Saga as the institutional memory that “serves as the connective tissue between an institution’s past and present and, to a considerable degree, shapes how future events will be interpreted” (p. 45). If an institution faces a situation similar to one it has previously faced, the way it approaches the new situation may depend on how it approached the situation the first time. In the case of changing student demographics, if the institution has encountered the situation before, it may refer back to the previous instance to determine what worked or did not work in addressing the situation.

Academic program. The academic program is important to the institutional culture. The curriculum, special course offerings, and prominent faculty all shape perceptions of the
institution. Classifications such as the Carnegie Classification measure institutions based on the level of research its faculty conducts. The classification level is a direct reflection of the university and the level of research conducted by faculty. Clark (1970) discussed the importance of senior faculty in creating a culture of loyalty and commitment.

**Distinctive themes.** When discussing the role of distinctive themes, the importance of relatedness to the institution as well as institutional ethos play a significant role. Kuh and Whitt (1988) stated:

> A college’s culture is a framework that helps faculty, students, alumni, and others to understand institutional events and activities, to create and define an internal self-image and external reputation, to develop loyalty and commitment, to acquire external resources for the college, and to generate “moral capital,” a deep belief in the value of the institution that gives direction to institutional leaders and supporters in times of crises. (pp. 46-47)

These deeply held beliefs can transform into an institutional ethos thereby describing how faculty, students, and staff feel about themselves in relation to the institution. A distinct institutional ethos is “accurately and reflectively self-aware, empathically responsive, internally coherent, resilient, and autonomous” (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 47).

**Organizational characteristics.** Not all colleges and universities have a distinct institutional ethos. Institutional size and complexity impact the development of a distinct institutional ethos. Larger institutions tend to be more complex, thus impeding the development of a consistent culture or tone (Peterson, 1986). As the number of faculty members grows, the number of students enrolled increases, the number of buildings increases and expands the size of
the campus, the informal contact that occurs between individuals on campus decreases, thus hampering the development of a strong or well defined institutional ethos (Clark, 1972).

**Other factors.** Many other factors shape the culture of an institution, its location, its residential or commuter status, and others that contribute to the many dominant subcultures that emerge at an institution. Changing technologies have shifted many institutions to incorporate online and distance learning into the curriculum. Turbulence in the external environment leading to increased student activism has changed how institutions regulate campus speech. Kuh and Whitt (1988) summarized:

> An institution’s ethos, academic traditions, and heroes are powerful cultural determinants. How faculty and students spend their time, with whom they interact, what people “perceive” culture to be, and the manner in which the norms and values of the institution shape behavior in the midst of crises seem to be key aspects of institutional culture. (p. 49)

These factors, which could seem small and insignificant, can have a significant impact on the institutional culture. An institution that largely consists of commuter students will approach student engagement in a different manner than a residential campus where students spend a more significant amount of time on campus. These *other factors* are unpredictable yet nonetheless important in shaping an organization’s culture.

**Subcultures**

Subcultures can emerge when a group of individuals shares a significant number of experiences due to the external environment or internal conflicts. Shared experiences can create shared views of the institution and thus a subculture of it (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Kuh and Whitt (1988) identified three subcultures that exist within a dominant culture: enhancing, orthogonal,
and countercultural. Enhancing subcultures adhere to and support the overarching university culture and mission. Orthogonal subcultures are those that support the overarching culture and mission, but also have their own culture and mission that are adjacent to the overall institutions. Countercultures are those that are in direct conflict to the mission and culture of the institution. These countercultures can be student groups or, on occasion, groups such as the faculty senate. While they do not always pose a direct threat, their actions can impede the activities of the institution.

**Individual Actors**

Any individual can shape the meaning given to a college or university. All institutional agents play a role in shaping what is occurring at the institution. The ways in which faculty, staff, and students identify with the institution and are culturally competent is constantly changing. Faculty and administrators tend to be more aware of the organizational culture due to the information that is provided to them as well as their placement on campus and time spent as employees. The influences of university presidents can have long-standing implications on the culture that are often documented in institutional histories. Individuals can also shape the culture through tragedies and triumphs.
Table 1

*Kuh and Whitt’s Organizational Culture Framework*

| External Environment | • What external stakeholders influence the organization?  
|                       | • How does the organization perceive its external environment?  
|                       | • What is the relationship between the organization and the external environment?  
| The Institution       | • What are significant moments or traditions within the organization’s history?  
|                       | • What is the classification of the organization?  
|                       | • Are faculty primarily full-time or adjunct faculty?  
|                       | • How do members of the organization perceive the culture?  
| Subcultures           | • Is there a difference in how the culture is perceived by different individuals and groups within the organization?  
|                       | • How are subcultures perceived?  
| Individual Actors     | • What individuals within the organization have the greatest influence?  
|                       | • Does change tend to happen from the top-down or bottom up?  

Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) framework, as referenced above, strives to address all factors that influence a university’s culture, including the external environment, the institution itself, subcultures within the institution, and the various individuals who play a role in shaping the culture. This framework informed this study because its broadness captures all of the nuances that impact and shape an organization’s culture.

**Organizational Identity**

Organizational identity is defined as an enduring, distinctive, and central statement as perceived by members of an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985) to answer questions such as “Who are we?” “What are we doing?” and “What do we want to be in the future?” (Lin, 2004, p. 803). Understanding organizational identity is important because it effects the actions that take place, the way those actions are interpreted, and the way decisions are made from members of
the organization (Lin, 2004). Organizational identity provides members of an organization with a “key lens for their interpretation and sensemaking about occurring events for their organizational life” (Lin, 2004, p. 804). Hatch and Schultz (2002) created a model that identifies the relationship between organizational culture, identity, and image. Members understand their organizational culture through organizational identity, which affects how others outside of the organization perceive the organization. However, organizational identity can also be one of the reasons that organizational change is difficult to enact. As members of an organization hold onto an organizational identity, threats to that identity through change can lead to resistance. This concept is discussed further with regard to planned change.

When discussing organizational perceptions of the environment, Tierney (2008) described an objective environment and an enacted environment. In the objective environment, the assumption is that the organization will change to meet the needs of its stakeholders and environments. The university environment is one that is ever changing and must do so to meet the needs of the changing external environment. This occurs regularly in higher education due to demographic shifts among those who attend college as well as changes in the ways that students want to receive instruction and their expectation of services upon arrival. Institutions of higher education must be able to recognize these changes while also making internal changes to meet the new demands. The main assumption about the enacted environment is that organizational members create their own environments. Tierney (2008) posited the following:

The assumption is that 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. The
organization’s culture focuses the participants’ understanding of the environment by
supplying many patterns and meanings. (p. 211)

Because society and institutions are constantly changing, it is difficult to identify one specific
type of framework or theory to study organizational behavior that can be used across all contexts.
Culture is constantly evolving and changing, which makes difficult to study or apply theories for
examining organizations as a whole (Mackenzie, 1986; Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). Theories
that work well for one organization, may not be able to explain the behavior of another
organization. This supports previous findings regarding the difficulty of defining organizational
culture. This also adds credibility to the goal of this study as it looks at both cultural and
organizational change.

**Organizational Change**

Higher education must undergo widespread transformational change to meet shifting
student demographics and ever-evolving community and global needs (Adserias, Charleston, &
Jackson, 2017). Much like organizational culture, organizational change is a difficult concept to
define. In the literature, there are first- and second-order changes. First-order changes involve
minor adjustments to an organization; however, no changes affect the core culture of it, also
known as incremental change. Co-optative change is an example of first-order change in that it is
superficial, does not address the institutional culture, and often places the onus of responsibility
on minority faculty, multicultural centers, and minority students to ensure its success (Aguirre &
Martinez, 2006). Second-order change is transformational change where values, mission, and
overall culture of the institution are changed (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Bess & Dee, 2008;
institutional cultures, as deep and pervasive, as intentional, and as occurring over time” (p. 27).
While challenging to achieve, transformational change is possible, and for it to succeed it must take place at the organizational culture level.

Change can be defined as the alteration of structures, processes, and behaviors in an organization or the introduction of something new (Bess & Dee, 2008; Zaltman & Duncan, 1977). Schneider, Brief, and Guzzo (1996) discussed the concept of Total Organizational Change (TOC) as change designed to affect all aspects of the institution simultaneously. TOC is “change that affects the psychology of everyone in the organization” (Schneider et al., 1996, p. 7). The researchers described three different philosophies regarding total organizational change: human potential philosophy, sociotechnical philosophy, and total quality management philosophy.

Change based on the human potential philosophy focuses on the needs of people. People desire growth and development; interpersonal interaction; and need trust, support, and cooperation. The overarching idea is that when individuals have these needs met, they will function more effectively.

Change based on the sociotechnical philosophy stresses the importance of both social and technical aspects at work. Focusing on only the technical or logistical aspects of the change, while ignoring the social aspects and how individuals may be affected, will ultimately lead to the overall failure of the desired change effort. The Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy focuses on holistic change efforts of the organization. TQM includes change strategies that involve pre-planning during the initial product design state, adequately training employees, developing an awards system to develop high expectations of employees, creating a space where employees can discuss and resolve issues, and working with suppliers to ensure quality products (Schneider et al., 1996). At the heart of the TQM model is complete institutional change.
Bess and Dee (2008) highlighted two types of change: planned and emergent. Planned change is approached from the top-down, with senior administrators, or those centrally located within the organization, planning and facilitating the change process. Planned change often occurs when the organization is responding to an external factor and when time and resources are limited. For example, performance based funding is policy driven by state legislature. Institutions respond to the policy by creating widespread changes to meet the various metrics needed to satisfy stated requirements. Emergent change is typically a bottom-up, decentralized grassroots change. One of the main assumptions of the emergent model is that people make frequent changes in their everyday work in response to conditions within the organization (Bess & Dee, 2008). The emergent model recognizes that innovation comes from all levels of the organization and ideas should be supportive and not suppressed.

Overseeing change can be a challenging endeavor. Change initiatives can emerge from all areas within an organization, yet all of those initiatives do not necessarily need to be implemented across the institution. Van de Ven (1986) identified four challenges in the management of change: the human problem of managing attention; the process problem of managing “ideas into good currency so that innovative ideas are implemented and institutionalized” (p. 4); the structural problem of managing part-whole relationships; and the strategic problem of institutional leadership. According to Van de Ven (1986), many of the issues that arise related to the human problem are related to employees’ primary concerns regarding the maintenance of day-to-day practices and policies as opposed to generating new ideas. Issues related to transforming ideas into actionable items that are implemented. Innovative ideas can come from anyone within an organization regardless of their position. However, if those ideas do not garner interest or commitment towards implementation, they will ultimately
fail. Another challenge within organizational change is ensuring that everyone sees the vision of the entire change effort and not just the aspects they are working on. This can be very common in large organizations where various departments are working on specific aspects that will contribute to the overall change process. From this vantage point, individuals may become so entrenched in what they are working on, they lose sight of the larger picture. Lastly, change and innovation efforts will only succeed if the leadership creates an environment and culture that is conducive to the change (Van de Ven, 1986).

In a study of leadership styles and organizational change, Adserias et al. (2017) incorporated the aspect of diversity and organizational change. The authors identified three types of diversity agendas: the social justice rationale, educational benefits rationale, and business rationale. The social justice rationale refers to the need for institutions of higher education to become more reflective of shifting demographics while also past and present social inequities. The educational benefits rationale touts the benefits of recruiting and retaining students from diverse backgrounds to aid in the institution’s pedagogical and human development missions. The business rationale simply refers to the need for institutions to become more diverse and inclusive so that they can better compete within the higher education market with recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students. Despite these various efforts, diversity agendas have high failure rates because they never truly change the institutional culture (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005).

Kezar and Eckel (2002b) described two different schools of research regarding organizational change: content and process. Research that focuses on content often focuses on the “consequence of change” with a heavy reliance on statistical methods and large data sets. The process school focuses on the role of individuals within the change process (p. 297). Kezar and
Eckel’s (2002a) analysis of institutional culture and change identified six main categories of change theories: biological, teleological, political, life cycle, social cognitional, and cultural (p. 437). The teleological model includes “strategic planning, bureaucratic and scientific management, and organizational development” (p. 297).

**Kezar and Eckel’s Five Core Change Strategies**

Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) framework of organizational change, shown below in Table 2, was based on Berquist’s (1992) four academic cultures and Tierney’s (1991) organizational culture framework. Kezar and Eckel’s framework identifies and examines five core change strategies that contribute to organizational change: (a) senior administrative support; (b) collaborative leadership; (c) robust design; (d) staff development; and (e) visible action. Through a study based on six institutions and transformational change, these five components emerged as having significant impact on the success of transformational change.

**Senior Administrative Support**

Supportive senior administrators or leaders were defined as those individuals in positions to “provide support in terms of value statements, resources, or new administrative structures” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 332). In one of the study institutions, the president was highly involved in the change initiative, regularly writing updates on the change project and facilitating some of the campus-wide roundtable discussions. To this, a faculty member noted, “without the resources and commitment of the senior administration, from the president down, things would be the same as they had always been” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 306). At another institution, the president and provost were responsible for launching the initiative. They provided financial incentives in the form of a competition for substantial funding as well as through the securing of outside funding to aid in the implementation of institutional goals. The study showed that
successful change must not only come from a top-down directive, but that senior administrators must be actively involved in the change process as opposed to delegating it to various parts of the institution.

Collaborative Leadership

“The positional and non-positional individuals throughout the campus are involved in the change initiative from conception to implementation” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 332). According to the researchers, the inclusion of employees in the change process had a significant effect on the perception of it. At one institution, workshops were held to generate a common understanding of the change process. Following the workshops, a call for volunteers to participate on action teams was made. One administrator noted that the use of the word DRAFT on all documents was significant in ensuring that members of the community felt as though they had a voice in changes that were taking place.

At another institution, each college was able to facilitate its own internal audits to determine the extent to which they were already meeting the identified goals and to then develop an implementation plan of those goals as well as a way to assess and measure progress. This step was vital for this institution as it aligned with an existing culture of autonomy among the various colleges and included institutional representatives as active participants in the change process.

Both institutions that participated in the study achieved success through transparency of the change process as well as by including all personnel who elected to participate in the process. Those that did not participate actively were still informed of what was occurring through regular progress updates.
Robust Design

Kezar and Eckel (2002b) drew extensively from the work of Eccles and Nohria (1992). Leaders develop a “desirable and flexible picture of the future that is clear and understanding and includes set goals and objectives related to the implementation of the picture” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 332). At one institution, this picture was created through campus-wide dialogues, sharing of meeting minutes, and inclusion of employees in the planning and implementation process over the course of several years. Organizational change does not occur overnight. Change efforts span a significant and undetermined period of time. Successful change can only occur if there is a clear objective and goals that individuals can work towards. Additionally the incorporation of smaller benchmarks and more immediate, tangible goals aids in continuing to drive involvement and motivation towards the ongoing change process.

Staff Development

Change initiatives include intentional efforts to provide opportunities for individuals to learn skills or knowledge related to the issues concerning the change effort. At one of the institutions studied, leadership team members conducted roundtables for faculty and staff to discuss the change process. At these roundtables, leadership members discussed why the change was occurring, and comments that were collected at those meetings were distributed to the entire campus. The institution also developed a leadership institute to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for all employees. At another institution, prominent faculty were brought in to discuss topics related to the impending change along with financial support for faculty members to attend national conferences. Much like the previous strategies discussed, organizational change cannot occur without buy-in and direct involvement from all levels of the
institution. Much like total organizational change, the use of a rewards or incentives system aids in achieving input and active participation from employees.

**Visible Action**

Successful change initiatives demonstrate steps in the change process that are visible and promoted so that individuals can see that the change is continuing and still important. This strategy is important for maintaining continuity and momentum at the institution. Visible participation in roundtables, distribution of meeting minutes, and active recruitment of individuals to a taskforce to implement the change serve as visible indicators that the institution was committed to and moving forward with the implementation.

**Sensemaking**

Sensemaking is “the reciprocal process where people seek information, assign it meaning, and act” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 314; Thomas Clark & Gioia, 1993). In addition to the first finding of the five core strategies that were instrumental in aiding transformational change, sensemaking also emerged as a superordinate strategy in four of the five core strategies. The core strategies provided an opportunity for “institutional participants to make new meaning—to help members of the institution change the way they perceive their roles, skills, and approaches/philosophies” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, p. 303). “Staff development, robust design, and collaborative leadership were all effective because they provided institutions opportunities for key participants to create new sense of the direction and priorities of the institution…” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b, pp. 313-314). Sensemaking was the underlying characteristic that made these strategies successful (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).
Table 2

Kezar and Eckel (2002b) Five Core Change Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Administrative Support</th>
<th>Individuals in positions of power provide support via resources, statements, or creating new administrative structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Design</td>
<td>Positional and non-positional leaders within the campus community who are involved in the change process throughout the entire process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust Design</td>
<td>Leaders develop an image of the future and a path to get there that is open to all opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>An intentional effort to provide opportunities for employees to learn skills or knowledge that is related to the ongoing change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible Action</td>
<td>Actions in the change process that are visible so that members of the organization know that the change process is still occurring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readiness for Organizational Change

Higher education is routinely undergoing change efforts as a result of internal and external influences. As shifts in student demographics and state legislation impact institutions, there is a constant need to change in order to meet demands. While there is growing literature on organizational change (Gumport, 2000; Kezar, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2001), there is a dearth of research on employee perceptions of and reaction to organizational change. “Readiness….is reflected in organizational members’ beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully make those changes” (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993, p. 681). Regardless of the time of change, people are often reluctant to undergo change processes when the outcome is unknown or if the change causes duress. In a study on readiness for change, Coch and French (1948) found that when given the opportunity to participate in the change efforts, employees were less likely to be resistant to that change.
In a study on commitment related to organizational change, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) sought to examine the different forms of commitment and employee support for change initiatives. The authors found that even if individuals were not committed to the change, they still supported it for fear of losing their job. Additionally, members of an organization might not feel a sense of commitment to the organization itself, but instead feel a sense of commitment to their colleagues or supervisor. According to Conner and Patterson (1982) “the most prevalent factor contributing to failed change projects is a lack of commitment by the people” (p. 18). Commitment in general is defined as “a force [mind set] that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 303). Commitment is hard to achieve if members of the organizational are not included in the change process or made to feel as though their opinion and inputs matter.

In Van Wagoner’s (2004) study on perceptions of change at community colleges, the author identified four factors that affect individuals’ perceptions: (a) length of time at institution, (b) comprehension of mission and strategic plan of institution and involvement in change process, (c) perception of change is based on the individual, and (d) perception often equals reality (p. 720). The longer an individual has been at an institution, typically the greater his or her sense of commitment to the organization. Proper education of the change process and how it fits not only into the strategic plan of the organization, but within the organization will contribute to its overall success. This is also a necessary factor in improving perceptions of a change process. The most significant finding of the study was the importance of increasing understanding of the change process. Greater understanding of the process often resulted in higher rates of acceptance of the change efforts (Van Wagoner, 2004). When undergoing institutional change, transparency is at the core of its overall success.
Conclusion

Organizational culture is a broad area of literature with many ways of being interpreted and understood. Within higher education, organizational culture cannot truly be understood without also addressing and interpreting organizational change. Institutions of higher education institutions are constantly undergoing change through the influence of public policies, external stakeholders, and shifting student demographics. Through this study I hope to contribute to the literature by analyzing these two concepts through the perspectives of university faculty, staff, and administrators.

Previous work on organizational culture and organizational change is incomplete in that it lacks research regarding how organizational culture and organizational change impact students as well how faculty, staff, and administrators shape the organizational culture. I sought to utilize frameworks on organizational culture and organizational change to explore how faculty, staff, and administrators made meaning of organizational change on their campus as well as how they perceived and understood their organizational culture going into the change period. The next chapter will outline the methodology that was used as well as the steps taken to conduct this study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the overall research approach that was utilized to better understand how faculty, staff, and university administrators perceived the organizational change process and organizational culture of a Hispanic Serving Institution. HSIs educate a large proportion of Hispanic/Latinx students in higher education. The impetus for this study was the increasing number of institutions that meet the designation of Hispanic Serving Institution. I sought to understand how faculty, staff, and administrators perceived and made meaning of the on-going change process. This qualitative case study explored the experiences and perceptions of faculty, staff, and administrators, since these individuals have the greatest influence in creating the campus culture and driving organizational change. Previous studies on HSIs have analyzed organizational culture primarily from the perspective of the students; others have incorporated administrative and faculty perspectives. Few studies, however, have targeted faculty, staff, and administrators as the sole research participants. Using a qualitative case study research method, this study sought to fill this gap in the existing literature regarding HSIs in terms of organizational culture and change.

The following research questions guided this qualitative case study:

1. How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?
2. How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?

3. What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?

4. How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which university faculty, staff, and administrators perceived the organizational change process at their institution that resulted from a designation change. Through this investigation of a public four-year, high research postsecondary institution that had recently been designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, I sought to understand how these individuals understood the designation of HSI, how they perceived the organizational change process, and how the new designation informed their work on campus.

**Research Design**

Multiple critiques have been raised related to the study of organizational culture. The first relates to the lack of adequate methodologies to measure culture (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). Mackenzie (1976) stressed the need to create a methodology that was able to trace a cause and effect relationship. However, Marcoulides and Heck (1993) stated that approaches developed to understand cause and effect had not been adequately tested to determine their validity. Kuh and Whitt (1988) countered both of these arguments by emphasizing the uniqueness of each institution. Attempting to compare one institution to another is problematic because that which is relevant within an institution might not translate to another institution. Therefore, organizational culture should be studied from within one organization as opposed to studying and comparing multiple organizations (Valimaa, 1998).
Qualitative researchers “seek the perspective provided by the whole picture and assert that values, passion, and politics are important in this research” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 6). The best way to learn when studying individuals is to describe and explain them from the perspectives of those involved (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Qualitative research is a “form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (Holloway, 1997, p. 2). The purpose of this study was to better understand how university faculty, staff, and administrators made meaning of and understood their institutional identity as a HSI. Qualitative research tends to have a subjective and personal orientation. It occurs in the natural setting of those who are subject to observation. Researchers conducting qualitative research must acknowledge that participants will have multiple constructed realities. Moreover, the research process itself will change both the researcher and participants, thus it is critical for the researcher to show respect and behave ethically towards participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

The research method utilized in this study was a single-institution case study. When conducting research on a current event where behaviors cannot be manipulated, a case study is the preferred medium for understanding (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) described a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) highlighted six different types of case studies that appear in research: (a) exploratory, (b) descriptive, (c) instrumental, (d) interpretive, (e) explanatory, and (f) evaluative. Exploratory case studies consist of field work and data collection prior to conducting any research. These studies are commonly seen prior to larger case studies and act as pilot case studies to determine any challenges in conducting the research.
Descriptive case studies involve “a detailed account of the subject of study” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 155). Instrumental case studies consist of researchers refining a theory for a given situation. This type of case study allows for the testing and confirmation of theories and ideas. Interpretive case studies seek to develop concepts or theories (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In Explanatory cases studies the researcher aims to explain a relationship. This type of study can aid researchers in understanding complex concepts. Lastly, evaluative case studies “judge the merit or worth of a case” and can help in explaining cases that are too complex to be understood through surveys (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 156). This current study of an HIS was a descriptive case study in that it focused on one institution. Conducting a single-institution case study allowed for greater depth and focus on a single institution. The case study is a preferred method of research when seeking to understand contemporary events. Direct observation and interviews are aspects of undertaking the study (Yin, 2014).

Single case studies are also appropriate research methods when certain circumstances are met. For example, it would be appropriate to use a single case study approach if it is a common case, which means that the object is to “capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation…because of the lessons it might provide about the social processes related to some theoretical interest” (Yin, 2014, p. 52). Another rationale for using the case study research method is to study a revelatory case. This situation presents an opportunity for the researcher to study a phenomenon that was previously unable to be observed and analyzed (Yin, 2014). While not an overly common case, as the number of HSI s continues to increase, more institutions will undergo the organizational change process related to organizational culture. Exploring the conditions that contribute to a positive organizational culture and affect change efforts will be helpful for other organizations that undergo similar processes. The number of HSIs has only
begun to increase significantly within the last decade. Thus, researching this topic provided an opportunity to analyze a relatively new institutional type.

Studying organizational culture is best done through action-research methods (Schein, 1990). These methods include qualitative techniques like interviews, ethnography, and field work. Qualitative methods are described as being more effective than quantitative methods because they allow the culture being researched to emerge through the artifacts observed and the stories told by those within the organization. By comparison, quantitative research is confined to data that are gathered based on what is specifically asked. This distinction means that questions can be based solely on assumptions and exclude the possibility of gaining other information that would be gained through qualitative methods (Schein, 1990). Semi-structured participant interviews allows for the collection of rich information without being confined to a specific set of questions.

**Researcher Positionality**

As a researcher, I sought to explore this topic based on my own experiences attending institutions considered HSIs or MSIs as well as my experience being employed at a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution. As the demographics of the population change, more institutions will begin to find themselves educating a more diverse student body. As someone who aspires to be a Senior Student Affairs Administrator at an institution that could potentially become a HSI, this is a topic that I see as very relevant, timely, and of great importance.

While conducting participant interviews, I took the view of an outsider as I did not know most of them personally and was not employed at the institution where I conducted the research. However, my experience working at a similar institution in the same state provided me with additional insights and knowledge into the potential experiences of the participants. When
conducting the interviews I shared why I selected the topic along with my experience working at a HSI. In my observations, this commonality seemed to contribute to an increased comfort level as I could better relate to their experiences, yet my position as an outsider prevented me from invoking my own biases.

**Hispanic Serving Institution University**

Hispanic Serving Institution University (HSIU) is a large, public, higher-research activity institution located in the southeastern United States. The institution serves over 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students across seven campuses (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2016). The geographic location of the institution contributes to its diverse student body. I gathered information about the institution from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The institution has an undergraduate student population of approximately 30,000 students. Approximately 26% of the institution’s undergraduate population is Hispanic/Latinx. The institution has a freshmen retention rate of approximately 77% with an overall graduation rank of 50%. The six-year graduation of its Hispanic/Latinx students is also 50%. The institution is recognized as a doctoral granting-higher research institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Forty-one percent of students receive Pell Grants to cover the cost of tuition. The site was selected because of its unique position as a large, higher research institution with a large undergraduate enrollment. This institutional type is not often studied in the literature about Hispanic Serving Institutions. HSIU is also an institution that had only recently become a HSI with a significant push for this designation from the university leadership. This study is bounded by its geographic location within the southeast United States, its status as a newly designated HSI, and through the participants who were intentionally recruited and selected due to the amount of time they had
been employed with the institution. As this is a single-institution case study, the results are not meant to be generalizable across all institutions.

Population

I recruited faculty, staff, and administrators to participate in the study and conducted individual interviews during spring 2018. Faculty members were defined as those individuals whose primary role at the institution is to teach courses. Individuals who work at the university in another capacity, but also teach courses were not considered faculty for the purpose of this study. Staff members were defined as those individuals who are in close proximity to students. Individuals that hold positions such as Coordinators, Assistant Directors, Directors, and Administrative Assistant staff were all considered Staff for the purpose of this study. Administrators were defined as those who hold titles of Deans, Assistant/Associate Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents, Provosts, and other members of senior leadership teams. Administrators are those individuals who oversee divisions within the university and are in close organizational proximity to the University President. All participants had to have been employed by the institution for at least three years to be eligible to participate. The study explored perceptions of organizational culture and organizational change resulting from the HSI designation from these three employee group perspectives.

Participants were recruited through targeted emails who were classified as faculty, staff, or administrators. Contact information for participants was primarily gathered through a query of the employee directory located on the university’s website. Participants were sent an initial personalized email that outlined the study and requirements for participation. Those who did not respond to the initial email were sent one follow up email requesting their participation. Snowball sampling was also a method that was intended to be utilized in the study; however,
many of the recommended participants had already agreed to participate in the study via emails they received directly from me.

Primary research participants were faculty, staff, and administrators. Previous studies on Hispanic Serving Institutions have analyzed institutions from student perspectives, such as how students perceive the culture and resources and the factors that contribute to student success. However, overall student success is greatly influenced by the environment created in the institutional setting. Faculty, staff, and administrators are all contributors to shaping institutional culture and climate which impact students.

The purpose of inviting faculty, staff, and administrators was to gain a holistic view and diverse perspectives of the institution. Since this is a large institution, various subcultures were expected within the larger organizational culture. Having perspectives from each of these constituents allowed for a greater exploration of themes that emerged in participant interviews.

Table 3

*Timeline for the Study*

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<tr>
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<td>Institutional documents, institutional website</td>
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Methods

Creswell (2013) created a Data Collection Circle to show the series of events that must occur to collect data for research. The data collection process includes the identification of a site or individual, gaining access and establishing rapport with the soon to be participants, purposeful sampling, data collection, recording information, resolving issues encountered in the field, and storing the data in a secure location.

I selected this study site based on several factors. The first factor was that the institution has a similar profile to the institution that I currently work at. My current institution is currently undergoing the organizational change process as it seeks to qualify for the HSI designation. I did

not want to study my current institution as I did not want my insider knowledge to bias the findings or cause me to collect and/or interpret data in a manner that would align with my pre-conceived notions. So I chose to study an institution with a similar institutional profile, that was further along in the change process. As a qualitative study, I conducted some interviews in person, thus selecting a location that was within reasonable distance to be able to conduct interviews was of utmost importance. Additionally, the institution needed to be an existing HSI and not an emerging HSI. The institution selected was a newly designated HSI, and may have only recently initiated an organizational change process.

Prior to contacting participants, I had to request permission to interview participants from the offices of the Provost and Vice President of Student Affairs. Following their approval, I gained access to participants primarily by contacting individuals I knew who would be interested in participating as well as requesting their assistance in identifying other participants. I also sent targeted emails to participants who were located in specific positions, departments, and academic units across the institution. Personalized emails were sent to all prospective participants requesting their participation in the study. An emphasis was placed on this in positions that appeared to have direct involvement in HSI initiatives or in gaining the designation of a HSI. This information was gleaned from the website related to the institutional strategic plan as well as an existing HSI research group.

Maxwell (2005) described purposeful sampling as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 88). Creswell (2013) noted three considerations that must be made when conducting purposeful sampling: who to select as participants, the specific sampling strategy, and the size of the sample to be studied. When selecting participants, Creswell (2013)
recommended employing “maximum variation as a sampling strategy to represent diverse cases and to fully describe multiple perspectives...” (p. 156). One of the primary reasons for selecting faculty, staff, and administrators as participants for this study was the different perspectives they could provide regarding the HSI designation and institutional culture. While there were similarities between the three groups, there were also various differences based on their roles at the institution and how close they were situated to senior administrators or those with knowledge of the designation change process.

Twenty individuals participated in the study, and all met the minimum requirement of being employed at the institution for at least three years. The interview process took several months to complete. Recruiting participants was much more difficult than I initially thought it would be. Some potential participants expressed interest in the study but did not meet the three-year qualification. Other potential participants expressed interest, but stated they were too busy to participate and did not provide additional availability when asked. Several potential participants stated that they did not know enough about the designation or the designation change and thus declined to participate in the study. Some participants had to be contacted several times based on interest, but failed to respond to follow-up emails.

Once individuals agreed to participate in the study, an appropriate interview platform was selected. Participants were sent a link to sign-up for an interview date and time and were provided with the consent form to sign and return. Upon receiving their signed consent form and scheduling their interview, I sent them a calendar invitation with logistical information. Interviews took place via Zoom (video conferencing), over the phone, and in person during a week-long timeframe when I was at the institution. Interviews ranged in length from 20 to 90 minutes. In person interviews took place in participant offices. Approximately one hour was
allocated for each interview, with additional buffer time for those that went longer than expected. I began each interview by sharing information about my, my program of study, employed and my employer, as well as information about how I selected the research topic. This time was meant to establish rapport and provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions. I also reminded participants during this time about the consent form as well as their ability to decline to answer questions should they elect to do so. If participants consented to being recorded, they were reminded of this and given the option to rescind their consent. I began the recording process after initial introductions occurred.

**Interviews**

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated, “The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 3). Through descriptive interviews, the researcher asks questions that allow the participant to be as descriptive as possible about what they experience and how they interpret their environment (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). When conducting the interview with participants, the setting and the first few moments of the interview are integral to the interview’s success. Interviewees will want to have a solid understanding of who the interviewer is so that they feel comfortable disclosing information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). For this to occur, it was important to begin communicating with participants prior to the start of the interview to develop the rapport needed to establish a comfortable interview environment.

The initial interview questions, which can be found in Appendix D, were designed to gather general information about the participant including, how long they had been employed with the institution, the office they work in, and the context of their job. The next set of questions
regarded the participant’s knowledge of the new institutional designation as a HSI, what it meant to them to be a HSI, and how the status as a HSI was talked about on campus. Other questions were related to the campus culture regarding diversity and inclusion, and current programs and resources in place for Hispanic/Latinx students to assist with overall student success.

Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) organizational culture framework Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) organizational change framework provided the foundation for the interview protocol and the questions that were asked during the study. Questions related to organizational culture helped provide insights regarding the values, shared meaning, and overall understanding of the institution. Questions related to organizational change focused on how the individual perceived the new HSI designation and the change process the institution had undergone.

The semi-structured format was designed to provide guiding and standard questions for participants to answer, while also providing the flexibility to ask additional questions based on information from participants. Interviews were conducted in person, via Zoom, or by phone. In person interviews or those via Zoom were far more revealing as they allowed for the observation of body language and vocal expressions that otherwise cannot be observed in text or simply over the phone (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). A copy of interview questions is located in Appendix A. As semi-structured interviews final interview transcripts varied among participants and additional questions may have been added to the prescribed questions.

Interviews with various personnel at the institution provided additional information and institutional context that could not be found on a website. Interviews provided insight into the level of awareness that employees had regarding the institution’s new designation as a HSI and its level of importance not only within the institution but also within their functional areas.
One important benefit of interviewing individuals in their natural setting is the ability to see the campus and observe the demographics, campus culture, and office structures. This approach also provided an opportunity for me to see if there were any new initiatives that were implemented as a result of the HSI designation.

Institutional gatekeepers are those individuals who protect access to the institution for the purpose of research. Institutional gatekeepers included the Division of Research, Office of the Provost, and Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. In order to gain access to the institution to conduct research, permission had to be granted by the Provost as well as the Vice President of Student Affairs. I provided these individuals with information regarding the study, and upon approval from both the Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Division or Research granted approval for the research to begin.

**Document Analysis**

I utilized document analysis as a secondary method of data collection. Documents can provide researchers with readily accessible information to better understand participants, institution, and site context (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Any marketing materials that highlighted programs or services that benefit Hispanic students were reviewed. One way that students interact with an institution prior to visiting is through the institutional website. Institutional websites provide the mission, values, and information on the student body, student services offered, and academic programs among others.

Previous research has shown the importance of an institution’s commitment to diversity, services to support Hispanic students, and diverse faculty and staff as factors in students selecting a college. Reviewing an institution’s website provided a snapshot of how an institution markets itself to prospective students and what programs and services, if any, are highlighted.
Additionally, the website provided information about the purpose of the institution’s initial founding as well as institutional strategic plans and departmental strategic plans for intentionally serving Hispanic/Latinx students. I reviewed documents provided more information about the organizational culture, the organizational change process, and institutional programming related to diversity and inclusion.

Using documents as a method of research has both advantages and disadvantages. Documents can provide additional information to help the researcher understand the environment and the culture of the location they are researching. Since documents are not typically intended to be used as data, they have strong validity and provides examples of “social meaning making” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 410). However, the use of documents is fairly new to qualitative research, and documents can sometimes be created to showcase what the organization wants others to know about it versus what is actually true (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Data Analysis

For this case study, data were gathered through individual interviews and document analysis. Regarding data collection and participant interviews, data were collected from 20 participants who were identified as faculty, staff, and administrators at the institution. When conducting qualitative research, data analysis occurs from the moment the study begins through completion and submission of the final report (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). At the heart of data analysis is the ability to make sense of the data that has been collected and communicate it in a way that can be understood by others (Merriam, 2009; Hatch, 2002).

To ensure quality note-taking and reflection of interviews, all interviews were recorded (if the participant consented) and I took notes throughout the interview. After each interview, I set aside time to review the notes that were taken during the interview and made note of overall
impressions. As the interviews went on, I also began to record keywords that were mentioned in multiple interviews for future reference in the analysis process. After each interview, the voice recording from the interview was reviewed for quality and uploaded to an external secured hard drive for storage. After the interviews took place, they were transcribed by myself and a professional transcriptionist so that I could commence data analysis more quickly. The interview audio was then listened to again while reviewing the transcripts to ensure accuracy. Finalized transcripts were sent to participants for their review and edits were made if they requested them.

To gain a better understanding of each participant's experience at the institution, I listened to each interview at least twice and reviewed the transcripts multiple times. The first listen of the interview recording was to ensure the transcripts were accurate. Additional listens were to identify demographic data, keywords, and themes to assist in the overall understanding and interpretation of the data. Yin (2014) identifies four general strategies when analyzing case study data: Relying on theoretical propositions, Working your data from the “ground up,” Developing a case description, and Examining plausible rival explanations (p. 136-140). The first two strategies were utilized when analyzing the data for this study. Two conceptual frameworks guided this study and were one of the ways in which the data was analyzed and later interpreted. The questions that each of the frameworks posed were compared to the insights and responses that participants provided. Working data from the ground up consisted of meticulously analyzing each transcript using the various coding techniques. This ensured that each of the transcripts was adequately reviewed and all relevant data was incorporated when analyzing the data.

After interviews were transcribed, I coded them both manually and using NVivo11 software. Each interview was reviewed at least three times utilizing the various coding methods. Manual coding consisted of color-coded highlighting that corresponded to the identified coding
methods that were utilized. I used NVivo11 software to further identify and organize the themes that emerged during the data analysis process and to identify relevant quotes and other data that would be utilized in the results section. Interviews were coded using three coding methods: Attribute coding, Descriptive coding, and In Vivo coding. Coding allows for noting details in data, makes it easier to organize and search data, and allows for the identification of patterns (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Coding is the critical link or key towards making connections between data collection and explaining their meaning (Charmaz, 2001). In qualitative data analysis coding is “a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4).

Attribute coding, Descriptive coding, and In Vivo coding were utilized as first cycle coding methods to analyze the data. Attribute coding provided basic descriptive information about the participants (Saldaña, 2013). This was helpful in analyzing the various perspectives of participants based on their employee classification and how long they had been employed at the institution. Some participants had been employed at the institution for as little as three years while others had been employed at the institution for twenty years. This contributed to the richness of the data as participants were able to speak from a wide variety of perspectives. Descriptive coding “summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 88). This coding method allowed me to identify keywords and identify the emergence of the themes and corresponding sub-themes. With In Vivo coding, the code utilized refers to a word or phrase that the participant uses. In Vivo coding allowed me to organize the various keywords and passages that were identified into more generalizable themes and concepts. Saldaña (2013) recommended that coding take place during
data collection as opposed to afterwards. By analyzing the data throughout the data collection process I was able to recall information more readily and create connections between the interviews as they were occurring. I was also able to make adjustments to my interview protocol if the questions I was asking were not clear or were not yielding the responses I intended them to reveal.

**Ethical Considerations**

In conducting interviews with participants, it was essential that I have the proper protocol in place to ensure confidentiality of participants. When conducting interviews where employees are commenting on their employer and making value judgments on the institutional culture and identity, some participants may be hesitant to be forthcoming. All of the interviews that were conducted in person were done so in the participant’s office. Participants were also provided an option of having their interviews done at an alternative location. Interviews that were done remotely were conducted via Zoom or over the phone. Sieber (1992) provided information on ensuring the privacy of study participants including the removal or changing of all identifying characteristics. To maintain participant confidentiality, all participants were assigned pseudonyms. These pseudonyms were assigned in a random manner so that there was not a way that the participants identities could be determined. Any documents, recorded interviews, or other items were stored in a secure environment on UABox and an external hard drive which were all password protected. Participants were informed of how collected data would be used. Additionally, some demographic or identifying data was excluded in the results if it was specific enough that it would reveal a participant’s identity.
Quality Assurance

To ensure quality of the research, several strategies were incorporated. In qualitative research, reflexivity is one of the methods utilized to ensure quality. As a concept, it “helps researchers to consider their position and influence during the study, and it also helps them to know how they have constructed and even sometimes imposed meanings on the research process” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 76). The researcher’s background has a significant influence on who they investigate, the angle in which they choose to approach the investigation, the method that is used to conduct the study, the findings they select as most appropriate, and how they frame the conclusions (Malterud, 2001, pp. 483-484). An audit trail was utilized to ensure quality of the study. Detailed notes were kept on the interview process including who was interviewed and when. Interview transcriptions as well as my notes and notes taken during the analysis stage were securely stored, organized, and labeled correctly. This helped to ensure that information could be referenced and that no data were mistakenly omitted (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 477).

Member checking was also used as a method to verify accuracy of information provided. After each interview was conducted and transcribed, individual transcripts were sent to participants to verify that the content was accurate and no misinterpretations on the part of the researcher occurred (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Minor discrepancies were addressed, including portions in which I misspelled a program the participant was referring to or if the participant chose to retract a portion of the interview that was a tangent. Yin (2014) stated that maintaining a chain of evidence aids in reliability of the information. An external auditor should be able to follow the steps of the study through the meticulous notes of the researcher. Triangulation as a quality assurance means that researchers have “multiple data points that can
broaden their understanding of the subject of their research” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 477). The use of multiple sources of data is the development of “converging lines of inquiry” which allows for data collected to be much more convincing due to it being based on multiple sources (Yin, 2014, p. 120). The interviews and document analysis were utilized to crosscheck each other to ensure validity.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I outlined the steps I utilized to conduct this case study on the perceptions of organizational culture and change at a Hispanic Serving Institution. Organizational culture affects student persistence and success, however, little is known about how faculty, staff, and administrators help to shape organizational culture or facilitate organizational change. The use of a single institution case study allowed for a deeper analysis of an ongoing change initiative that is occurring at the institution. Through interviews and document analysis, faculty, staff, and administrators provided valuable insights regarding how they perceived their institution’s organizational culture as well as how they perceive organizational change as related to their institutional designation as a HSI. As a professional working in the field of higher education at a Hispanic Serving Institution, it is my hope that this study will provide a new body of knowledge related to organizational culture and change at Hispanic Serving Institutions.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF STUDY

This single-institution case study explored faculty, staff, and administrator perceptions of the organizational change process and organizational culture of a newly designated Hispanic Serving Institution. The study also reviewed institutional documents related to the strategic plan and the institution’s goals and initiatives related to diversity. Higher education is an environment where change, planned or unplanned, is a constant. A study on organizational change provides valuable information that can assist other institutions undergoing various change processes. The use of interviews provided a narrative that aids in painting a picture of the institution from various levels and points. In this study, I sought to understand the organizational change process and organizational culture as it related to the HSI designation, from the perspective of faculty, staff, and administrators. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?
2. How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?
3. What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?
4. How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?
This case study incorporated qualitative interviews with faculty, staff, and administrators designed to better understand the change process and the institution’s culture as a result of the designation change. Additionally, document analysis was conducted of the institution’s strategic plan to better understand how the designation change was shaping the future of the institution. The narrative provided by participants provides insights of their understanding of the new institutional designation as well as their understanding of its effect on the institution and their various roles.

**Major Themes of the Case Study**

The following major themes emerged as a result of the data collection:

1. Existing Diversity
2. Awareness to Action
3. Institutional Culture
4. Funding

Faculty, staff, and administrators seemed to have an understanding of what a Hispanic Serving Institution is, however, knowledge of how the designation was impacting the work within their department or at the institution was much more divided. The length of time of service for study participants varied, with some employed for three years to more than 20 years. A constant acknowledgement among all participants was the ever-present diversity of the institution.

**Theme 1: Existing Diversity**

Walking around HSIU, it was not difficult to see the diversity on campus. On the institution’s website one of the main headlines discusses how diversity is in the DNA of the institution. Over the past several years, the institution has made a commitment to diversity that includes incorporating it into the strategic plan. The primary goal is to promote and build
institution-wide cross cultural diversity and diversify the worldview of students, faculty, and stuff. The institution benefits greatly from its location in a diverse region, and this diversity is reflected in the student body. One of the questions I posed regarded participants’ awareness of when the institution became a HSI. Many remarked that they had always viewed the institution as being very diverse. Even those who could not remember the exact moment when the institution was designated as a HSI or had limited knowledge of the designation, the resounding consensus was that the institution had always had a diverse student body.

Isaiah Dalton, an administrator at the institution who also attended as an undergraduate and graduate student, remarked on the diversity of the institution stating that it has “always been a very diverse institution in terms of the large proportions of the various minorities. It’s been a very unique asset of ours and we’ve been very proud of it.” This pride in diversity was echoed by others at the institution as well. Dr. Phillip Newland, a senior level administrator made a similar remark regarding the diversity at the institution, “Well, it’s something that’s just kind of always been part of our culture and something that we’re very proud of, the HSI designation, just, you know, sort of made it even more exciting for us.”

Geographic location. Several participants commented on a contributing factor to the institution’s diversity, the school’s geographic location in the Southeast United States in an area that has a very diverse population of individuals from underrepresented and marginalized groups. Dr. Garcia, an administrator within the Division of Student Affairs, discussed how the diversity of the region impacted the diversity at the institution:

I think the diversity of our students has always been here and for a very long time. We’ve been recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse institutions in the nation and the most ethnically diverse institution in the State University System. And we’ve maintained that for a very long time and it has a lot to do with where we’re positioned…. I don’t think our student demographics have changed.
For some, it seemed somewhat of a non-issue/surprise that the institution was now designated as a HSI because of the diversity in the region. Patrick Jones, a staff member located in the Division of Student Affairs who has been employed at the university for approximately four years, stated that it made sense that the institution was a HSI as the region has a large Hispanic/Latinx population and most of the students they serve are from the area. For him, it was no surprise that the institution would be considered a HSI.

None of the study participants were surprised that the institution was considered a HSI. For many, the school had always been diverse during the time of their employment. For others, the diversity of the surrounding area seemed to be a contributor to the institutional diversity. Due to the diversity of the region, a few participants remarked that the institution had done very little to actively recruit a more diverse student body. Instead, the diversity of the institution was a result of the surrounding diversity. Dr. Klein, a faculty member at the college, noted that the obvious diversity of the institution was a result of the location stating, “it’s a given” and is not something they have to think about. He noted that recruitment of diverse students is not the challenge, the challenge lies in responding to the diverse groups of students and providing appropriate services and resources.

Maxwell Graham, a staff member within a student affairs office, shared a similar sentiment regarding the student diversity as a result of the geographic area. However, he also acknowledged that the institution had not used that diversity to its advantage. He remarked, “for me it’s very much the ‘well, where are we located?’ It’s kind of a given that we are diverse based on where we are. But we haven’t truly banked on it.”

Participants clearly viewed the institution as diverse. Thus, there was no true change or demographic shift that propelled them towards the HSI status. Instead, it began to become
apparent that demographic data the university was collected had not been captured effectively, and therefore was not providing a clear view of students in attendance. Dr. Luisa Fumagali, a faculty member who has been employed at the institution for more than 20 years, discussed the diversity she had observed in her classroom over the years:

I always remember HSIU as being a diverse place—always, from the get go. It’s just that we had not really taken the time to figure out we had 25% and really asking people who they were. I remember my first two years here, one of the greatest things that happened in my class is like I had like two or three Cubans, one or two Puerto Ricans, three people from Trinidad, two from Haiti, Americans who were learning Spanish. It’s always been very diverse. And maybe it is in function of the department that I am in, but my classes have always been very diverse especially when I teach anything related to Caribbean or Latin America—always very diverse. I just didn’t think we had pursued it as keenly as we have done in the past few years.

This ever-present diversity is why for many, becoming a HSI was not a surprise or a designation that was surprising. If anything, it provided them with an opportunity to continue to celebrate and spread awareness of the diversity of the institution. One common theme emerged when discussing the diversity at HSIU: the pride people felt of working at the institution. Dr. Allison McKinney, an administrator with a focus on retention and student success stated, “You know, the thing that I am most excited about [HSIU] is, ‘yes, we’re a Hispanic Serving Institution,’” but we also are the most diverse institution in terms of types of diversity and percent of diversity.”

For some individuals, this posed a bit of a challenge with regard to programming for their diverse student body. HSIU is a majority, minority institution, meaning that most of the students identify as non-white. While 27% of the student body identifies as Hispanic/Latinx, 20% of the student body identifies as Black/African American. Dr. McKinney commented on this fact as a unique aspect of the institution that provided both challenges and opportunities. For her, the importance lies in awareness of the diverse students and their respective needs and how to best meet the needs of each group adequately and equitably.
Dr. Ramsey Obrien expressed some apprehension regarding students potentially getting left behind as a result of the HSI designation and who the institution may now attempt to recruit. She recalled an announcement made at a faculty senate meeting where the university president noted that the new designation would allow them to recruit students from Central and South America who would also be able to pay the full tuition amount. This was a comment that made Dr. Obrien pause because she remembered thinking about the current students, especially the first-generation students, and wondering what would happen to them and if they would be forgotten in favor of students who could pay more.

For some participants, while they were proud of the diversity at the institution and the designation as a HSI, they worried about the effect it could have on other students and the services provided to them. Mr. Dalton highlighted the “cognitive dissonance” that some people might face because of the diversity of students and the feeling that some student groups may not get the attention and/or resources needed. The institution has had a long history of serving not only Hispanic/Latinx students but also black and African American students as well as international students. Seeking the HSI designation has been something they have had to reflect on in terms of how it might impact the other students they serve.

Dr. Newland echoed the sentiment of serving a diverse student body and being intentional in creating policies that will enable all students to succeed:

Of course, we care about that for all of our students, but we do separate and look at the different groups too and make sure we're not doing some policies that serving one, you know, segment of our student population but not serving or maybe even dis-serving another segment. We're very cautious of that. When we make some policy change, we take the whole student body. But then, we also take it apart and make sure we're not leaving somebody behind.
For other participants, the biggest challenge the institution faces is not with the recruitment of students, but retaining them and understanding how to adequately serve them once they are at the institution. For Dr. Klein, recruiting students is not the issue, but instead knowing how to serve them once they arrive. In his 14 years at the institution, he has seen the institution’s culture shift from being a regionally focused commuter campus, to a more research focused institution. With this institutional culture shift, he expressed concern about those students whom they would typically serve being left behind because they do not have the academic or financial background to succeed at a higher performing institution.

Along with attaining the HSI designation and beginning early conversations about how to meet the needs of the institution’s diverse student body, the designation has also sparked conversations regarding the hiring of more diverse faculty, staff, and administrators at the institution. A few participants mentioned the lack of Hispanic/Latinx faculty, staff, and administrators and how it was not representative of the number of Hispanic/Latinx students at the institution. Dr. Garcia described the designation as an opportunity for hiring more diverse personnel:

What I do see the needle moving in is our faculty, staff, and administration. Obviously, you see it more in student affairs where the demographics are a bit more reflective of our student demographics. Where we struggle is in our faculty and higher administration which is a national issue. A good example is, I’m an associate Vice President for Student Affairs, I’m the highest ranking Hispanic in administration, which I’m very proud of but I’m also very saddened by that because, in my mind, if you have a Hispanic Serving Institution then it should be important enough where you have a VP or someone that is at that level that is reflective of your students. And we don’t have that yet.

Along with continue to diversify the student body and maintain the HSI designation, identifying opportunities to hire diverse faculty and staff is also a charge of the institution as outlined in their strategic plan. However, steps on how that is to be achieved have yet to be identified.
Becoming a HSI. In exploring the campus and talking with participants, it became apparent that diversity has never been an area in which the institution has been lacking. The student body, for the most part, has always been diverse, and the diversity in the surrounding area contributes to it. This led me to further explore how HSIU became a HSI. For HSIU, the path to becoming a HSI was a relatively quick process that did not necessarily involve more intentional recruitment and retention of students, but instead was merely a numbers game. Dr. Garcia recalled how the institution began reviewing its institutional data and student demographics. Since the percentage of Hispanic students was so high, many wondered why they were not already classified as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Isaiah Dalton, an administrator with a direct role in tracking student demographic data to achieve the HSI designation, recounted how close the institution was to achieving the designation and the minor changes the institution made to finally qualify for the designation:

What we realized is that, one, is we have been recognized by some publications as a very successful institution for awarding degrees to minorities. And so, we started to think about pipelines and we’ve realized that we were—I don’t have the specific numbers in front of me but when you’re counting by headcount, we were about 24 or 23 students away from being 25% Hispanic enrollments for undergrads. And so, very briefly, we realized that we had a number of students who had not reported their race or ethnic background. And we certainly didn’t want to infringe on anybody’s privacy, if they don’t want to report that. But at the same time, the question was whether or not we had done a good job of asking. And so we did a very soft campaign to those students that had not reported their race and we just asked them. And we said, “Listen, we just want you to be aware that your categories right now as ‘no race reported’ and if you would like to, we’d happily make note so that our—‘it’s a data integrity initiative basically.’” And we were 0.5 over what we needed to be that semester.

Once the designation was reached, Dr. Garcia recalled how quickly the word spread with it being mentioned at all university-wide addresses and other events as a point of pride for the institution.

In speaking with participants, it became quite clear that the institution’s journey towards becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution was relatively quick and did not require additional
institutional planning or initiatives. The institution has always had a high level of diversity that coincides with the diversity of the area around the institution. Because the institution had a high level of diversity leading up to acquiring the designation, all that was required to attain the HSI designation was requesting students to self-select their race and ethnicities thereby allowing the institution to reach the required percentage to reach the HSI designation. HSIU was a benefactor of the diversity surrounding the institution. Thus, there was limited intentionality required on the part of HSIU to recruit additional students to achieve the designation. Once the designation was finalized, the institution then began the process of determining what the HSI designation meant for them.

Theme 2: Awareness to Action

Once the institution was officially designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, news of the designation was disseminated widely by the President’s office. There were multiple press releases sent out from the Office of the President as well as a constant reminder of it on an internal website. Senior leaders spent significant time and effort making sure individuals were aware of the new designation. HSIU is a large organization with numerous employees and students across several campuses, so spreading awareness as effectively as possible was imperative. When news of the designation began to circulate, some participants, like Dr. Susan Gilmore, an administrator in Student Affairs, were very surprised because she assumed the designation was one the institution already held. Perceptions of how information was disseminated varied among participants. Some participants, like Dr. Newland, remarked that the information was widely announced from the top-down with the university president, college deans, and provost talking about it at all meetings and forums they hosted.

Mr. Dalton reflected on how the designation had become a point of pride for the institution not only in recruiting prospective students but also in generating press from the Board
of Governors. It was also seen as a point of success since diversity is one aspect of the institution’s strategic plan. Qualifying for the designation demonstrated success in this aspect and provided the opportunity to discuss and create new strategies to evaluate.

While all participants eventually learned of the designation, some said they felt that the information was not as widespread as it could have been and that it seemed some areas or individuals were more knowledgeable than others. Ms. Gilmore was one of the individuals who found out about the designation primarily through other individuals who were involved in the process to attain the designation. While she was not aware of any central awareness campaigns, she had attended a symposium by the Division of Student Affairs in which institutional represented discussed diversity and cultural literacy, defined HSI, and provided sessions on terms such as “Latinx,” that are being used more often. While the symposium was informative, she noted that most of the attendees were those in the Division of Student Affairs, thus potentially leading to a knowledge gap among employees within other divisions.

A lack of understanding for the HSI designation and what it meant for the institution was shared by several participants, including Mr. Dalton, who was involved in attaining the designation. Once the designation was formalized, the institution expended more effort to inform individuals that the institution was now categorized as a HSI, however, they did not explain what that exactly meant. Mr. Dalton acknowledged that while this should have taken place, the institution simply did not have the time or the resources to support these efforts.

With the designation now official, and news of it beginning to circulate around campus, some employees, like Maxwell Graham, a staff member within the Division of Student Affairs, wondered what being a HSI would now mean for HSIU. He recalled that with every mention of the institution’s Hispanic Serving Institution status, there were an equal number of questions
about what that meant for the institution. Whenever senior administrators were asked about this, the response was that details were still being worked out but would be disseminated soon. These questions and many like it have been in the minds of those who are still unsure of what the designation means for the institution or even their offices.

**Slow process to move from awareness to action.** In spending time with participants and gathering more information about the change process resulting from the new designation, it became clear that moving from awareness to action has been a slow process. In the three years since it was announced that the institution had gained the designation, there still does not appear to be a plan or vision moving forward with respect to educating people on topics related to Hispanic/Latinx students and what it means to be a HSI. While all of the participants were knowledgeable of the designation, fewer were aware of programs that had been implemented or were in the process of being implemented related to the designation.

Mr. Graham recalled his experience of working in an office that was tasked with helping to attain the designation and the challenges and issues they faced. While they knew of opportunities, like the HACU Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities National Conference that they were able to send students to, they were unsure of other resources they could access. Additionally, although the institution had reached the 25% threshold of self-identified Hispanic/Latinx students on campus, the larger challenge was figuring out where those students were located. Mr. Graham stated that you cannot always assume someone’s race or identity based on their appearance, and because the institution is a largely commuter school, identifying Hispanic/Latinx students was still a challenge for them.

**Perception of HSI designation.** Although there seemed to be a strong awareness of the HSI designation by study participants, the knowledge of what the designation meant, and what it
means for different cohorts of individuals in their roles, varied. Participants were asked to describe how they felt the designation as a HSI was perceived by faculty, staff, and administrators at the institution. Responses varied widely. With regard to how the designation was perceived by faculty members, the overall perception was that faculty were a) aware if they were located in a department that is eligible to apply for grants, b) more aware if they identified as Hispanic/Latinx, or c) they did not understand how the designation affected them.

The ability to apply for grants was cited as a significant contributor to faculty awareness and engagement with the HSI designation. Some participants like Mr. Dalton believed that faculty in the sciences and engineering were more aware because they have more opportunities to leverage the designation through the various grants they are eligible to apply for. This has led to some faculty to begin to think more about the students the institution serves as it now affects them more directly. It was also acknowledged that levels of awareness are varied. While those faculty in the sciences and engineering have an interest due to the funding opportunities, other faculty members had an interest in the designation because of their own identities as Hispanic/Latinx. This has contributed to some faculty acknowledging and advocating for the hiring of more diverse faculty members to align with the growing diversity of the students.

Lastly, not all faculty understood how the designation affected the work they do at the institution. Dr. Watkins stated that many faculty members still did not know what the designation meant for the institution, as it has not been talked about at any faculty meetings she has attended. While most of the faculty participants understood the value of diversity in the classroom, understanding how the designation affected every day roles was more difficult to discern. Dr. Sanchez posed a question that all faculty members should ask themselves which was “How is
your practice changed as a result of this being a Hispanic-serving institution?” Dr. Garcia

summed up the opportunity that faculty members now have in their roles:

I think if I’m a faculty member, I’m looking for what resources can I offer students that are identified as Hispanic or minority, right? And/Or what research can I be involved in, in order to fill a gap in the literature, or build on current knowledge. I’m either going to have a passion for it and/or I’m going to look for resources to support my students.

Responses varied in how participants believed faculty members perceived the HSI designation. Some participants expressed a belief that faculty were neither informed nor cared about the designation. Others suggested that faculty members were aware and engaged especially if they instructed courses that dealt with diversity and inclusion or would be affected by the designation, or if they were in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) department where they would be eligible to apply for grant opportunities. In speaking with faculty participants, there was a sense of detachment for those who were not in a STEM department or did not self-identify as Hispanic/Latinx. This is significant, because in the case of organizational change, it is important for all members of an organization, even those who do not feel that they have a connection to the change, have an understanding of how the change process impacts their areas as well.

Perceptions of how staff members perceived the HSI designation was similar to that of faculty members. Some participants were unsure if all staff members knew or cared about the designation, especially if they were not in a student-facing position. Others noted that it was staff members, in particular the Division of Student Affairs, who are doing most of the work when it comes to spreading awareness and creating programming to provide more education about the designation. Mr. Dalton noted the difference in awareness between those staff members in direct-service positions and those in more peripheral roles. He stated that those staff in transactional
roles like those within Student Affairs or those in academic advising are more aware of the designation than many other staff members because many initiatives they are directed to implement are pushed down from senior administrators.

For many individuals like Dr. Garcia, students are their main focus so any opportunity to improve student success is embraced and welcomed:

As a staff member within the Division of Student Affairs, I’m thinking of the student because my main focus is always the student. And so, what support mechanisms are out there for our students. Are they properly supported? Are we getting too much into just the numbers? And I see that as part of my role to remind others that it’s not just about the numbers, but we also have a responsibility to the student. It all goes back to, “Are we going to just enroll or are we going to serve?”

The designation has allowed various areas to begin to think about the current programs that are provided and identify if they are addressing the needs and the students that they should be serving. If not, it allows them to discuss what could be done to improve these efforts.

Staff members, in particular those in Student Affairs whose role is to interact with students directly in a more support- and resource-driven role were not only the most aware of the designation but were the most forward-thinking with regard to the implications the designation would have on the institution and the students they serve. Staff members in Student Affairs were also the primary group providing seminars and educational programs to better educate and engage members of the institution about the new designation, and look forward to identify how the designation can best impact students.

Perceptions of administrators’ views and knowledge of the designation were primarily externally focused and centered on opportunities for the institution to promote itself and seek alternative funding sources. “For administrators, it’s all about the money” said one participant. One administrator highlighted the declining state financial support as a motivator for attaining the HSI designation as it provides an opportunity to seek alternative funding:
As an administrator, you know the importance of serving your students. But I think a lot of times, especially if you’re in executive leadership, right, so you’re talking your top, your focus or a large portion of your focus is on “How much money can I bring in?” And that has to be one of your areas of focus because unfortunately you can’t do anything without the money. So, if I’m thinking as an executive leadership person, I’m thinking more federal dollars, more grant opportunities, how can I capitalize off this designation? How can I market this designation so that I can get more donors? Because more donors equals more dollars.

The designation is also seen as a marketing tool to recruit more diverse students. The institutions diversity is one of its main marketing points to differentiate itself from other institutions in the area.

Among the three participant groups, faculty members appeared to be the group that struggled the most in understanding how the designation affected their roles within the institution. Administrators assumed the role of using the designation to further the image of the institution, assist with recruitment of students from other regions, and secure more external funding sources. Staff members assumed the role of providing programming to educate members of the institution as well as creating programming and resources for Hispanic/Latinx students. Faculty members had yet to identify the role that they could potentially play in the organizational change process, especially those who did not work in positions that would allow them to apply for the various grant opportunities.

While perceptions of the designation varied between participants and position type, some participants, like Emily Diehl, stated that they did not think it was as much of a difference in perspective between different groups as it was a difference in the levels of awareness regarding understanding of the designation and its implications for the institution. Dr. Newland shared a similar sentiment regarding the perception of the designation, with those who were most engaged
being those with a vested interest in student success as compared to those who were solely interested in the funding aspect of the designation.

Although most participants were able to articulate their belief regarding the HSI designation and how it was perceived by various stakeholders, several of them had to pause to reflect. Ms. Gilmore was one of those participants whom, after reflecting, did not think the designation and what it meant for the institution was at the forefront of everyone’s mind:

This might be the wrong answer but I don’t know how much thought people are giving it. Like as I mentioned to you, I'm aware that we got the designation. The only time I've heard it discussed in a group setting was at that one symposium I attended. I don't know if students read that and if they fit into a certain demographic, if they have a perception that— I don't know, that we’re going to have differently tailored programming, like what does it mean to students? I don’t really know. I feel like, in terms of faculty, staff and administrators, I haven’t been involved in a lot of discussions about what people think it means.

Learning about participants’ perceptions of the HSI designation and how they viewed others’ perceptions of the designation provided a wealth of insight as it demonstrated the importance of creating both awareness and understanding. All participants were aware and knew of the designation, but understanding of what the designation meant beyond the federal definition was limited. Furthermore, participants had difficulty seeing how the designation directly impacted their work.

**Hispanic serving vs. Hispanic enrolling.** In moving from awareness to action, some participants discussed aspects of the designation with which they struggled. As the designation is driven by enrollment numbers, participants like Dr. Garcia indicated that they had given more thought to the notion of enrolling vs. serving. While institutional representatives stated that they do want to truly serve Hispanic/Latinx students, they also admitted to struggling with what that exactly looks like. To address this, Dr. Garcia stated that HSIU has begun to create councils that
will focus on what the designation means for the institution and discuss new initiatives like a proposed center for Hispanic/Latinx students:

Just recently, I’d say maybe in the last six months, has there been more in-depth conversations about, “Wait a second, what does it mean to be a Hispanic Serving Institution? And what do we need to put in place to demonstrate that we’re actually serving Hispanic students and not just enrolling Hispanic students?” So, there’s been more intentionality built in. There has been a Hispanic Serving Advisor Council that’s been developed on the academic side of the house to sort of explore, “What can we do now that we have this designation in order to better serve students?” And then, of course, the platform takes on some of those responsibilities as well. And even more recent, about three months ago, conversations within the Division have started on looking at pooling together a proposal on developing a Center for Hispanic Students and what would that look like for HSIU. So those conversations are starting.

Mr. Jones defined a Hispanic-enrolling institution as one that has “a lot of Hispanic students enrolling in classes.” He defined a Hispanic-serving institution as one that is directing its resources to that demographic of students to ensure their overall success. Faculty member, Dr. Sanchez, serves on a HSI research group at the institution that is tasked with compiling a resource database for members of the institution to access that provides information related to what it means to be a HSI and serving Hispanic/Latinx students. For him, focusing on the serving aspect of the designation is his passion because he does not want the designation to only be about the ability to apply for grants.

As a result of attaining the designation, some participants shared a belief that the university should now move to hire a Vice President in charge of diversity and inclusion or someone who would be in charge of what could be a HSI Taskforce. Currently, all work related to the designation change is being conducted by multiple people as additional responsibilities to their regular job duties. Mr. Graham suggested that since there is no one person or office solely responsible for working on initiatives related to the HSI designation, efforts towards programming are not getting the attention they need because the job duties are tasked to
individuals who have other obligations to fulfill. Additionally, because there is not a central HSI office, this leads to multiple areas working on various initiatives but not always communicating with each other on what is being done.

Mr. Dalton stated that while there is no one person in charge of overseeing efforts, the efforts that have been completed have been very collaborative, with individuals regularly sitting down at the same table to collectively discuss items related to the HSI designation. Many of these discussions had taken place within administrator meetings and did not include faculty or staff members. Dr. Newland expressed that having a specific person handle all matters related to the HSI designation was something that they had only begun to explore recently. Prior to receiving the designation, the institution did not have anyone in that role largely because the institution had always been diverse so it was not viewed as a necessary position:

And I have to say, that’s something that’s interesting you bring that up because last week, I had a conversation with somebody about that, is that we— and I really don't think it’s anybody. I think it’s just more, like I said before about, we’ve just always kind of— that was, it’s been around us so not— and then proud of it but not necessarily realized, “You know, we need to get more organized about this.” I look at a lot of schools, which I've been doing lately. And like a lot of schools will have, you know, maybe a Vice President for diversity or whatever the title is but we don't have that. In Student Affairs, they have some diversity position. I forget what the exact title is but that is something that we need to do, we have not done. But, again, I don't think it’s— I think it’s just more people like, “Well, we’ve always-- you know, this is the way we’ve done things and we’ve always had a lot of diversity.” I don't think anyone's really thought about organizing it formally. But, you know, I think that will happen. I definitely think that will happen.

**Services and programs.** As HSIU has continued to progress from institutional awareness of the designation to implementation of actionable change, institutional representatives are discussing whether or not unique programs and services are necessary for Hispanic and Latinx students. Since the institution has always been diverse, there has not been a need to provide tailored programs specifically for Hispanic/Latinx students. Instead, programs have been
designed for first-generation and underrepresented student groups in general. In speaking with participants, including Dr. Deen, programs are typically targeted towards larger groups of students such as first-generation students or minority/underrepresented student groups. While there have been a few events targeted to Hispanic/Latinx students and their families within the admissions office, including events entirely in Spanish, Ms. Brown stated that campus-wide initiatives had not yet come to fruition other than bringing Hispanic/Latinx speakers or authors to speak on campus.

Participants recounted various scholarships, tutoring and mentoring programs, access programs, and learning programs targeted towards first-generation and underrepresented groups. However, the majority of participants were not knowledgeable of programs or resources specifically for Hispanic/Latinx students. For Dr. Garcia, this provides a wonderful opportunity to ask students about their unmet needs. One event that her office hosts is a breakfast with an administrator which provides an opportunity for students to have coffee and breakfast with her and engage in conversations about their experiences at the institution and discuss their specific needs. One major benefit of the HIS designation, she stated, has been the funding that senior leadership has provided for diversity programs. As part of the institution’s strategic plans and one of its major platforms, diversity and programs that deal with diversity are important endeavors for the institution. In its first year, the diversity committee received $100,000 to assist with programmatic efforts. In its third year, they were granted over $200,000 for campus-wide programming. Financially, institutional support has been available for Hispanic/Latinx programming. Next steps include identifying the best way to allocate resources to meet students’ needs.
Awareness of the designation was widespread across campus and among various disciplines. However, perceptions of the designation and knowledge of next steps varied widely. Some participants were able to identify the impact that the designation could have on the institution related to student success and funding opportunities. Others were fairly disengaged in the process and did not understand or see how the designation could connect to their role. This is not surprising as there were no observable changes in the student body prior to gaining the designation. Thus, if there are no observable changes or required actions, it might be assumed that there is no reason to change existing behaviors or programs.

**Theme 3: Institutional Culture**

As the institution continues to embrace the HIS designation and move from awareness to action, one pivotal aspect in ensuring the success in the organizational change process is helping various stakeholders understand the role they play in the success of the designation. Additionally, individuals need to better understand how the designation impacts their work. Mr. Graham stated that one of the exciting aspects of the designation is that it is providing an opportunity for everyone to think critically about what the designation means for the institution:

> I think the fun part is it’s made everyone think, “What does a HSI mean for us?” and I think that for several—I think for the certain individuals who I speak to, it questions, “Are we truly a serving institution or are we just Hispanic recruiting?” Because if we’re Hispanic recruiting, we got it. We know what population’s going out there. We put it in our title of “the most diverse institution.” But I think that when we say, “Are we serving,” it is figuring out what do those services look like. Are we translating items into Spanish to say, “hey, we’re recruiting” because when we think of Latinx families, you’re not recruiting the student, you’re recruiting the family.

Several participants mentioned this aspect of the change process. For example, Mr. Torres stated a belief that this was a great opportunity to do more outreach with the surrounding community to increase community engagement and to provide more education about the institution’s designation as a HSI.
Some participants were already using the designation to implement new initiatives to support Hispanic/Latinx students. Ms. Brown, an administrator in the office of admissions, spoke about initiatives her office was implementing as a result of the designation, in particular those related to recruitment of new students. Her office has begun hosting more on-campus events targeting Hispanic/Latinx students in surrounding communities. They have also been intentional over the past several years to hire a more diverse staff who could speak Spanish to provide recruitment opportunities that could be done in multiple languages and to prevent language barriers between their office and prospective students and their families. She stated:

I think being a Hispanic myself, I understand the culture that even if you are Hispanic and you are fluent in English, the moment you talk to me in Spanish, I'm just going to switch and talk to you in Spanish and we're going to have a connection that it just comes because of that. It's very natural.

The admissions office is also working to create a Spanish version website along with reaching out to the prospective students and their families to include them in the application and transition processes.

The designation has also provided the institution with an added incentive to provide programming surrounding cultural heritage months. Prior to the designation, Dr. Garcia noted that the administration did not have a significant influence on promoting cultural and heritage month celebrations. Rather, programming was relegated to the Multicultural Programming Board. Upon receiving the HSI designation, administrators realized they needed to take a stronger stance on celebrating these months as they are now a HSI and Minority Serving Institution. Participants like Dr. Mathers, a staff member with a student success program, stated that the designation is making them more cognizant of the diversity of their students and their students’ needs:
We definitely talk about it a lot. And we talk about it if we're making sure that the students that are classified as Hispanic need any extra support. And because our office is academic support side, we definitely bring them up into our conversations and make sure we're doing anything needed. So, I guess, in an institution that they don't have to care about special populations that wouldn’t even be a discussion point. But definitely, it is a discussion point when we are planning our programs.

Dr. McKinney shared a similar perspective regarding the diversity of the institution and trying to generalize programs and services so that they could benefit all students. For her, any institution that has diverse populations has to think about “what that means across the board, whether it’s in your curriculum, how you teach, or the hiring of faculty and staff.” These were areas in which she thought the institution could do a better job.

With regard to enrollment management, Mr. Dalton stated that the university is being much more intentional in its recruitment of Hispanic/Latinx students. Although the diversity is “naturally occurring” due to the institution’s geographic location, the designation has inspired them to recruit students not just from nearby counties, but international students from Latin American countries as well. Because HSIU has a diverse student body, one challenge that Dr. Garcia discussed was balancing the need to provide services for Hispanic/Latinx students while still being inclusive of all students. She described a fear that is shared among many people of wanting to celebrate the HSI designation but still remain inclusive of their diverse study body.

While some participants were able to describe how their offices or departments were implementing new strategies or initiatives resulting from the HSI designation, others had not yet seen the impact of the designation on their departments. Dr. Newland was one of the participants who grappled with the general feeling on campus that not much had changed:

I really don't think so other than the main thing that I see that I think is different is what I just talked about, the grant opportunities. But, you know, I mean, a big part of it again is you just have to understand is that we’ve always been aware that that was a huge part of who we are as a university. It’s just getting the HSI designation was really kind of just making it official for us. But I would say that the general feeling on campus was— I
mean, when we got it, everyone was like, “Well, of course, you know, we realized that. Look around,” you know. I don’t think that the general population of staff and faculty, administrators et cetera. You know, it’s just part of who we are. And like I said, it really was just an official designation but it’s something we’ve always felt very strongly was here and we’ve always been very, very proud of it.

Participants like Dr. Hill and Mr. Torres did not feel as though the designation had had an impact on their work. Dr. Hill teaches a subject matter that deals with intercultural communication and stated, “That’s the beauty about intercultural communications is I'm constantly talking about the different racial ethnic groups in our society. But in terms of how the designation has changed my teaching style, it hasn’t.” For Mr. Torres, his role deals primarily with first-generation students. So while some Hispanic/Latinx students may fit this category, the designation has not affected the work that he does since it is not part of his job responsibilities.

Mr. Jones, a staff member in Student Conduct, expressed similar feelings regarding the designation and the work of his office, “… here we have a process, we stick to our process, I mean, that’s Student Conduct in general.” Similarly, Dr. Gilmore described a serve all students approach in her reflection of how the designation affected the work of her office:

Is it wrong to say I don’t think it does? Like because I think that we were already serving—you know, Dean’s Students Office, you’re kind of—you do some outreach to make all students aware that you're here. But, for the most part, you serve the students who come to you. So you're going to serve and do your best to understand whoever walks in the door.

Dr. Deen stated that while the designation impacted the work that is being done at the institution, it is also part of a large institutional goal regarding diversity. She said that the university is now at the point where it needs to educate those who are not a part of the grant writing process more about how being a HSI actually should impact their work.

Some university-wide programs that have been implemented included a HSI Research Group tasked with researching what it means to be a HSI and providing an online database and
resources for members of the institution to utilize for reference. For Ms. Brown and the admissions office, they have already begun to see the impact of their efforts on their outside constituents:

And it’s very interesting because, just on Monday, we were hosting a high school counselor lunch where we invite high school counselors from our recruitment territory and one of the high school counselors approached me and told me—one of the things that I felt most proud about—she told me, “Thank you for bringing diversity to the Office of Admissions.” I think that now we’re being—we were diverse. We were just not being very intentional in anything. And now the Student Affairs Division, with their diversity and cultural affairs initiative, they’re being also more diverse in bringing a lot of Hispanic speakers, having colloquiums about Hispanic cultures. And I think I see the difference now.

**Impact the designation is having and will have on the future of the institution.** While raising awareness of the designation and ensuring changes are ongoing, the future of the institution is open to a number of possibilities. Many of the participants expressed high hopes for the designation transforming the institution in the future. Mr. Torres registered hope that the designation would be seen as one of legitimacy that provided additional programming and resources for Hispanic/Latinx students. He communicated a desire that the designation and increased interest in Hispanic/Latinx students would lead to more “personal, professional, and social development” along with academic programs and initiatives to assist students in acclimating to the institution. Ms. Brown shared a similar sentiment with her hopes for better inclusion within the surrounding community:

I think HSIU has a great opportunity, and I hope that the university will embrace it in reaching out beyond the gates of the campus – the physical campus into the community to connect to all those organizations around us. I think we need to show to the community how we can contribute to the community overall, not just the students as a Hispanic community that we serve. I would love to see that and, hopefully, that will give the direction the university will take eventually.
Dr. Klein expressed hope that the designation would lead to more collaborations between colleges and departments as well as more trainings that emphasize cultural competence and provide resources for Hispanic students.

Drs. Fumagali and Garcia both communicated hope that the designation would lead to the university hiring more diverse personnel who are more reflective of the student demographics, and not just in the languages and humanities departments but also in the STEM fields where there is a dearth of Hispanic/Latinx faculty members. Other participants stated a belief that there is still a great deal of work that needs to be done to continue to build awareness of the designation and what it means beyond having a certain percentage of students. Dr. Deen indicated that the designation will “help everybody else on campus understand the impact of the Hispanic culture on the area that we live in, on our institution, on the local economy” which will then translate to benefits for the students beyond graduation. As a faculty member, Dr. Hill registered hope that the designation would lead to more programming to encourage increased connections between faculty members and students. For him, unless you serve as an advisor for a student organization having a connection and interacting with students typically does not go beyond the classroom.

Dr. Newland said that the designation helped him and other administrators see the responsibility they have to students, and how simply being diverse means little if the institution is not being intentional in the services it provides to aid with student success:

You know, I would just say—and, of course, part of this is, you know, blame it on the performance metric system. But I do think that we realize more and more that we do have a responsibility here with the students. And I think that becomes heightened when we start looking at a diverse student population particularly. And I say that mainly because a lot of the diverse students are first-gen’s. And so, that’s a bigger bill. Wanting to make sure they succeed.
Dr. Garcia suggested that the designation would allow people to be more intentional in their programming and less fearful in feeling as though they are excluding other groups of students:

I think it’s going to make folks be a little bit more intentional in their programming and less fearful. And the reason I say less fearful is, even for myself, like I struggle with developing a Hispanic Center when we don't have a Black Center, we don’t have an Asian Center. And it's not that I think we need all of those centers, like I would feel so much better if I was able to do a minority Hispanic-serving Center, right? And I think that's a fear for a lot of people is well, we know that we, as a HSI, should have certain things in place for Hispanic and Latinx students but how do we develop that and make sure that it is inclusive of others, right? It's going to be really important that as we roll out a Hispanic - Latinx Center that people understand that Hispanic and Latinx is an ethnicity and not a race.

She also expressed hope that the designation would lead to a cultural shift among faculty, staff, and administrators to begin questioning how they observe the differences between students but also begin conversations of how to better serve them.

**Theme 4: Funding**

Essentially, achieving the HSI designation allows institutions to access additional funds to better serve Hispanic/Latinx students at their institutions. Knowledge of grants was a universal theme for most study participants upon hearing about the newly gained designation. Dr. Gwendolyn Watkins, a faculty member, remarked that an impetus for the institution seeking the designation was to attain grant dollars. Additional funding opportunities were viewed positively by many participants as they would allow for implementation or continuation of programming for students that was previously unable to be funded. Ms. Brown stated a belief that the HSI funding could be used to provide better services for Hispanic/Latinx students which would free up other funding to serve the general student population.
Dr. Garcia stated described the designation as a catalyst for some college deans to become increasingly interested in the benefits it could have within their academic units. She observed that it was because of the opportunity for research dollars that conversations within academic departments had begun much sooner than they had in other areas of the institution.

When news of the designation was distributed, Dr. McKinney reported that her department began immediately looking at various Title V funding opportunities. She stated, “if there’s opportunities to get external funding, you know, we will do things for Hispanic students.” One of the challenges with the funding is knowing who is able to apply for it. Dr. O’Brien discussed the confusion of knowing what is currently being proposed and knowing who is able to apply for the funding. Because there is not a HSI Clearinghouse that communicates funding opportunities and eligibility criteria, there has been some confusion among faculty members who have not yet been educated regarding how they can become more involved or eligible to submit grant applications.

Because the push for additional funding has heavily focused on opportunities for those in STEM fields, some participants who are located in non-STEM academic units expressed concern that their academic units will not receive additional funding. Dr. O’Brien, for example, noted that the institution had become heavily focused on research and research initiatives. This has created a certain amount of animosity as the university was investing much of its funding on faculty and researchers within STEM fields while “not paying a whole lot of attention to anybody else.” Many other participants shared similar observations regarding the emphasis on STEM areas and how individuals in these areas were being encouraged to apply for various grant opportunities. Emily Diehl, an administrator in the College of Sciences who would have a direct role in applying for grants for her department, informed me that not only had her College not applied for.
grants or been approached to apply for grants, but that her overall knowledge of the designation and its impact on her area was fairly limited. She also expressed confusion about who was spearheading efforts related to the designation:

I think the first person who brought it to my attention was our Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the College of Sciences. I meet with her once a week as basically like the liaison to the College of Science Student Services group for my department. And she was excited when the announcement came out and she had mentioned, “Oh yes, you know, this has meaning and it’s the way of funding opportunities.” So—but it’s really not—and it’s funny because, you know, everybody’s like “STEM, STEM, STEM,” you would think that if there are people working on things that we would be in the conversation, but we’re not. I’m sure in any large organization. And so I’m not really clear on who, in our organization is doing what. But they certainly haven’t been reaching out to us over in, you know, our work group.

Despite an awareness of the designation and knowledge of potential funding opportunities, there have been challenges in communicating this information efficiently across the institution to departments that would be most affected.

Federal grant opportunities are important to many institutions because they provide additional funding for various initiatives. Mr. Dalton discussed collaborative, cross-disciplinary grant opportunities for which HSIU would now apply based on the new designation:

This is the really cool part about the HSI, once you're set as designated there, you can have all the PI’s sort of create their own programs and develop their own focus for what they want to do. And so, when it comes to whether we're talking about pre-med students, or biologists, or environmental scientists. There are tremendous benefits for any of the faculty in those areas to be able to then develop their own strengths and develop their own programs. And they can put in proposals and they’ll get funded.

Currently, the funding process goes through a clearinghouse within Institutional Research. Since institutions are not allowed to submit multiple applications for the same grant, applicants are usually collaborative efforts across multiple disciplines. However, because of the lack of a centralized HSI office, many participants were not aware of where to go to gather more information about the funding eligibility process.
While participants were aware of the funding opportunities that the HSI designation now provides for the institution, knowledge of the process, formalization, and organization were aspects with which individuals expressed concern. Additionally, as highlighted in one of the previous themes, while faculty seemed to have the least connection and understanding of the HSI designation and how it affected the institution, they were the ones who were being encouraged to apply for various grants that would best serve Hispanic/Latinx student needs. This could prove to be problematic and an issue the institution will need to address to ensure that grant applications submitted are truly in the best interest of Hispanic/Latinx students and their overall success.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to understand how faculty, staff, and administrators at a Hispanic Serving Institution perceived organizational change and organizational culture resulting from an institutional designation change. The following four research questions guided the study:

1. How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?

2. How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?

3. What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?

4. How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?

The primary sources of data were faculty, staff, and administrators who had been employed at the institution for at least three years and volunteered to participate in this study. Within the institution, I identified three cohorts of individuals to interview and answer the research questions. Administrators, or those in senior level leadership positions, were recruited to provide information from a higher-level within the organization. It was also assumed that administrators were more involved in attaining the HSI designation as it related to the application and data collection process. Staff members, or those at the levels of coordinator and director who had more direct contact with students, were recruited to gain insights on the process as well as
implications for day-to-day interactions and programming with students. Faculty members, those whose primary role on campus is to conduct research and teach courses, were recruited to provide yet another perspective on the organizational change process.

The process of finding participants proved to be more challenging than I initially thought. Some individuals expressed interest in participating but did not have the required three years of employment to be eligible. Others responded to the recruitment emails stating that they did not feel they were knowledgeable enough about what it meant to be a Hispanic Serving Institution and thus declined to participate. Yet others simply stated that they were too busy or simply did not respond. This was very common among administrators. As there were fewer individuals who were considered administrators for the purpose of this study, their lack of participation posed an additional challenge in gaining a meaningful pool of participants. Throughout participant interviews, I learned that several individuals had limited knowledge of what the HSI designation meant and wanted to participate in the study to learn more.

Findings demonstrated that although the organization changed institutional designations, becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution, the change process was not a result of a progressive change in student demographics but rather a change in how the institution collected its student data. Consequently, many of the perceptions of the organizational change process and the organizational culture were skewed as many participants perceived the institution as already diverse. Therefore, identification of changes resulting from the newly acquired designation was difficult to identify because the designation was merely a formal title for a level of diversity that already existed.

Additionally, because the institution attained the HSI designation through different data collection techniques, there was not an intentional, ongoing change process that required
proactive strategic planning or inclusion of multiple stakeholders and taskforces at the institution. What resulted was an urgency to reach the designation threshold to be eligible for additional funding opportunities and confusion and lack of direction on next steps in the process. From participant accounts, HSIU attained the HSI designation in 2016. Since then, there has been minimal action towards understanding what that designation means for the institution beyond the ability to apply for additional funding.

In this chapter, I respond to each of the research questions and provide recommendations to HSIU that may be relevant to other emerging or newly designated HSIs. These recommendations may be particularly helpful to institutions with a similar student demographic and located in a similar region as HSIU whose pathway to becoming a HSI occurs at a much faster rate. I also discuss limitations that were faced in this study and provide implications for future research.

**How do faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutional designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution?**

One of the overarching themes regarding HSIU’s designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution was that the institution has always had a diverse student body. Participants who had been employed with the institution for upwards of 20 years remarked that there has always been an environment of diversity both at the institution and within the surrounding area. The location of the institution is in a racially and ethnically diverse area, which contributes to the diversity of its students. As a result, very little intentional recruitment had been done to increase the diversity of the student body. Since the institution and the area have always been diverse, for many, the designation was more of an affirmation of their diversity as opposed to something that they had to interpret and make meaning of. It simply “just is.”
Attaining the designation was simply a matter of reconfiguring how student demographic data were collected, providing students with an opportunity to update their race or ethnicity, and then recalculating the numbers. Once it was confirmed that the institution met the qualifications to be designated as a HSI, the institution coordinated institution-wide press releases and updates informing students and personnel of the new designation. The new designation was mentioned in regular correspondence from the university president and mentioned at departmental meetings and gatherings. However, moving beyond spreading awareness of the designation to understanding what the designation means for HSIU has yet to occur across the institution.

Due to the manner in which HSIU reached the HSI designation, there was no intentional push to recruit Hispanic/Latinx students, thus there was no opportunity for institution-wide engagement and involvement in becoming a HSI. This situation has resulted in a lack of intentional programming and an overall sense of uncertainty regarding what should be done specifically for Hispanic/Latinx students and how employees at the institution play a role in supporting the HSI designation. Many of the participants had not thought about what it meant to be a HSI aside from the federal definition. A few participants highlighted the difference between being a Hispanic-Enrolling and Hispanic-Serving Institution and trying to figure out which the institution wanted to be. However, for most participants, the designation had not been given much thought beyond simply awareness. While awareness of the designation was widely publicized by senior administrators, institution-wide involvement and input was limited to those directly involved in collecting the data to qualify for the designation.

Another factor in how faculty, staff, and administrators made meaning of the HSI designation was the lack of education on what the HSI designation meant beyond the definition, and what it meant within the context of the institution. Senior administrators, including the
president, made every effort to inform the institution about the new designation as a HSI once it was confirmed. However, to date there has been limited communication about it outside of the administrative ranks or those who work closely with administrators. Once the designation was announced, there was little articulation about what the designation meant, why it mattered, and the impact it would have on the institution. Some participants saw the designation as formalizing what they already knew regarding the diversity of the institution. Others knew that it would provide pathways for additional institutional funding. However, many did not recognize or understand how the designation could impact the work of their office or department. Because attaining the designation happened so quickly and involved very few personnel in the process, there has yet to be an institutional change process that engages the entire institution.

Overall, because HSIU has always been viewed as a diverse institution and one that is located in a diverse region, and because the process of achieving the HSI designation was simply reconfiguring how student demographic data were collected, employees at the institution have not truly been involved in the organizational change process. To a certain extent, the existing diversity has led some participants to believe that very little needs to be done because the student diversity is already present. Because there has been minimal involvement in the change process, or education on the HSI designation, employees have not had time to critically reflect on what the institution designation means for the institution beyond the numbers.

**How do faculty, staff, and administrators view their role in upholding the “serving” aspect of the HSI designation?**

For most of the participants, the institution has always been very diverse. As was previously mentioned, the process of becoming a HSI was relegated to a small group of administrators who evaluated how the institution was collecting demographic data from students. Changes in data collection provided students with an opportunity to update their race and
ethnicity information. Because much of this was happening behind the scenes, the organizational change process was relatively quick and uneventful, as opposed to one that involved various stakeholders across the institution.

For some participants this administrative process contributed to a lack of understanding of what being a HSI meant for the institution and its daily operations. Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) framework on organizational change details the importance of senior administrators, collaboration, robust design, staff development, and visible action when undergoing the change process. Senior administrators were highly involved in attaining the designation and spreading awareness once the designation was achieved. However, beyond these two steps, there were no visible plans to lead the institution through the change process. Much of the work had been isolated to individuals or small groups working through various processes. One administrator is hosting meetings with Hispanic/Latinx students to gain a better idea of their needs, another is in charge of a research taskforce charged with accumulating resources about the HSI designation that can be listed on a website for use by members of the institution to better educate themselves on the designation. The admissions office has used the designation as an opportunity to implement new initiatives to create more intentional and accommodating recruitment programs for Hispanic/Latinx students and their families. Aside from these small, isolated endeavors, others have yet to find their place in understanding and embracing the HSI designation. This lack of direction or vision of next steps has led to a sense of disconnect by members of the institution.

Some participants also commented on the diversity of the institution’s large Black/African American student population in addition to Hispanic/Latinx students. The percentages are very similar to each other, which has led to some cognitive dissonance for individuals who felt as though one group might receive more attention than another. This
concern can be connected to the lack of education that was provided to members of the
institution about the designation and what it means for HSIU specifically. Although the
institution is a HSI, it also qualifies as a Minority Serving Institution due to the diversity of the
students that it serves. In future stages of the ongoing change process this will need to be an area
that the institution addresses to ensure that it is able to serve Hispanic/Latinx students while also
meeting the needs of its overall diverse student body.

Another area of disconnect was the impact of the HSI designation on participants’
individual roles and offices. While participants were aware of and excited about the designation,
understanding how the designation should or could impact their work had not yet been identified.
Once again, this suggests that the institution is in the early stages of the organizational change
process and still organizing next steps around the designation. Because the institution had not yet
identified a way to educate various constituents of the meaning of the designation and how it
could impact their department, some of the participants had not yet determined how their offices
could positively impact Hispanic/Latinx student needs.

Because HSIU is a newly designated HSI and appears to be in the early stages of the
organizational change process, some participants had not yet reflected on how the designation
would impact and/or transform the long-term status of the institution. Some participants
suggested that the designation would not have an impact since the institution has always been
diverse; for these individuals nothing had actually changed. An underlying message, although
not explicitly stated, was that because the institution has never struggled for diversity, there was
not a need to implement changes or new initiatives. However, at the time of the study, the
institution had yet to ask Hispanic/Latinx students about their potential needs or level of
satisfaction at the institution. Other participants expressed hope that the designation would lead
to more institutional support for Hispanic/Latinx student initiatives, more hiring of Hispanic/Latinx staff and especially faculty to match the demographics of the students, and more intentionality and less fear in programming to diverse groups of students. Several participants expressed a shared belief that the designation would allow them to implement initiatives they had previously advocated for but did not have the leverage to accomplish.

Beyond student organizations and resources already in place for first-generation and underrepresented student groups, there did not appear to be any resources specifically set aside to assist with Hispanic/Latinx students. Given the diversity of underrepresented groups at the institution, many of the resources are allocated to impact the largest group of students which includes underrepresented students and first-generation students. Based on the institution’s current standing in the change process, it is uncertain if this the institution will further explore, make adjustments to, or simply expand to continue to meet the needs of its overall diverse student population.

Additionally, some participants acknowledged the nuance between being Hispanic-enrolling and Hispanic-serving. One of the problematic features of the designation is that it is driven by enrollment numbers. This leads to ambiguity in what it means to “serve” Hispanic/Latinx students. Only a couple of participants discussed this notion of ‘serving’ as compared to ‘enrolling’ Hispanic/Latinx students. Because the institution had not yet articulated a clear vision of enacting the HSI designation beyond simply awareness, it is unclear which direction the institution will pursue.

During the interviews, I also observed the unequal distribution of work related to programming and educating about the designation as compared to those who were eligible to apply for various federal grants. Participants frequently identified the Division of Student Affairs
as a source of providing education symposiums about the HSI designation and providing programming and services to assist with Hispanic/Latinx student initiatives. Among participant interviews, those located in the Division of Student Affairs appeared to have the most knowledge of the designation and resources currently available at the institution. However, it appeared as though only faculty members were being encouraged to apply for federal grants. In participant interviews, some faculty members stated that the designation had had no impact on how they carried out their roles, and yet they were seeking out opportunities to apply for available grants as a means of additional funding. This is problematic because it means that there are individuals who are applying for funding without knowing the intent of the designation, why it was created, or how it could best impact the students in their classrooms.

The HSI designation is very vague in how it defines “serving” Hispanic/Latinx students. HSIU will need to conduct a needs assessment of its students to better identify ways for funding to have the most significant impact on the institution’s overall success. The institution also needs to provide more opportunities for faculty members to engage in educational seminars about the HSI designation so that they have a better understanding of the intention what the designation means for the institution. As some faculty will be eligible to apply for various grant opportunities, knowledge of the designation and the demographic of students the grants are designed to serve will be vital to ensure that funding requests are supporting the best interests of the institution.

**What is the perception of the culture of the institution as it pertains to being a HSI?**

Faculty, staff, and administrators had different perceptions of how the designation was perceived on campus by various stakeholders. Perceptions of how administrators viewed the designation included the idea that it was primarily about the public relations aspect of the
designation for the institution. Some participants stated that they believed administrators were primarily focused on the additional exposure of the designation for the institution. The designation would allow the institution to recruit additional students, in particular international students from Latin American countries, and be seen as an alternative school choice to the other HSI in the area. Participants also stated that administrators were motivated by the financial benefits of the designation and the ability to apply for federal grants. My overall impression from participants was that administrators perceived the designation based solely on numbers, image, and status.

Perceptions of the HSI designation by staff members was varied with some stating that they did not think that staff members were aware or even cared about it, while others suggested that staff members embraced the designation and regularly thought about programming that could be implemented. Participants also viewed staff members as the main curators of programs related to educating other employees about the HSI designation. Staff members, particularly those in the Division of Student Affairs or in student services offices, appeared to have the most knowledge of the designation, especially related to student needs and student success. Of the three participant groups, staff members were the only ones who seemed to have students’ needs at the forefront of the discussion.

Faculty members were either unaware or did not understand how the designation impacted their work in the classroom. For many faculty members, their classrooms have always been diverse, so they indicated that they would continue to teach in the same manner as before the designation. Additionally, if their area of research was not related to Hispanic or Latin American history, faculty members did not see a connection between the institution’s designation and their faculty role. Those faculty who had a more vested interest in the
designation self-identified as Hispanic/Latinx themselves or were in an academic unit that was eligible to apply for federal grants. Some faculty also saw the HSI designation as an opportunity to call attention to the lack of diversity among the faculty that mirrored the student demographics. For these faculty, they perceived the HSI designation as providing them leverage to advocate for increased recruitment and retention of diverse faculty.

Participants all perceived the culture as being very diverse with regards to students, but lacking in diversity among faculty and administrators. Participants described the culture as bureaucratic and a place where you do not want to ‘rock the boat.’ The institution was also described as ever-changing and still trying to develop an identity. The idea of still developing an identity can be attributed to external influences of the state in relation to performance-based funding.

When asked to describe how Hispanic/Latinx students are represented on campus, many participants struggled to articulate anything significant beyond the fact that they see them on campus, that there are cultural-based student organizations, or that students are enrolled in their courses. I found this to be somewhat troublesome. If an institution is seeking a designation that provides federal funds to assist with services to Hispanic/Latinx students, faculty, staff, and administrators should know more about their students and students’ needs so that they can use the funds for appropriate initiatives. Essentially, institutional representatives are requesting funds to implement programs without having done an adequate needs-assessment of the students they are attempting to serve.

The perceptions of the institutional culture varied widely based on participants’ roles within the institution. As a HSI, the institution has not fully formed an identity around the designation and its specific meaning. As the institution continues to go through the
organizational change process, it will have an opportunity to explore what the HSI designation signifies and how members of the campus community can continue to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

**How have faculty, staff, and administrators experienced the change process as it relates to becoming a HSI?**

Based on participant interviews and a review of institutional documents, there was not a significant change in student demographics that initiated the change process. Participants were in agreement that the institution has always been viewed as diverse with regard to student demographics. The geographic region was also seen as a factor in contributing to the diversity of the institution. Because of this, the institution had not undergone a true intentional change process, leading up to or resulting from the designation change.

Because the institution has always been seen as diverse, implementation of programs and services to serve Hispanic/Latinx students has been slow to occur. Attaining the HSI designation formalized what was already known or assumed by most participants. Beyond attaining the designation and spreading awareness of it, next steps of how the HSI designation will impact the institution are still in development.

The most common response by participants regarding the designation change included the notion that they were aware of it, but it did not directly affect or change the work they were doing in their role. Unless participants were in a position to apply for federal grants, it was difficult for many to see how the designation truly affected them. Participants in positions that dealt with recruitment of prospective students said that the designation provided them with the legitimacy to carry out initiatives they previously wanted to implement. Others expressed hope that the designation would lead to hiring more diverse employees or providing leverage needed to implement new programs to serve Hispanic/Latinx students.
There was a great deal of publicity leading up to and at the time of securing the designation; however there has not been an institution-wide dialogue regarding the implications of the designation beyond additional funding. Many participants shared excitement about the designation and what it meant for the institution but had not yet identified how it would impact the institution or their specific roles. In the ongoing change process, the designation will provide an opportunity for offices to review their policies and procedures to see if there are initiatives or services that could be implemented or enhanced to continue to serve Hispanic/Latinx students.

**Connection to Conceptual Frameworks**

Kuh and Whitt’s (1988) and Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) theories were utilized to frame this study. Table 4 shows the connection between Kuh & Whitt’s framework and HSIU. The diversity of the external environment was a significant contributor to the diversity of the institution. Although the institution was recently granted the HSI designation, participants acknowledged that the diversity within the institution has always been present, largely due to the geographic location and the diversity of the region. Seeking out the designation allowed the institution to pursue alternative funding opportunities while also providing the institution with increased marketability. The relationship between the institution and the external environment varied based on the campus. While the main campus seemed to have a limited relationship with the surrounding community, other campuses were fully imbedded within the surrounding community including partnerships with local state colleges or nearby companies. The perception of the culture varied by employees, however all agreed that the institution valued diversity within its students, faculty, and staff. The institution began as a largely commuter campus which has recently begun to invest more resources in on-campus housing and providing more on campus events and opportunities to further engage students. This along with attaining the HSI
designation has led to more conversations regarding student engagement at the institution. The large size of the institution makes it difficult for information to be distributed across the institution resulting in silos or subcultures. Participants seemed to stick to their areas or departments within the institution with minimal intentional collaboration across disciplines or functional areas. Senior administrators have the greatest influence within the institution, with most change occurring from the top-down.

Table 4

*Kuh & Whitt (1988) Organizational Culture Framework*

| External Environment | • Changing student demographics  
| | • Statewide policies; performance-based funding metrics  
| | • Perceive surrounding community as very diverse  
| | • Relationship between the institution and the community varies based on the campus and participants role at institution  
| The Institution | • Carnegie Classification: Doctoral Granting Higher Research Institution  
| | • Two-thirds of faculty are full-time  
| | • Perceptions of culture vary by employees but all agree that the institution is very diverse  
| Subcultures | • Culture perceived differently by faculty, staff, and administrators  
| | • Culture varied by campus  
| | • Large organizational size led to feelings of being siloed  
| Individual Actors | • Senior administrators have the greatest influence within institution  
| | • Most change is facilitated from the top-down  

Kezar and Eckel’s (2002b) framework was utilized to understand the organizational change that was occurring at HSIU. Senior administrators were heavily involved in efforts to achieve the HSI designation. Once it was attained, a large campaign was implemented to market the designation and spread awareness across the institution. However, because the change
process in attaining the designation happened very quickly and with minimal involvement from campus representatives, there was not a widespread effort to engage members of the institution in the change process. Additionally, next steps in the change process have yet to be determined by the institution. Aside from ability to pursue additional funding opportunities, a vision of what is next has yet to be determined. Similar to the need for a vision is the need for staff development. While all participants were aware that the institution is now a HSI, very few knew what that meant within the context of the institution and what impact the designation would have within their roles. Additionally, the institution has not yet decided if it wants to create a position for an individual whose primary role is to work on HSI initiatives. Instead, these duties are assigned to various individuals at the institution. Creating a position for someone to work primarily on HSI initiatives would help to streamline the process and create a point of contact on all matters related to the designation that people could contact. More educational trainings should be implemented across the institution to help move the institution from spreading awareness for the designation towards action in the form of programs and resources.


Table 5

Kezar & Eckel (2002b) Five Core Change Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Administrative Support</th>
<th>President and senior administrators were instrumental in achieving the HSI designation and promoting it once it was attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Design</td>
<td>The change process was facilitated by a small group of individuals, thus the collaborative process was limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust Design</td>
<td>Institution is early in the change process, and details regarding next steps have not been clearly defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>Aside from awareness of designation, ongoing education is limited and isolated to small areas within the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible Action</td>
<td>Aside from awareness of designation, no clear articulation of ongoing change process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations for Practice

Senior administrative support was pivotal in spreading awareness of the HSI designation. From the very beginning, HSU had support for attaining the HSI designation from the university president and other senior administrators. Throughout the process of achieving the designation, there were numerous press releases and announcements at various university events. This contributed to the widespread knowledge of the new designation. However, because attaining the designation occurred with little intervention and was done relatively quickly, little time was spent developing a strategic plan or vision for the organizational change process. While HSU was a unique case in regards to how quickly they were able to recalibrate their demographic data collection process, recommendations for institutions seeking this designation include involving more individuals in the organizational change process and providing a clear framework of next
steps after the designation is achieved. For successful organizational change to occur, a clear roadmap is necessary to maintain buy-in and engagement in the ongoing change process.

Similarly, it is important for institutions undergoing a designation change to a HSI to adequately educate personnel on what the designation means for the institution and how it can impact the work people are doing. In speaking with participants, many were unable to make a connection of how the designation could or should impact their work. This was largely due to a lack of knowledge of what the designation meant for the institution aside from enrollment numbers. Those that were the most aware of or invested in the designation and its ramifications tended to identify as Hispanic/Latinx. It is important for the HSI designation to not just be the sole interest of those who identify as Hispanic/Latinx. Institutions must ensure that they are educating their employees and providing a plan of action that shows the value of the designation and the impact that each area of the institution can make within their roles.

Along with aiding individuals in seeing how the designation affects their areas at the institution, it is also important to educate individuals about what a Hispanic Serving Institution is and provide educational sessions on the types of Hispanic/Latinx students that are at their specific institutions. Institutions need to bring students into the conversation to ask them about their experiences within the institution, and resources they feel that they need to be successful. If institutions are not including Hispanic/Latinx students in the organizational change process, then the grants that they are applying to are most likely do not have student needs at the forefront. In order to move beyond awareness to action, members of the institution need to have a thorough understanding of the students they serve and the needs and resources they desire.

Another recommendation for institutions is to designate a person to oversee HSI initiatives. Because there was no one in charge of leading initiatives before and after gaining the
HSI designation, it was another ‘duty as assigned’ for those who were directly involved. Although some of the senior administrators suggested that the process had been collaborative, it was apparent after speaking with other faculty and staff members that information about after-designation actions resided in silos and were only known if individuals were connected to administrators who shared this information. In the absence of this connection, individuals were unaware of initiatives that were occurring. Hiring an individual to oversee HSI initiatives would provide more consistency and the added benefit of having someone who could be solely focused on all initiatives related to the HSI designation.

Smaller changes that were implemented at HSIU that should be implemented at other HSIs or emerging HSIs are the incorporation of bilingual websites, or websites with heavy traffic such as the admissions office, that provide information in English and Spanish. Institutions should also develop newsletters were they discuss updates regarding the designation, grants that have been applied for, or other useful information. And bilingual admissions counselor. The admissions office at HSIU incorporated bilingual admissions counselors within their offices and received immediate positive responses from students and their family members who now felt more included in the admissions process.

Because any institution can become a HSI regardless of their original mission and purpose, it is important for institutions seeking to become a HSI to reflect on what becoming a HSI means for them, and how it will affect the work that is done. Institutions may need to think more critically about what diversity at their institution looks like as a HSI, and what serving students and not simply enrolling student’s means for the institution and its daily operations.
Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the perceptions of organizational culture and change at HSIs would provide further insights on an institutional type that is rapidly growing. This study could be replicated at institutions that have had the designation for a longer period of time or emerging HSIs that are just beginning the organizational change process. Although HSIU achieved the designation in 2016, it is still in the early stages of the organizational change process. HSIU is just now beginning to identify the needs of its students and has only recently started applying for federal grants. Further studies should look at institutions that have had the designation for at least five years and/or applied for and secured grant funding.

Another recommendation for future research would be to study emerging HSIs. Studying emerging HSIs would allow the researcher to analyze what practices the institution is utilizing to recruit more students or how the institution is engaging the campus community in the organizational change process. In studying emerging HSIs, institutions may fall into two categories, those that use the emerging HSI designation proactively to assess their institutions needs and those that begin collecting this data after achieving the HSI designation. This information may benefit institutions in understanding what steps should be considered when undergoing the organizational change process as well as best practices in involving the entire institution. Studying institutions that have had the designation for a longer period of time may also yield results regarding what programs were implemented with the use of federal funding.

Additionally, it would be valuable to examine institutions that are located in regions where there has been a rapid population change as well as those in areas where there has been a slow but steady population change. Because HSIU became a HSI very quickly after changing its methods for reporting student demographic data, its organizational change process prior to
securing the designation was very brief compared to an institution whose Hispanic/Latinx student enrollment numbers increased slowly prior to qualifying for the HSI designation. Additionally, for HSIU, the diversity in the surrounding area had always been present, so there was not a perceived change in the diversity of the students. Studying institutions where the changing demographics in the surrounding area are contributing to the changing demographics within the institution would provide rich data on not only the organizational change process, but the organizational culture in relation to the external environment.

Future researchers could examine emerging HSIs to observe the potential change process as it is occurring. A longitudinal study could be conducted to observe an institution at various stages in the change process. This could provide insights regarding best practices for other institutions seeking the HSI designation. HSIU is a large, public doctoral-granting institution, and it was apparent that its size contributed to how information was disseminated and the lack of involvement of members of the institution within the change process. Future research could study smaller institutions where communication throughout the institution is more streamlined or where more collaborative efforts are common and supported. Future studies should also examine the role of motivation in seeking the designation of HSI, especially related to an institution’s desire for additional funds. As previously noted, the desire for additional funding was a strong motivator for HSIU. However, marketability was also a motivator as it increased the desirability of the institution to potential students in the surrounding area as well as international students.

Future qualitative studies could include multiple-site case studies in which several institutions that have recently undergone the institutional designation process are explored. Observations may include commonalities, differences, and best practices. Assessing multiple institutions of different types and sizes would provide additional insights regarding similarities
and differences which could lead to further development of best methods or practices. As the number of HSIs and emerging HSIs increases every year, this data could be instrumental in assisting institutions undergoing the organizational change process.

Studies should also continue to focus on perceptions of faculty, staff, and administrators. These individuals play key roles in providing programming and services for Hispanic/Latinx students. Understanding their perceptions of the change process could influence future programs. Institutions more diverse faculty and staff could also be compared with institutions that have less faculty and staff diversity. This could provide information as to whether or not the diversity of faculty and staff impacts organizational change efforts. Additionally, how institutions create buy-in among employees throughout the change process would be a worthwhile avenue of study.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to engage participants to reflect on the change process as a way to provide best practices for other institutions. Reflections from employees of an institution that has undergone or is in the process of the organizational change process resulting from the HSI designation would provide information on how it was perceived and efforts that could be implemented to improve the change process.

**Limitations**

This case study focused on one Hispanic Serving Institution and its faculty, staff, and administrators. One limiting factor was the location of the institution. The institution is located in a region that is fairly diverse, and much of the surrounding diversity is mirrored in the students who attend the institution. As a result, the perception of institutional change occurring was not the consensus among participants. Student demographics did not change; instead it was the way the institution collected demographic data from students which resulted in the institution
achieving the HSI designation. This situation limited the amount of change that actually occurred prior to qualifying for the HSI designation.

Participant criteria limited participation to those employees who had been employed at the institution for at least three years. This criterion was implemented to recruit participants who had been employed at HSIU throughout the change process and would be able to provide thorough insights and observations. However, because the institution was already diverse, time at the institution did not appear to be a factor in how participants perceived the organizational change process.

One limitation was the willingness and availability of potential participants. Faculty, staff, and administrators were the sole participants of this study. The rate of response was much slower than I anticipated. Some senior-level administrators declined to participate due to their busy schedules. As the number of participants who were considered administrators was already small, this provided an additional limitation in having enough data to analyze. Additionally, some potential participants declined to participate upon receiving the recruitment email; they expressed feelings that they did not know enough about the HSI designation. This information would have still been valuable because it would have provided more information regarding awareness of the designation and the organizational change process.

Another limitation was my position as an outsider. While I am currently employed at an institution in the same state as HSIU with a similar student demographic and shared knowledge of various experiences, I was still considered an outsider and thus did not have many internal connections with participants who met the participation criteria. This could have impacted the number of people who were able to participate in the study. Additionally, this may have added to participants’ hesitation to speak to me about the institution.
Conclusion

The purpose of this single institution case study was to explore how faculty, staff, and administrators perceived the organizational change process and organizational culture at a Hispanic Serving Institution. Participants shared their experiences working at the institution as a newly designated HSI. Throughout the study, participants regularly remarked about the diversity of the institution and the region. Participants were aware of the new designation as an HIS; however, knowledge of next steps in the organizational change process was limited. Upon recognition of how close the institution was to qualifying for the designation, there was a concerted effort among administrators to better capture student demographic data. Yet, upon securing the designation, knowledge of next steps appeared to be a work in progress. The findings of this study show the importance of the organizational change process being planned and implemented with a clear vision. This study also demonstrates how varied the timing of the change process can be, with some portions taking months and others, such as implementation, taking years.

At institutions undergoing the change process resulting from student demographic shifts or designation changes, it is important to have clear actionable steps in place beyond awareness of the designation. In this case study, the institution spent a great deal of time spreading awareness to individuals at the institution about the new designation type. However, communication about next steps was not specifically articulated and is still being developed and implemented.

There are hundreds of institutions in the United States that will soon qualify as HSIs. Work done at institutions like HSIU will provide valuable insights for future HSIs pursuing the organizational change process and seeking to identify what the designation means for their
institution. It is my hope that this study and others like it will continue to add to the literature on Hispanic Serving Institutions and provide much needed insight on this fast growing institutional type.
REFERENCES


Subject: Selected to Participate: Hispanic Serving Institution Designation

Dear <Name>,

My name is Tava Bingham and I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Alabama working toward an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration. To fulfill the requirements of the program, I am currently conducting research for my dissertation about perceptions of organizational culture and organizational change by faculty, staff and administrators at a Hispanic Serving Institution.

You have been identified as a faculty, staff, or administrator who has possible insight on the institutions Hispanic Serving Institution status.

I write this message to request your participation in an interview to collect data for this study. Your participation is optional and a copy of the participant’s consent form is attached to clearly outline the expectations of participants. There is no obligation on your part to participate and all responses will be kept completely confidential. The only requirements to participate in the study is that the participant must have been employed at HSIU for a minimum of three years.

If you would like to participate in this study or have additional questions about this study or the data collection process, please feel free to contact me by email at tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Tava M. Bingham
APPENDIX B
REMINDER EMAIL

Dear <Name>,

I previously reached out to you requesting your participation in my dissertation study on HSIU’s institutional status as a Hispanic Serving Institution. I would very much like to speak with you regarding your perceptions of the organizational designation as a university employee. If this is something you would be interested in participating in or you have additional questions, please email be at tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Tava M. Bingham
APPENDIX C
CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION

Dear <Name>,

I’m excited that you are interested in participating in this study! Please review the attached Participant Consent form which contains more information about the study and will request your decision to participate or not participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return via email to tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu. Additionally, please use the following link to provide your availability to select a time for the interview: http://bit.ly/2BUJBs4

If you have any questions at any point, please let me know.

Kindly,
APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project: Perceptions of Organizational Culture and Organizational Change at a Hispanic Serving Institution

Time of Interview: ______________
Date: _________________________ Place: _________________________
Interviewer: _________________________ Interviewee: _________________________

Interview Procedure
You are being asked to participate in a study investigating campus culture and organizational change at a Hispanic Serving Institutions. The purpose of this study is to better understand how faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of the institutions HSI designation and how it impacts the organizational culture. During this interview you will be asked to respond to several open-ended questions. You may choose to not answer any or all of the questions. This procedure will involve recording the interview and transcribing it verbatim. Your results will be confidential, and you will not be identified individually.

Informed Consent
Please sign the informed consent form signaling your willingness to participate. If participating via Zoom or phone, please sign the consent form and email to tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu prior to participating in the interview.
Questions

1. How long have you been employed with the university?
2. What is your position and title?
3. In what office do you work?
4. How would you define a Hispanic Serving Institution?
5. Are you aware that your institution is designated as a HSI?
6. How does your institution’s status as a HSI impact the work you do in your office?
7. How does your institution’s status as a HSI impact the work done at the institution?
8. Have the demographics of the student body changed during your time at the university? If so how?
9. Do you believe the designation as a HSI is perceived differently between faculty, staff, and administrators?
10. How would you describe the campus culture to a prospective student? To a prospective employee?
11. In what ways are Hispanic/Latinx students represented on campus?
12. How have campus policies and programs been implemented to ensure the success of Hispanic/Latinx students?
13. How are campus resources allocated to assist Hispanic/Latinx student success?
14. What services on campus are specifically designed for Hispanic/Latinx students?

Closing

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I appreciate you taking the time to do so. I may contact you in the future for the purpose of conducting a follow up interview. Again, let me reassure you the confidentiality of your responses. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu.
APPENDIX E
THANK YOU EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear <Name>,

Thank you so much for participating in my dissertation study! I greatly enjoyed our conversation and the insight you provided. Attached is the final transcript for your review. Please review it at your convenience and let me know if you have any questions or edits you would like me to make.

Please reach out to me if I can ever be of assistance.

Kindly,
APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILE

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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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<td>Gwendolyn Watkins</td>
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<td>Dana Thompson</td>
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<td>Dr. Phillip Newland</td>
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APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
Individual’s Consent to be in a Research Study

You are being asked to be in a research study. This study is called “Perceptions of Organizational Culture and Organizational Change at a Hispanic Serving Institution”. This study is being done by Tava M. Bingham, who is a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration at the University of Alabama. Her work is being supervised by Dr. Karri Holley, a professor of Higher Education Administration at the University of Alabama.

What is this study about?
The purpose of this study is to better understand how faculty, staff, and administrators perceive organizational change that has taken place at their institution as well as their perceptions of their institutions organizational culture.

Why is this study important—What good will the results do?
While much research has been conducted on the topics of organizational culture and organizational change, little research has been conducted to understand how employee groups within higher education institutions perceive organizational culture or organizational change that occurs at their institutions. This study seeks to provide insight on how faculty, staff, and administrators make meaning of their institutions culture as well as their interpretations of perceived change.

Why have I been asked to take part in this study?
You have been asked to participate in this study due to your role as a faculty, staff, or administrator who has been employed at the university for at least one full year.

How many other people will be in this study?
A number of faculty, staff, and administrators have been invited to participate in this study. The researcher hopes to interview approximately twenty-five faculty, staff, and administrators for the study.

What will I be asked to do in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to provide your honest insights during the interview. The interview will be recorded so that it may be utilized in future data analysis.

**How much time will I spend being in this study?**
The interview should last about 45-60 minutes, depending on how much information about your experiences you choose to share.

**Will being in this study cost me anything?**
There is no financial cost to you or the institution for participating in this study.

**Will I be compensated for being in this study?**
You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**What are the risks (problems or dangers) from being in this study?**
As a participant this study poses no physical, mental, or emotional risks to you. Information that you share will be kept confidential.

**What are the benefits of being in this study?**
There are no direct benefits, however your insights will provide valuable information on perceptions of organizational culture and change and will help to contribute to the growing research on the subject.

**How will my confidentiality/privacy be protected?**
The only place where your name appears in connection with this study is on this informed consent. The consent forms will be kept in a locked file drawer. No names will be used during the data collection. Your name will be kept confidential by assigning a pseudonym or a name of the participants choosing. Data collected will be stored in a locked drawer with limited access and all files stored on the principle investigators computer will be encrypted.

**What are the alternatives to being in this study?**
The only alternative is not to participate.

**What are my rights as a participant?**
Being in this study is totally voluntary. It is your free choice. You may choose not to be in it at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. However, if you stop the interview, you will not receive the gift card. Not participating or stopping participation will have no effect on your relationships with the University of Alabama.

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board is a committee that looks out for the ethical treatment of people in research studies. They may review the study records if they wish. This is to be sure that people in research studies are being treated fairly and that the study is being carried out as planned.

**Who do I call if I have questions or problems?**
If you have questions about this study right now, please ask them. If you have questions later on, please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Karri Holley, Associate Professor of Higher Education.
Administration, at (205) 3448-7825 or by email at kaholley@ua.edu, or the primary investigator, Tava M. Bingham, at (804) 943-4245 or by email at tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu. If you have questions or complaints about your rights as a research participant you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of the University at 205-348-8461.

I have read this consent form. This study has been explained to me. I understand what I will be asked to do. I have had a chance to ask questions. I freely agree to take part in it. I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

__________________________________________
Signature of Research Participant            Date

__________________________________________
Signature of Investigator                  Date

*If participating via Skype, please scan and email the signed consent form to tmbingham@crimson.ua.edu prior to the interview date.

**Audio Recording Consent**

The individual qualitative interview will be audio recorded for research purposes to transcribe for further analysis. These recordings will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room that is only accessible by the principle investigator. Audio files will be kept for no longer than one year and will be destroyed upon lapse of that time. If you do not agree to be audio recorded, the principle investigator will type notes of the interview.

I understand that part of my participation in this research study will be audio recorded and I give my permission to the principle investigator to record the interview.

☐ Yes, I consent to be audio recorded for this study.

☐ No, I do NOT consent to being audio recorded for this study.
APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

The University of Alabama
Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development
Office for Research Compliance

January 25, 2018

Tava Bingham
College of Education
Box 870102

Re: IRB#: 18-OR-026 "Organizational Culture and Organizational Change at a Hispanic Serving Institution"

Dear Tava Bingham:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

Your approval will expire on January 24, 2019. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent form to provide to your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Enrique T. Myles, MSM, CMM, CCP
Director & Research Compliance Officer

150 Rose Administration Building | Box 870111 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0111
205-348-8468 | Fax 205-348-2189 | Toll Free 1-877-829-3006

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