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This OAS Issue Brief presents information about Latino-Serving Institutions, their contributions to the educational attainment of Latinos in America and outcomes for Latino students. APLU also presents its action steps to support the success of Latino Students and to support our member institutions that serve these students.

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## APLU: COMMITTED TO LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

### Highlights

- ◆ HSI's account for 50 percent of all students enrolled in degree-granting 2-year and 4-year institutions-including for-profit colleges and universities.
- ◆ APLU members enroll 15 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in higher education.
- ◆ In 2011, 37 percent of bachelor's degrees earned by Latino students were conferred by HSIs along with 33.1 percent of masters degrees, 19.8 percent of doctoral degrees and 21.7 percent of professional degrees .
- ◆ APLU member HSIs awarded 12.1 percent of bachelor's degrees to Hispanic students, 7.9 percent of master's degrees, 6.3 percent of doctoral degrees and 4.0 percent of professional degrees awarded to Latino students.
- ◆ Collectively, APLU member institutions produced 37 percent of bachelor's degrees, 26.4 percent of master's degrees, 49.8 percent of all doctoral degrees and 20 percent of professional degrees awarded to Latino students nationally.

This issue brief presents information about Latino-Serving Institutions, their contributions to the educational attainment of Latinos in America and outcomes for Latino students. The Latino community has experienced unprecedented growth in the United States in the past five decades, yet a limited proportion of Latinos are accessing colleges and universities, and even fewer are completing their degrees. Recognizing the demographic shift of our nation and the importance of Latino students and Hispanic-Serving Institutions to the future of our nation, APLU has renamed what was formerly the Office for Access and the Advancement of Public Black Universities (OAAPBU) to the Office for Access and Success (OAS): The Advancement of Public Black Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions. This change reflects APLU's and the Office for Access and Success' commitment to develop a comprehensive

agenda to broaden access and opportunity, improve the quality of the undergraduate experience, and enhance diversity within student and faculty populations at all public universities. The Office for Access and Success is dedicated to equity, access, and educational excellence for all individuals in America with a special focus on underserved students and minority-serving institutions.

No one can deny the fact that Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) represent an important battle ground for the nation's college completion agenda. HSIs still represent a viable and accessible higher education option for many Latino students upon whom the degree completion agenda rests. Meanwhile there is a strong sense that "business as usual" will not serve students or institutions very well going forward. The current policy environment, at the state and federal level, is fixed on completion measures and appropriations from public

and private sources are being tightly linked to student success and institutional effectiveness measures. These changes have significant implications for HSIs. In addition to facing the same challenges as any other institution, HSIs are committed to serving students who typically arrive with greater, more complex challenges to overcome in pursuit of a college degree.

### Defining Hispanic Serving Institutions

Hispanic-serving institutions are defined as accredited, not-for-profit degree granting postsecondary institutions whose Latino enrollment exceeds 25 percent of its total full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment. Upon its authorization in 1998, Title V required that at least 50 percent of Latino undergraduates at HSIs be “low-income.” However, this portion of the eligibility criteria was dropped in the Third Higher Education Extension Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-292). Having emerged as a result of the nation’s shifting demographics and the persuasive appeals of advocates for the Latino community (Laden 2004; Santiago 2006), HSIs are central to the expansion of educational opportunity for this historically disadvantaged group. While other minority-serving institutions (i.e., historically black colleges and universities [HBCUs] and tribal colleges and universities) were founded for the purpose of educating their target populations, HSIs earn their designation based on enrollment demographics alone. Although there is no single “official” list of HSIs published by the U.S. Department of Education, Excelencia in Education (2013) data reveals that 356 accredited, not-for-profit, two- and four-year postsecondary institutions met the 25% Latino undergraduate FTE enrollment threshold required to be designated as a HSI in 2011-2012.

### The Contributions of Hispanic Serving Institutions to Latino Educational Attainment

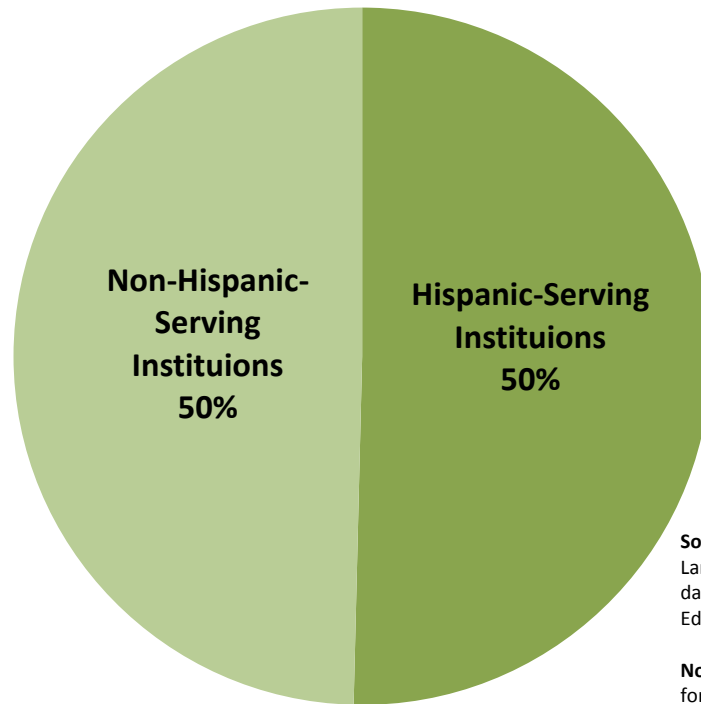
**Providing access.** As the demographics of the United States continues to change, HSIs continue to play an increasingly important role in providing access to higher education for Latinos and other students. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), Latinos are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States. The growth of the Latino population is even more drastic in certain geographical areas of the country; for example, in California and Texas, more than one out of every three people is Hispanic or

Latino (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The overall growth of the Latino population is mirrored in U.S. postsecondary institutions: Latino enrollment in colleges and universities more than tripled in 19 years — from 782,400 in 1990 to 2,938,098 in 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics 2013). APLU member Hispanic-Serving institutions serve 5 percent of all Hispanic students and represent 10 percent of all Latinos in HSIs (National Center for Education Statistics 2013). Although only about 11 percent of all postsecondary institutions are HSIs, more than 54 percent of Latino undergraduates enrolled in not-for-profit, U.S. postsecondary institutions attend HSIs (Santiago, 2013). HSI’s account for 50 percent of all students enrolled in degree-granting 2-year and 4-year institutions-including for-profit colleges and universities (see Figure 1). APLU members enroll 15 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in higher education. (see Figure 2). The high concentration of Hispanic students in HSIs clearly demonstrates the important role that these institutions play. According to Excelencia in Education the numbers of HSI’s is growing dramatically with the number of HSI’s growing from 311 to 356 between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

**Granting bachelor’s degrees.** HSIs award 51 percent of associate degrees to Latino students and HSIs are also responsible for granting a large share of the overall degrees earned by Latinos. In 2011, 37 percent of bachelor’s degrees earned by Latino students were conferred by HSIs along with 33.1 percent of masters degrees, 19.8 percent of doctoral degrees and 21.7 percent of professional degrees (see Figure 3). HSIs also award a significant proportion of degrees in high-demand fields related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to Latinos. Nearly 65 percent of STEM certificates, 61 percent of STEM associate degrees and 40 percent of STEM bachelor’s degrees awarded to Latinos in 2011 were conferred by HSIs (IPEDS, 2013). In addition, Latinos who complete STEM bachelor’s degrees at HSIs are more likely to have earned their degrees in a math-intensive science field (e.g., computer science, engineering) than their counterparts who graduate from non-HSIs (Dowd, Malcom and Macias 2010). National postsecondary data also illustrate that Hispanic-Serving Institutions act as pathways to graduate degrees for Latino students in STEM fields; between 2003 and 2007, nearly 40 percent of Latino STEM doctoral recipients completed their undergraduate degrees at an HSI (National Science Foundation 2009).

**Awarding graduate degrees.** HSIs award a

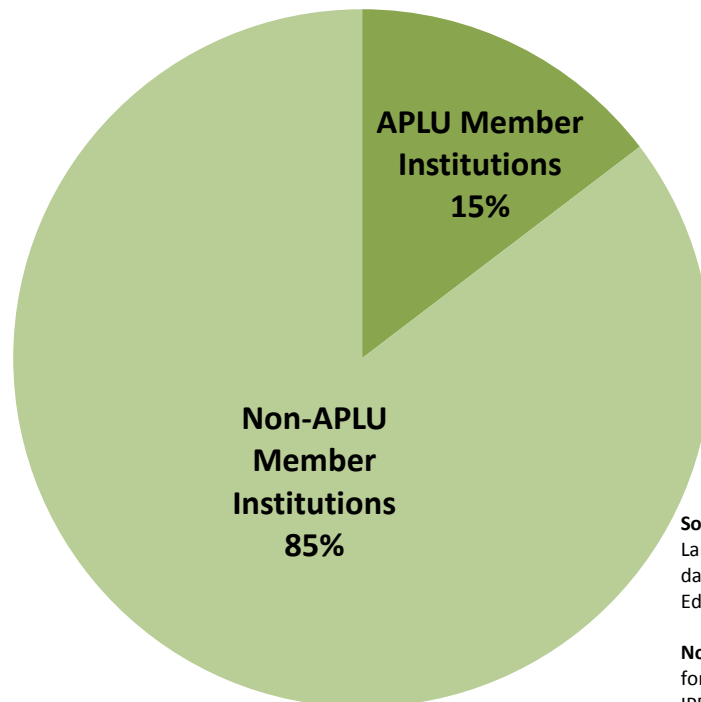
**Figure 1: Total Hispanic Enrollment in All Degree-Granting 2-Year and 4-Year Institutions by HSU Status, 2011**



**Source:** Association of Public and Land-grant Universities analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2011-2012

**Note:** 2011 is the most recent year for which data are available in IPEDS.

**Figure 2: Total Hispanic Enrollment in All Degree-Granting 2-Year and 4-Year Institutions by APLU Membership, 2011**



**Source:** Association of Public and Land-grant Universities analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2011-2012

**Note:** 2011 is the most recent year for which data are available in IPEDS.

significant percentage of master's degrees to Hispanic students, conferring 33 percent of all Master's degrees earned by these students in 2011, the most recent year for which degree completion data are available (IPEDS 2013). Despite the fact that only a small proportion of HSIs grant doctoral and professional degrees, nearly 20 percent of Latino doctoral degree holders and 21 percent of Latino first-professional degree holders earned their graduate degrees from HSIs. HSIs awarded 33 percent of STEM master's degrees and nearly 13 percent of STEM doctorates to Latinos in 2011. The fact that these institutions confer such a relatively high proportion of STEM graduate degrees to Latinos is noteworthy considering that the range of STEM graduate programs available at HSIs is relatively small.

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### Challenges Faced by HSIs

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According to Contreras, Malcom and Bensimon (2008), it is important to examine how these institutions conceptualize what it means to be “Hispanic serving,” and the extent to which this status is reflected by an HSI's institutional identity, policies, practices and performance due to the unique way in which institutions become HSIs. It is important to find a better understanding of the ways in which HSIs serve Latino students and the areas in which institutional performance can be improved and this has been supported by many research studies (e.g., Bensimon 2010; Contreras, Malcom and Bensimon 2008; Dowd, Malcom and Bensimon 2009; Dowd, Malcom and Macias 2010; Santiago and Andrade 2010).

Limited research has been done to assess how well HSIs are serving their students, particularly their Latino populations. While HSIs do award the majority of certificates and associate degrees, as well as a significant percentage of bachelor's degrees, to Latinos, it is important to determine if these institutions produce equitable educational outcomes for these students. For example, do Latino students constitute an equitable proportion of students who graduate compared with other racial/ethnic groups? Are Latinos equitably represented in STEM fields? Are Latino students being recruited and retained at the same rates as other student populations attending HSIs? These lines of inquiry can uncover the state of equity in educational outcomes at HSIs.

Examining expected educational outcomes (e.g., graduation rates and access to high-demand STEM degrees) and other indicators of institutional

### APLU MEMBER IMPACT

APLU member HSIs yield 12.1 percent of bachelor's degrees to Hispanic students, 7.9 percent of master's degrees, 6.3 percent of doctoral degrees and 4.0 percent of professional degrees awarded to Latino students nationally (see Figure 4). Collectively, APLU member institutions produced 37 percent of bachelor's degrees, 26.4 percent of master's degrees, 49.8 percent of all doctoral degrees and 20 percent of professional degrees awarded to Latino students nationally. (see Figure 4) APLU members enroll 15 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in higher education (see Figure 2).

commitment to serving Latino students (e.g., Latino representation on faculty and administrative staff, and among graduate students) should be used to evaluate any institution (including HSIs) that serve Latino students.

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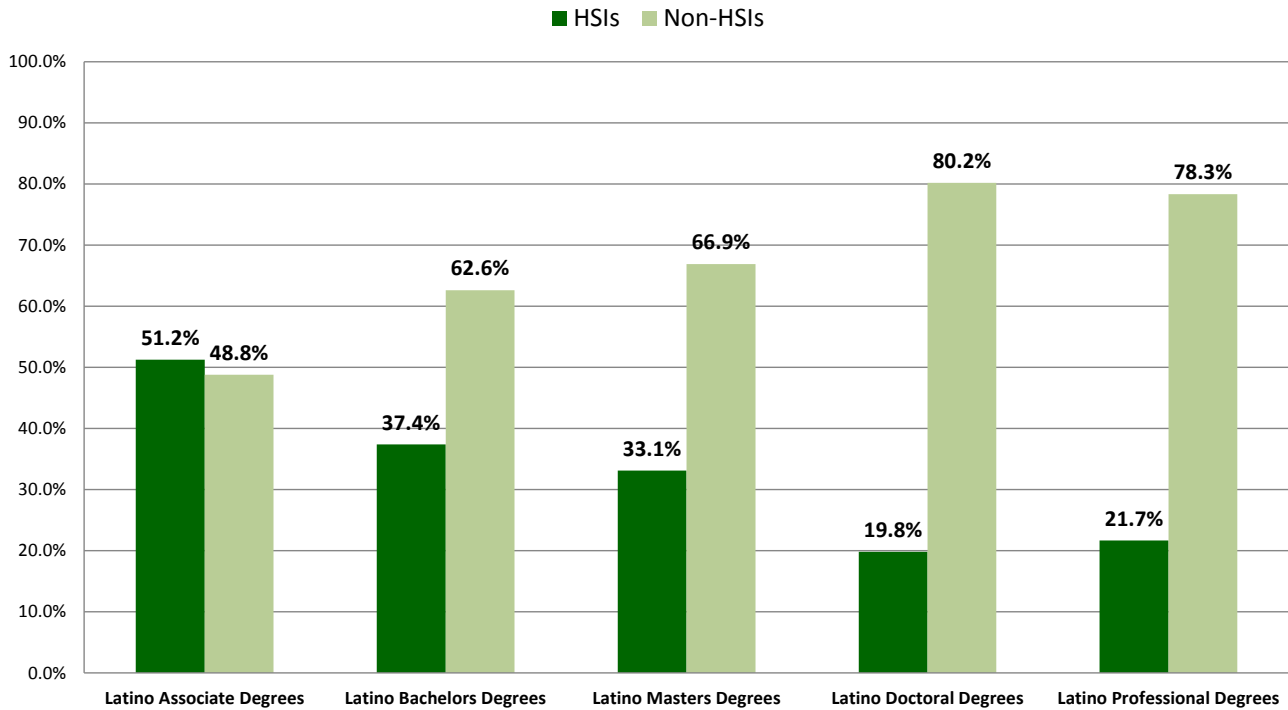
### Project Degree Completion

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To reclaim the United States' position as the world leader in degree attainment, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (A•P•L•U) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) created Project Degree Completion. This initiative consists of pledges from 500 four-year public colleges and universities to boost college completion by 3.8 million bachelor's degrees so that 60 percent of U.S. adults will possess a college degree by 2025. Public-four year colleges and universities currently award just over 1 million degrees annually.

The Project Degree Completion pledge is broadly consistent with the efforts of the Obama administration, the Lumina Foundation, the College Board and other prominent educational organizations—to enhance the nation's global competitiveness by ensuring that 60 percent of U.S. adults (aged 25 to 64) earn a postsecondary credential. While these goals are ambitious for both APLU and the nation, these goals are not attainable without increasing access to Latino students and ensuring that more Latino students succeed in earning a bachelor's degree.

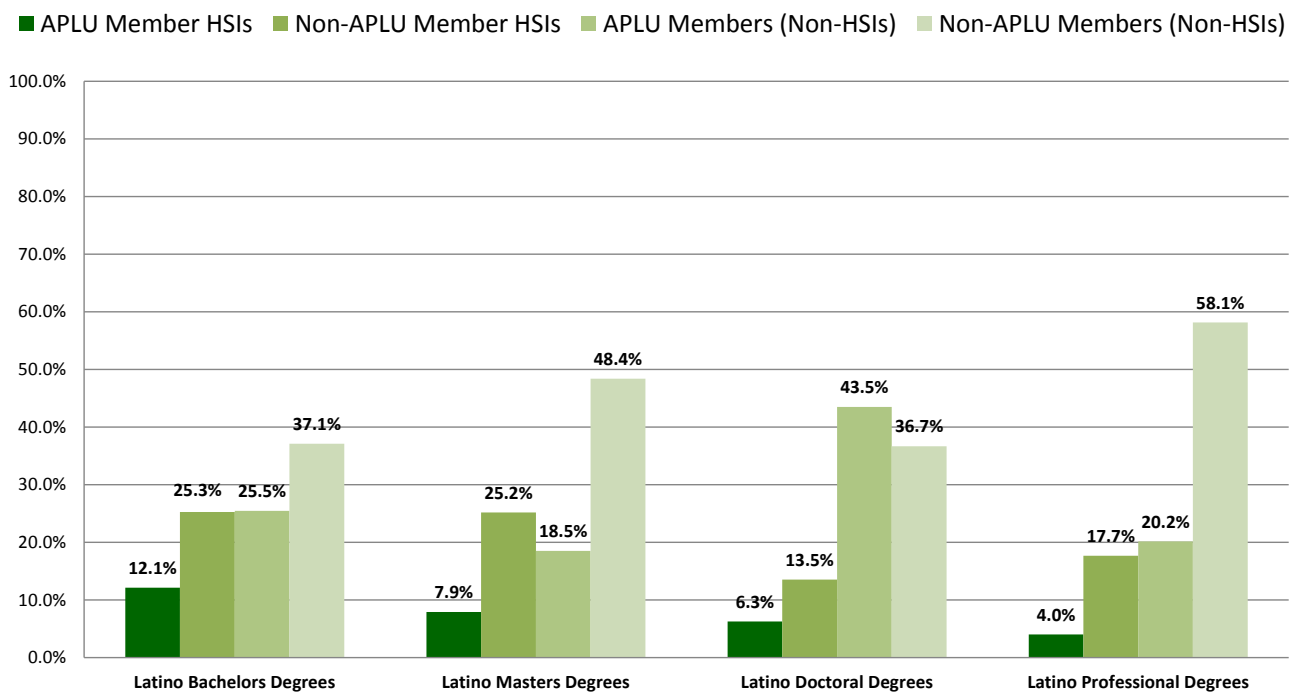
**Figure 3: Proportion of Degrees Awarded to Latinos by HSIs and Non-HSIs by Degree Type, 2011**



Source: Association of Public and Land-grant Universities analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2011-2012

Note: 2011 is the most recent year for which data are available in IPEDS.

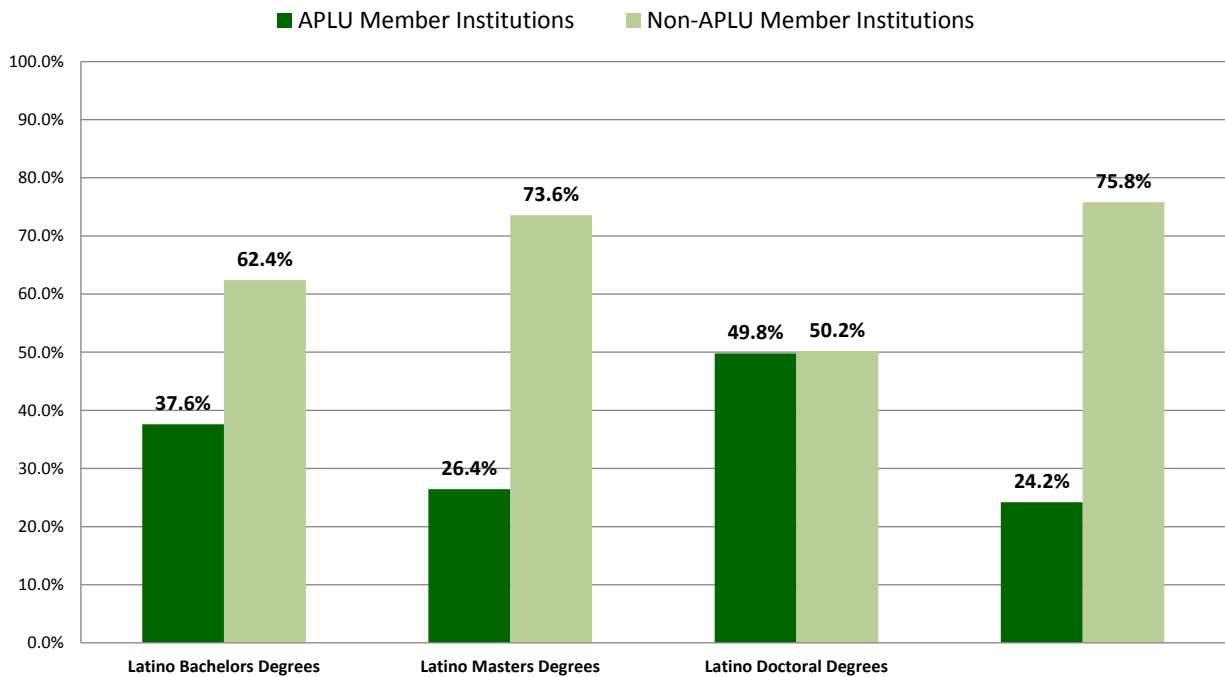
**Figure 4: Proportion of Degrees Awarded to Latinos by HSIs and Non-HSIs by APLU Membership and Degree Type, 2011**



Source: Association of Public and Land-grant Universities analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2011-2012

Note: 2011 is the most recent year for which data are available in IPEDS.

**Figure 5: Proportion of Degrees Awarded to Latinos by APLU Membership and Degree Type, 2011**



Source: Association of Public and Land-grant Universities analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, IPEDS, 2011-2012

Note: 2011 is the most recent year for which data are available in IPEDS.

## APLU Action Steps

HSIs make large contributions to the status of Latinos in the United States, and to American society as a whole. Because Latino students are heavily concentrated in HSIs and as the demand for higher education by Latino students continues to increase, it is critical that these institutions examine what it means to be an HSI, and assess how well they are serving their current Latino student populations. While 50% of Latino students access higher education through Hispanic-Serving Institutions, it is important to note that Latino students are being served by many other institutional types including community colleges, public universities, private universities and HBCUs. It is important that all institutions have strategies that can help them to ensure Latino student success.

APLU has created a HSI Task Force that has been charged with recommending ways that APLU can help member Hispanic-Serving Institutions and all APLU member institutions in their work with Latino students. APLU is committed to helping institutions be intentional about increasing Latino student success,

providing examples of inclusive policies and identifying what works to improve Latino student success.

The APLU Action Steps are the areas where APLU will focus its efforts to improve Latino student success at all APLU member institutions- including Hispanic-Serving Institutions. APLU looks forward to providing leadership in this area, and we welcome any thoughts and ideas that you may have as we take our next steps. The APLU Office for Access and Success has already begun to collect data, policies and examples of what is working at colleges and universities across the country through the Most Visible Progress National Degree Completion Awards that collects strategies and programs that are being implemented by colleges and universities to improve graduation and retention rates for all students. The new awards will provide program models and strategies that will be shared with other higher education institutions through an interactive web database and a printed publication. The Most Visible Progress National Degree Completion Award is made possible through the generous support of the APLU Office of Access and Success Advisory Board.

APLU is committed to the action steps that have been put forward and will be working to implement this strategy to benefit APLU's member institutions and to

advance the learning of Latino students at all APLU member institutions. While APLU and AASCU and each of the 500 colleges and Universities that have signed up for the College Degree Completion initiative, the goal of increasing the number of degrees produced by public colleges and universities must also be accompanied by ensuring that low-income, first-generation and under-served populations not only access college but also matriculate to college completion. To accomplish this ambitious goal, APLU plans to ensure Latino student success by aiming to accomplish three key goals:

- **INTENTIONALITY-USING DATA**
- **INCLUSION-CHANGING POLICIES**
- **IDENTIFICATION OF MODELS AND STRATEGIES THAT WORK.**
- **INCREASING ACCESS-ENCOURAGING LATINO PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATE SCHOOL**

APLU believes that this approach will not only help our Hispanic-Serving Institutions, but all APLU members who serve a significant proportion of Latino students and contribute greatly to Latino student success. This issue brief is the beginning of a longer conversation to discuss ideas and initiatives to improve Latino student success. We invite you to engage us by joining the Latino-Serving Institution's Task Force or by emailing ideas to [oas@aplu.org](mailto:oas@aplu.org). We look forward to working with you to improve Latino student success!!!

## **APLU ACTION STEPS**

- ◆ **INTENTIONALITY-USING DATA**  
Provide data and strategies to APLU member institutions that will help institutions disaggregate data and identify areas of improvement.
- ◆ **INCLUSION-CHANGING POLICIES**  
Recommend policies to APLU member institutions designed to improve Hispanic student educational achievement.
- ◆ **IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS**  
Provide examples to APLU member institutions of what's working for Latino students.
- ◆ **INCREASING ACCESS TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS**  
Increase the number of Latinos who graduate with masters and doctoral degrees. To encourage them to diversify the professoriate.

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For further information on APLU, visit [WWW.APLU.ORG](http://WWW.APLU.ORG)

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## APLU LATINO-SERVING INSTITUTIONS TASK FORCE

Member	Title	Institution
Mildred Garcia	President	California State University, Fullerton
Adriana Flores-Ragade	Director of Diversity Initiatives	The College Board
Robert G. Frank	President	University of New Mexico
M. Peter McPherson	President	APLU
Mark B. Rosenberg	President	Florida International University
Deborah Santiago	Co-Founder and Vice President for Policy Research	Excelencia in Education
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APLU would like to thank the members of the each of the members for the service on the Latino-Serving Institutions Task Force. We heartily acknowledge your contributions to APLU and we would like to thank you for helping APLU as we move forward in ensuring that all student, especially those from underserved populations, can both gain access and excellence in American higher education.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**John Michael Lee, Jr.** is vice president for the Office for Access and Success (OAS) and is responsible for advancing Public Black Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and supporting the APLU Council of 1890 Universities; Commission on Access, Diversity and Excellence; and the OAS Advisory Board. His research interests include student access, participation, and success in higher education; student recruitment, retention, and graduation; student development; minority serving institutions (HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges); higher education diversity; and education policy.

He earned a Ph.D. in higher education administration from New York University, an MPA with a concentration in economic development from Georgia State University, and a bachelor of science in computer engineering from Florida A&M University.

**Samaad Wes Keys** is the program assistant for the OAS and is responsible for research, managing collaborative partnerships and initiatives to meet the key organizational objectives for advancing college access and success for all students, with particular attention paid to underrepresented groups at the precollege and college levels. His research interests are focused on postsecondary education policy, minority student access and success, and minority-serving institutions. He holds a deep interest in the for-profit sector of higher education and how these institutions are shaping the future direction of higher education.

He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. He earned a master's degree from Central Michigan University in educational curriculum and instruction and a bachelor of arts degree from Morehouse College in psychology.

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## ABOUT APLU

The **Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)** is a research, policy, and advocacy organization representing 234 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations. Founded in 1887, APLU is North America's oldest higher education association with member institutions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, Canada, and Mexico. Annually, member campuses enroll 4.7 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.3 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$41 billion in university-based research.



## ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF 1890 UNIVERSITIES

APLU's **Council of 1890 Universities** collectively represent the interests of 1890 land-grant institutions including the University of the District of Columbia and the University of the Virgin Islands. The Council seeks to maintain, insure and increase funding, to present a unified approach for presentation of views regarding these institutions and to serve as a forum to share ideas and resources. The Council works with other 1890 associations in developing a comprehensive agenda for APLU regarding congressional and federal policies and programs impacting 1890 institutions.



## ABOUT OAS

APLU's **Office for Access and Success (OAS)** is dedicated to equity, access, and educational excellence for all individuals in America with a special focus on low-income & underserved students and minority-serving institutions. OAS is primarily responsible for supporting the APLU Council of 1890 Universities; the Commission on Access, Diversity and Excellence (CADE); Hispanic-Serving Institutions; and the OAS Advisory Board. To reach the authors, please email [oas@aplu.org](mailto:oas@aplu.org).



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