Benefits of Being a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)

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The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

I. What is an HSI – Federal Definition

Official designation as an HSI occurs through the Department of Education (see http://www.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/index.html) as the first stage of application for a Title V grant under the Higher Education Act (Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Grant). Meeting the enrollment qualification (25% Hispanic FTE undergraduate enrollment) ought to also qualify an institution as a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) and make the institution eligible for MSI programs. However, not every agency with an MSI program is careful about including HSIs on the list, reverting instead to a 50% minority student FTE undergraduate enrollment criteria for non-HBCUs. The Department of Defense took this route this year in one of its programs.

II. Benefits of Becoming an HSI

A. Current HSI grant programs

1. Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Grant (Title V, Part A), administered by the Department of Education. Approximately $100M appropriated for FY 2012. Grants are for five years, either individual HSI grants averaging around $400,000 per year or cooperative grants to a consortium of institutions averaging $600,000 per year. For more details, see http://www.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/index.html.
2. Promoting Post Baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (Title V, Part B), administered by the Department of Education. Approximately $20M available for FY 2012 to support graduate education at HSIs. See http://www.ed.gov/programs/ppoha/index.html for details.
3. Higher Education Program: Hispanic-Serving Institution Education Grants Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture. Approximately $9M available in FY 2012. Grants can be up to $500,000, food science and agriculture focus. See http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1094. Additional programs are in development for Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities defined in the 2008 reauthorization of the Farm Bill.
4. Student Aid and Financial Responsibility Act: authorized in 2010 as part of Health Care reform bill, essentially continues the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) funding of 2007-8 and provided $100M per year for the next ten years in competitive grants to HSIs to support STEM education and two-year/four-year institution collaboration. See first link above for more information.

B. Additional programs authorized but not currently funded

1. Department of Defense MSI grants, de-funded in FY 2006.
2. Department of Energy, authorized in Energy Act of 2005, but no money appropriated for the program.
3. Housing and Urban Development, HSIs Assisting Community (HSIAC), de-funded in 2011.

C. HACU continues to advocate for additional programs and several are included in pending legislation:

1. HSI set-aside program pending in NSF reauthorization legislation; NSF still studying how best to include HSIs, seems reluctant to set up a separate HSI program.
2. Workforce Investment Act (WIA): HACU is pushing for a job training program at HSIs to meet the unemployment or underemployment needs of Hispanic workers.

To date, over $2 billion have been awarded to HSIs through the current grant programs mentioned above (including the currently un-funded DoD program.)