

# Rise, Teach, Learn - Season 4 Episode 6

---

## HSI Impacts & Initiatives

00:02

Welcome to the Rise Teach Learn podcast. I am Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Director of Faculty Development at Chico State. And we are happy to make this resource available to our campus community and beyond. The podcast is hosted by Dr. Jamie Linn Gunderson. And she will engage in timely conversations with faculty, staff, and students and give you a taste of the Chico experience. Subscribe to our podcasts and explore the many resources available on our website. Thank you for listening.

00:33

Hello, and welcome to rise teach learn. I'm your host Jamie Gunderson. In this episode, we explore what it means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution. I'd like to start by welcoming this episode's guest Dr. Chiara Ferrari, our Director of Faculty Development, and I'll allow our other guests to introduce themselves so you can become familiar with their voices.

00:55

So my name is Teresita Curiel, I am the director of Latinx Equity and Success. I'm also a Chico alum and longtime practitioner at campus.

01:06

My name is Joseph Morales, I serve as Chief Diversity Officer here at Chico State.

01:11

Thank you, Joseph and Teresita, for being part of this conversation. Chiara, I want to start with you. We were very intentional about devoting an episode of the podcast to what it means to be an HSI, specifically for Chico State. So, can you talk us through kind of the why behind that decision?

01:33

So I would say that there are a couple of reasons. One is that this year, it's not the first time that we have an initiative that puts together sort of conversations about HSI and faculty development. But it's the first time that we're offering a professional development initiative on the meaning of HSI across divisions and across you know, it's not only for faculty, it's for administrators it's for, for staff, it's for students, I believe that we do have a few students also come in. So, one reason was to pair this initiative with the podcast. The other reason is that since the beginning of the year, we do have a Chief Diversity Officer, a Chief Diversity Officer whose expertise and work has been related to HSI and so it just seemed a good way not only to introduce him, but to introduce the work that he's been doing. And probably a third reason is that I don't know how many people on campus actually hear these conversations or actually know about what the meaning of being a Hispanic serving institution is. And we will be discussing this throughout the episode, but also the difference between enrolling Hispanic students and serving Hispanic students. And so, another goal is to really have a conversation that, in a

way, unpacks some of, you know, this idea of servingness, what what is servingness? How do we serve our students? And how do we know that what we're doing is actually impactful?

03:14

It's interesting that we are introducing the campus to the work when Teresita has been doing it. What I'm saying is, there's like a disconnect there, of some of some sort right, it uncovers this, something has not been connecting.

03:31

You know, I was appointed into this position in 2015, the fall of 2015. And when I was appointed, we were already an HSI, our student demographics were already past the 25% threshold. That is, you know, the basis for the definition. However, I've been on campus for over 28 years. And it speaks to what it means to serve students and to serve in particular, Hispanic Latino students. For 28 years, I've been creating opportunities for underserved students to achieve higher ed or to get into institutions of their choice to make sure that they're successful in their experience and to hopefully get them to complete, graduate and go on to fulfilling careers.

04:18

So prior and you know, and Dr. Morales, thank you for pointing that out the disconnect, if you will, you know, but I'm not alone in this work, right. You know, there are programs and people on this campus that for decades, some of the programs that have existed at Chico State for over 50 years, such as the Educational Opportunity Program, understand what it means to be responsive to underserved students and to serve them effectively. And to be able to substantiate their servingness with actual data that demonstrates that they're indeed effective in their practice. But you know, now fast forward in 2015 I think the institution, we had placed a couple of goals in in a variety of enrollment, strategic plans and diversity plans, but Chico State and many institutions across California and perhaps maybe the nation, saw a huge influx of Hispanic Latino students during that time, you know, 2015, 2016, 2017. And, you know, and we were seeing this incredible growth, and lo and behold, you know, we became an HSI. And we weren't really prepared in that we didn't fully understand what that meant to the institution, what it meant to leadership, what it meant to faculty, what it meant to the experiences in a classroom, what it meant to students in particular. I tried to center the student always in the HSI conversation, not so much the institution, I center the student first and then the institution. Obviously, the institution is important to be able to enact, you know, our practices and structures, making sure that they're, indeed ready for the servingness part. But yeah, it's people and programs on this campus who have been doing this for a long time, not under the HSI specific umbrella, but under the servingness to underserved students. So again, 2015, we became a Hispanic serving institution, 2016, we became eligible for our first HSI grant. And that has been a game changer on campus with the infusion of so many resources from the federal government, we can better enact this work. But we also need to be able to enact this work without the federal resources in support of who we have at Chico State today.

06:45

I want to make sure that we pivot on the point of data, and maybe Teresita to you can give a little context as to how that data impacts different designations between an Hispanic *enrolling* institution and Hispanic *serving* Institution.

07:00

Well, first, let me tell you how we become Hispanic enrolling, right? You know, and you can look at the trends. But in fall 2015, we surpassed the 25% benchmark, that was essentially our ticket into Hispanic serving institution. And I'm using the definition used by the Hispanic Associations of Colleges Universities. So and this is based on undergraduate FTE. And so it's very technical definition. Further technical definition is what the US Department of Education determines criteria to be eligible to apply for Title Three, Title Five grant programs is not only the enrollment piece for Hispanic Latino students, but also they take a look at how the institution is funded. So, our core expenses must also be at or below four-year public institutions for Chico State. And thirdly, it also requires that we enroll a significant proportion of low-income students at Chico State, regardless of their ethnicity. And there are several criteria to meet that threshold. But I essentially try to simplify it to say, over you know, half of our, over half of our students have to be eligible to apply for federal financial aid programs.

08:39

The Department of Ed has a very specific definition, which is based on IPEDS, student data. So, they define and count students a very particular way. And so 25% of undergraduates have to identify as Hispanic Latinx. And then the, the financial components are, you can meet it. The first part one of two ways, either all half of all your students receive title for funding, or, and this number changes, it's generally about a third of your undergraduates are Pell recipients. And so here I'm not. I have yet, I mean Teresita would be the expert on which one of those we fulfill maybe we fulfill both. And then there's another component, which Teresita mentioned, which is sort of a core expenditure component, which is based on the Department of Education formula, how much money the campus is calculated to be spending per student. If you meet the financial aid component, and then that core expenditure component and the data component then you are eligible to apply for HSI grants, and different federal agencies have used the Department of Education's definition for their own grant programs like National Science Foundation, likewise NIFA, USDA It uses that definition. So, as I think I heard you mentioned HACU, right, which is there, they have sort of a different definition. And you can meet that definition, but it doesn't really make you eligible for HSI grants.

10:11

Thank you, Dr. Morales. And so, the US Department of Education will tell you that they don't designate any institution as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Correct. You know, and they remind us of that all the time. Yeah. And this is one of the biggest misconceptions. Right. What the US Department of Ed does do is determine if we're eligible for Title Three, Title Five, minority serving institution grant programs and Chico State's case we only satisfy the HSI criteria. And so that is what we're limited to. And this is a designation, the eligibility for Title Three, Title Five that is, that we have to renew annually. Thus far, it's been a simple process. However, it's something that we continue to monitor to make sure that we are on track to meet all three criteria, any given year, because we want to make sure that we maintain our eligibility for the grant programs as best we can.

11:05

Teresita is right that, you have to establish eligibility on an annual basis. And we are technically at this point only eligible to pursue HSI grants. But one of my goals is to make us also eligible to apply for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution grants, which the acronym for which is AANAPISI. And so, to be a dual designation, minority serving institution, so to speak. And, you know, it's very interesting that this campus was founded as a predominantly white institution, obviously, in the 19th century for a particular demographic, but it also was part of the mid 20th century when California devised the comprehensive vision for higher education in California 1959-1960. That's Clark, Kerr, and others. But what's interesting to me is that's prior to the Civil Rights Act, right, so the vision of how higher education would be implemented, is imagined in a time when not everybody legally has access to education, higher education in California. It's all the more interesting, when you think about one of the tenants that I understand is that at that time, they envision that higher education in California would reflect the demographics of the State. That was one thing in 1959-1960. It's another thing today. And so that's one of the things that's specifically of interest to me, also, for me, going back to that history that I'm you know, I think that all the work that has been done prior, for me, grounding the work also in the ethnic studies movement, from the Third World Liberation Front strike in 1968-69, which is part of the CSU's legacy at San Francisco State. That's a way of when in my mind if I connect HSI, because HSI did not begin in, what year was it, Teresita? 2016 or 15? What did you say?

13:00

for us 2015.

13:02

HSI did not just magically appear in 2015. It's part of a longer history of work. So, for me, it's important to talk about all the work prior to 2015. And for me that has a, you know, one of the ways to ground that work is in ethnic studies. And that's a way to keep HSI work accountable. Ethnic studies is really about for me democratizing access to higher education, democratizing who gets to benefit from higher education, connecting the campus to the community, democratizing the production of knowledge and so forth. When I connect HSI to those prior movements, and AANAPISI, I would say, for that matter, it connects it to that longer history, which goes to the 19th century, right. I mean, the history of education in California has not been an equitable space. That's a fact. Right? And so connecting it to the ethnic studies movement to democratize and make higher education more equitable, is a way for me to to advance HSI. That's, that's my point of view. So, the work Teresita has already been doing and others is, you know, for me, I'm glad to be part of that, and to see if I can, you know, add to it. And so, but for me also, it's about more than being HSI, it's about being also an AANAPISI, right? about representing all the underserved communities in California. We cannot be historically a black college university, but that doesn't mean we cannot be an intentionally black thriving university where we are serving black students. The campus I came from, had a theory, I will say, that we tried to put into practice that the University of California, Irvine will not succeed unless black students, staff and faculty succeed. There's not enough black students, staff and faculty to make that happen, nor is it their responsibility alone. It's all of our responsibility to ensure the campus succeeds. So that in principle is very important. I would make the same argument for native Students, staff and faculty, we can be a native thriving campus. And this is really all in alignment with the new ethnic studies area F requirement to focus on these

historically underserved communities. So for me implementing the ethnic studies requirements is also about becoming an intentional and historically-grounded minority serving institution.

15:22

So we have that requirement to educate our students. So can we talk about some of the work that's been happening and some of the new initiatives and I also want to fold Chiara into the conversation to talk about faculty development's role in supporting these initiatives

15:36

It has been an incredible opportunity to partner with faculty development, because it is going to take more than Dr. Morales or myself and a select group of practitioners who have engaged in this work for decades to really move us forward in this space. And the collaborations with faculty development, give us an opportunity to really engage with faculty and others who want to engage in this work, to learn and to uncover, unpack, dialogue, and share best practices, I need to mention that I did five faculty learning communities prior to this initiative that's happening this semester. But we know more, you know, the faculty learning communities that I did back in 2018 were based on what we knew in 2018. But now we know more now we know more, the research is growing in this space. You know, there's more conversation about the emphasis on servingness. So we continually need to grow. And again, a lot of wonderful things are happening in the grants, some really cool things are happening with partnerships. This work has to come about through collaboration and accountability across campus.

16:50

This initiative falls under some of the commitments that I made that faculty development made when we launched, the READI hub, the hub for research and equity, antiracism, diversity, inclusion, when I was advocating for funding, and speaking with the Vice Provost, and speaking with the Provost, there was a request to to really reach out to other units, including student affairs, and to see how READI could provide support, conversations, resources, really across divisions. And so there was as part of investing funding in READI, there was the expectation that READI would really expand what faculty development does beyond just supporting faculty. And it seemed to me that working on professional development that relates to Chico State as an HSI is a perfect example, is a perfect opportunity to work outside academic affairs to work outside faculty development to working outside, just supporting faculty.

18:07

Because as Teresita said, the work to support Latinx students and diverse students, it really needs to be collaborative, really needs to happen across division across units. And so, this this was the time for faculty development to fully embrace resources, conversations about Chico State as an HSI. Because I'm the first one that knew, that still knows very little, about what it means to be an HSI, what it means to provide faculty and professional development at an HSI. And so, one of the things that I've been very interested in the HSI professional development is that we have explored these frameworks, these multi dimensional framework of what it means to be a Hispanic serving institution. And, and the interesting thing is that it's actually very hard to come up with a clear-cut definition that applies to all HSIs. First of all, because HSIs are very different from each other, you know, from private, public, to rural. And you know, Gina Garcia, highlights all of these different elements of HSIs in in many of her articles and books, but the part to me that was very interesting that it is very interesting is that this idea of

servingness, it cannot fully be defined conceptually, but it needs to be defined primarily in practice. And so, offering a professional development opportunity where we have a chance to both discuss conceptually, but also put into practice the concepts that we discuss, and also discuss ways in which we can assess whether not we are successful in our efforts, that to me was a chance to meet that commitment that I made.

20:08

So Jamie, there has to be attention to the whole pipeline, right? you know, at every stage for our student from the recruitment, outreach, enrollment all the way to completion to our engagement with alumni. There's opportunities to be Hispanic serving, or to center servingness to the Hispanic Latino campus community along that spectrum. And as Chiara indicated, it is better defined in practice than theoretical because it is contextual. It is, it's contextual, to what's happening on the campus, to who the campus is, you know, and leveraging the strengths of the institution, and taking an opportunity to look at where we're not as strong and taking action in those spaces to deliver on our promise, right? You know, and I always say this, when we enroll a student, we have made a compact, that we are going to provide them a high-quality transformative experience. And of course, the students' responsibility is to engage in the opportunities right. But it's a compact and I think that that's that's why I feel such an incredible sense of responsibility. A) because it's my personal community, right? It's a community I'm very passionate about. You know, I am HSI but HSI is me. And you know, given the number of years I've experienced at Chico State, both as a student and as a practitioner, there's so many opportunities. I've really enjoyed the authentic dialogue conversation that is coming. Because again, it informs us what do they need as campus practitioners to better deliver on this promise that I spoke about, and to do it from a Latino lens.

22:03

And there you have it, folks, today we explored servingness and what HSI means to Chico State. I'd like to thank Teresita Curiel, Joseph Morales, and Chiara Ferrari for their contributions to this episode and to our campus. Please don't forget that you can access previous episodes of Rise Teach Learn as well as all of the resources associated with this and other episodes through our FDEV podcast web page. A big thank you to you for listening and until next time, we got this Wildcats!

We would like to thank the Mechoopda on whose traditional lands this recording is taking place. Without their support and continued positive presence in our community, we would be unable to afford the cultural and educational work that is at the heart of this recording.