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The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the undersigned organizations we urge you to establish a President's Board of Advisors on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The board would advise you and federal agencies on effective approaches to ensure equity of federal resources to the 572 HSIs and 5.5 million students they educate and serve nationwide.

HSIs represent and serve the largest and fastest-growing segment of higher education institutions that educate historically underserved populations. Since the 1994-95 school year, the number of HSIs has more than tripled from 189 in a handful of states to 572 across 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in the 2021-22 academic year. This significant growth has been driven by the rapid increase of Hispanic enrollment in the last three decades. Remarkably, HSIs now educate 67% of the nation's 4 million Hispanic college students.

HSIs are a microcosm of America's diversity. In 2021, in addition to two thirds of Hispanic undergraduates, HSIs also educated one of every four Black or African American, two of every five Asian American, one of every four American Indian and Alaska Native, and one of every three Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander undergraduate students. Furthermore, 30% of all Pell Grant recipients were enrolled in HSIs, and these institutions awarded one out of every five STEM degrees, even though they make up only 15% of all postsecondary degree-granting institutions. HSIs are pivotal in training the next generation of highly qualified workers essential for our STEM-centric economy, where the majority of new entrants into the workforce are Hispanic.

Regrettably, HSIs and Hispanics remain excluded from participation in numerous federal capacity-building funding opportunities. This exclusion results from either federal statutes and regulations that do not explicitly recognize HSIs, or federal agencies failing to engage and guide them to participate. This lack of resources places HSIs at a significant competitive disadvantage compared to better-endowed institutions.

To address these disparities and ensure a bright future for our diverse student body population, we propose the following actions:

- Appoint a President's Board of Advisors on HSIs (the Board) to advise you and federal agencies about effective strategies and resources to ensure equity of federal resources for the 572 HSIs and their 5.5 million students.
- Ensure the Board includes presidents/chancellors of both HSIs and emerging HSIs, as well as the chair of HACU's governing board. The Office of the Secretary of Education should staff the Board, and it should report to both the Secretary and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council.
- Direct international education and outreach agencies to earmark funds and technical assistance for HSIs, enabling them to collaborate with institutions abroad, especially in Spanish-speaking countries, and promoting international education and facilitating academic, scientific, and cultural exchanges.

I look forward to continuing to work together to champion Hispanic success in higher education. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at antonio.flores@hacu.net or at 210-576-3214.

Respectfully,

Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

[List of Organizations]

cc: The Honorable Miguel Cardona U.S. Secretary of Education
Neera Tanden, Director of the Domestic Policy Council