In Recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month:
How SSHA is Doing as an Integral Part of an HSI

Introduction

Greetings SSHA Faculty and Staff:

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th – October 15th) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Week (mid September), Andrés Hernández and I put together this little report that may be of interest to you.[1] It is actually a piece of data that we are collecting as part of a larger assessment of SSHA on the HSI front which, we anticipate, will lead to a myriad of collaborations and funding opportunities to support our School and campus mission.

Our campus and country is rich with the history, culture, and contributions of diverse Hispanics, and Hispanic-Americans that live here. We are also one of some 559 HSIs, with an explicit mission of educating, empowering, and improving the lives of the large Hispanic community in which our campus resides.

UC Merced (UCM) was officially designated as an HSI by the United States Department of Education in Fiscal Year 2010. To be eligible and certified for the HSI title, institutions must show an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic. As undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment has increased at UC Merced (Figure 1), so too has the percentage of undergraduate Hispanic students (Figure 2), with now over half of all undergraduate students identifying as Hispanic.

In parallel with campus, SSHA's percentage of undergraduate Hispanic students has grown each year (Figure 3), with a Fall 2021 enrollment that was 64% Hispanic. Similar numbers for SNS and SoE are 55% and 49%, respectively. The growth of this population in SSHA is impressive and highlights our diversity and connection to our region.

SSHA has also had some success identifying, recruiting, and retaining a diverse faculty. Our Hispanic senate faculty base is larger today than it was in 2005 (25 FTE for Fall 2021 vs. 4 for Fall 2005) and compared to SNS and SoE, SSHA has a greater percentage of Hispanic senate faculty overall (Figure 4).[2] We recognize, however, that further diversification is needed. *We also want to emphasize that SSHA's tie to the Hispanic community is more than just numbers: the scholarship of many of our faculty directly relates to Hispanic populations and cultures, with direct application to their history, language, health, and creative arts.*

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1. We use the term "Hispanic" here to represent the diverse peoples with ancestry from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. We recognize that each of these communities may have their own preferred nationality nomenclature. For more information on National Hispanic Heritage month See: National Hispanic Heritage Month: Sept. 15-Oct. 15, 2021 (census.gov) and National Hispanic American Heritage Month 2021 (hispanicheritagemonth.gov).

2. Data show a percent decrease followed by a moderate increase in Hispanic faculty on campus. Overall, there is not an increase in Hispanic senate faculty based on percent from 2005 to 2020. A 'bumpy' upward trend starts in 2010, but it's less than impressive. SSHA has added 21 Hispanic senate faculty since 2005 (as of Fall 2021). Similar lack of increases in Hispanic senate faculty (based on relative increases over the years) are seen in the other Schools. For these data see: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness – Faculty and Staff Statistics Interactive Data.

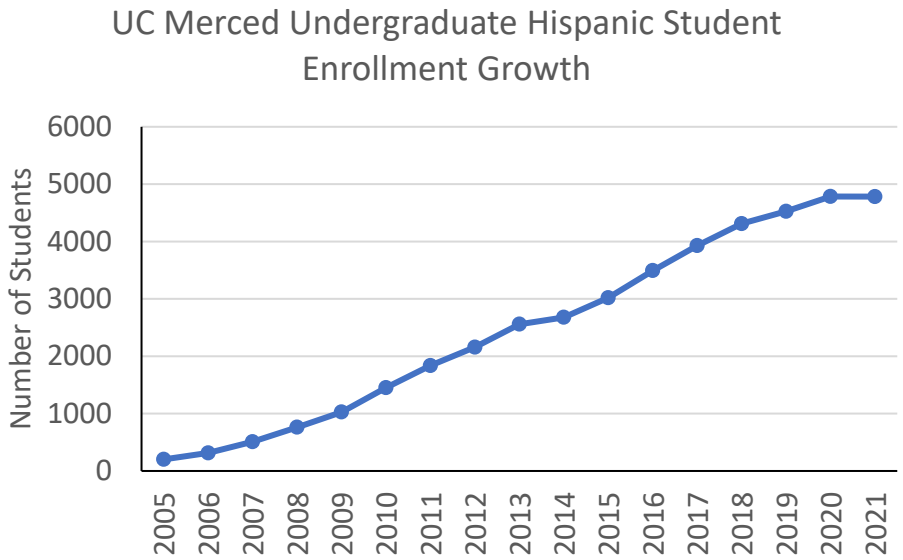

Figure 1. UC Merced undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment growth since 2005. Years presented depict data from the corresponding Fall semesters. *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

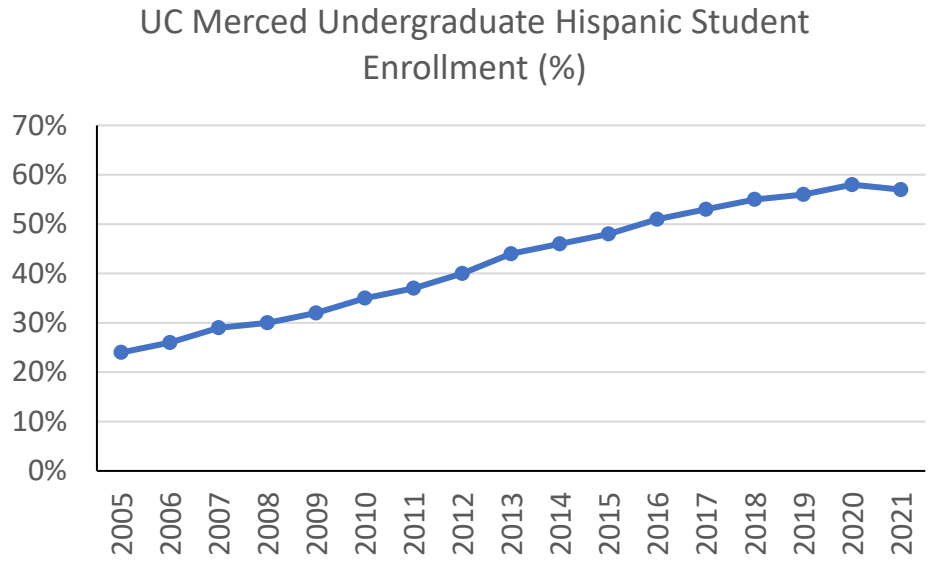

Figure 2. UC Merced undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment growth since 2005 as a percent of total undergraduate enrollment. Years presented depict data from corresponding Fall semesters. *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

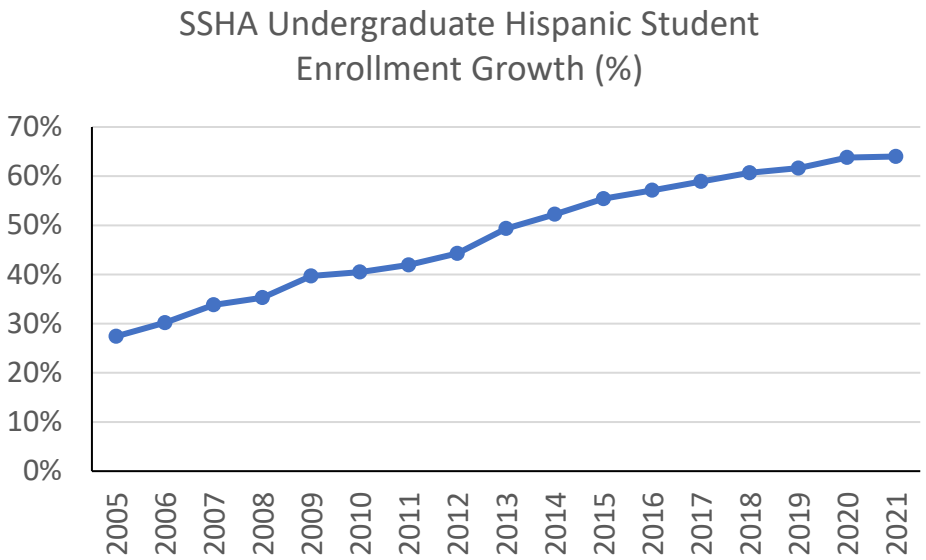

Figure 3. SSHA undergraduate Hispanic student enrollment growth since 2005 as a percent of total SSHA undergraduate enrollment. Years presented depict data from corresponding Fall semesters. *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

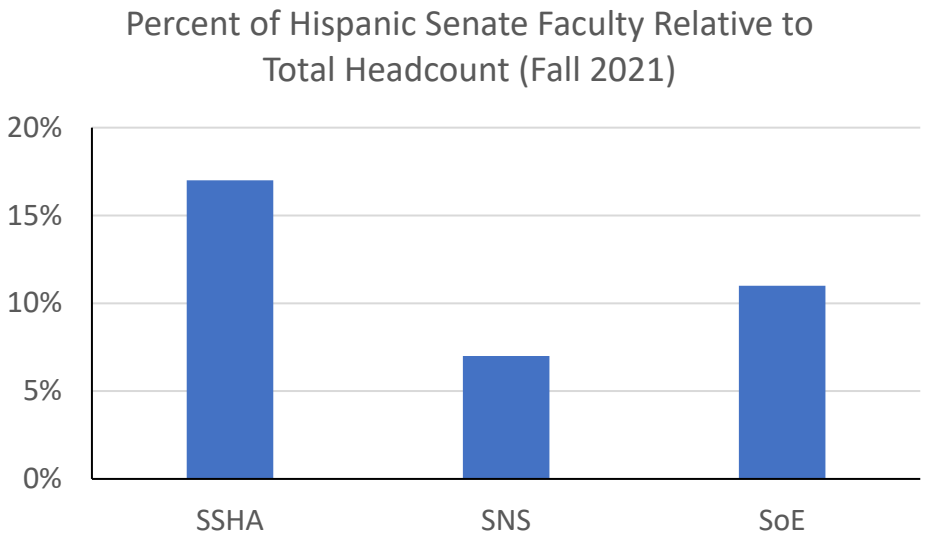

Figure 4. Hispanic senate faculty relative to total headcount (Fall 2021). *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

Who are SSHA's undergraduate Hispanic students?

SSHA has a large undergraduate Hispanic student population, many of which are first-generation college attendees, Pell Grant eligible, and from homes where English is not the primary language used (Table 1). The majority of UC Merced's undergraduate Hispanic students identify as ethnically Mexican/Chicano (Table 2).

SSHA Undergraduate Hispanic Student Characteristics

Undergraduate Population	64%
First Generation Status	88%
Pell Eligible	81%
Primary Home Language:	
English Only	17%
English and Another Language	49%
Another Language	34%
Unknown	<1%

Table 1. Characteristics of SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students, Fall 2021. *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

SSHA Undergraduate Hispanic Student Ethnicities

Mexican/Chicano	84%
Cuban	<1%
Latin American	22%
Puerto Rican	2%
Other Hispanic/Latino	7%

Table 2. Percent of total number of records for disaggregated SSHA undergraduate Hispanic student data, Fall 2021. *Source: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

SSHA attracts undergraduate Hispanic students from across the state of California, with the majority originating from the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) regions of Los Angeles, North San Joaquin Valley, and the San Francisco Bay area (Figure 5).

When compared to all other ethnic groups combined on the variables in Tables 3, 4, and 5, Hispanics are not statistically different with the exception of "students who took part in a leadership program". SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students are doing especially well compared to SNS and SoE regarding graduation rates. Compared to SNS and SoE, SSHA graduates more undergraduate Hispanic students based on the most

recently available 4-year (2018 cohort; SSHA: 62%, SNS: 50%, SoE: 27%) and 6-year (2016 cohort; SSHA: 68%, SNS: 66%, SoE: 58%) graduation rates.

There are many reasons for the School differences mentioned above, including the types of majors offered. Similar trends are seen on other campuses.

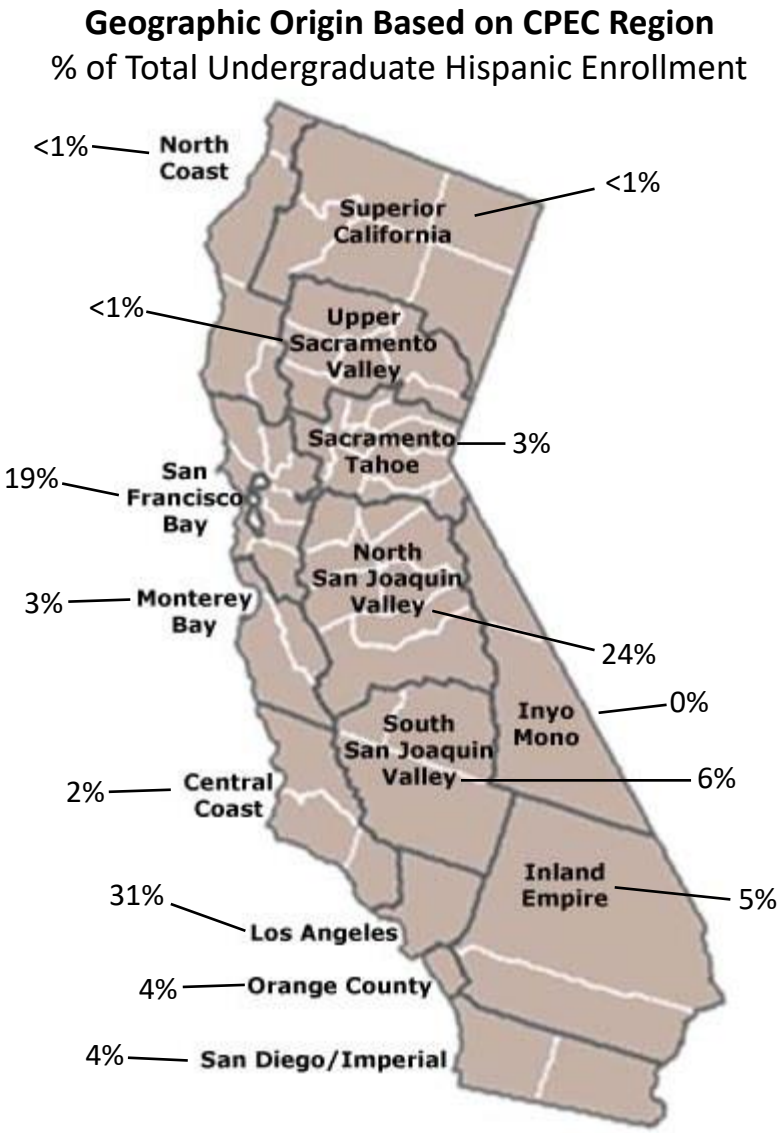

Figure 5. Geographic origin, by California Postsecondary Education Commission region, of SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students. *Sources: CPEC Map of Regions and UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness.*

Student Metrics (SSHA)

	Hispanic	All Other
High School GPA (median)	3.54	3.55
Not in Good Standing	10%	7%
Retention to Year 2 (2021 cohort)	79%	83%
4-year Graduation Rate (2018 cohort)	62%	63%
6-year Graduation Rate (2016 cohort)	68%	72%

Table 3. Entry scores, academic standing, retention, and graduation rates of SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students and All Other SSHA undergraduate students. *Sources: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness and University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) Data Tables, 2020.*

Socioeconomic Factors and Post-Graduation Plans (SSHA)

	Hispanic	All Other
Food Insecurity	57%	52%
Homeless	9%	8%
University is Affordable	75%	72%
Enroll in Graduate or Professional School	42%	45%

Table 4. Food insecurity, homelessness, university affordability, and plans to enroll in graduate or professional school of SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students and All Other SSHA undergraduate students. Percentages presented are the percentage of students who responded “yes”. *Sources: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness and University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) Data Tables, 2020.*

Academic Opportunities (SSHA)

	Hispanic	All Other
Assist Faculty with Research	16%	20%
Conduct Own Research Under Faculty Guidance	13%	12%
Capstone or Thesis	8%	10%
Honors Program	5%	6%
Leadership Program*	10%	16%

Table 5. Academic engagement of SSHA undergraduate Hispanic students and All Other SSHA undergraduate students. Numbers presented are the percentage of students who responded "yes". * indicates a significant difference ($p \leq 0.05$) between Hispanic and All Other SSHA students. *Sources: UC Merced Center of Institutional Effectiveness and University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) Data Tables, 2020.*

What About Staff?

Thus far, we have focused mainly on students and teaching-related variables like faculty. But what about Hispanic representation of our staff (although that factor is not considered in the HSI definition)?

Comparative School data are not readily available on the Center for Institutional Effectiveness' site, but data pertinent to staff by profession up to Fall 2021 can be found here for the campus overall. A few things shown in this dashboard are particularly noteworthy given the inaugural mission of our campus and the students we serve: as of Fall 2021, UCM has a good representation of Hispanic Advisors who are often the student's first campus contact (49%); Hispanics are significantly underrepresented in Executive, Supervisory/Managerial, and Administrative categories (White being the predominate representation); and, 38% of all campus staff are Hispanic. As we saw in the faculty ranks, more work is needed to diversify staff in certain roles. For an easy to read digest of staff categories and data from 2018 see here.

Closing Comments

Andrés and I hope that you have found this quick review interesting, and perhaps useful. If you would like additional demographic data or want a special analysis done, say for your department, please address your questions to Andrés at ssha.research@ucmerced.edu. This report will be posted on the SSHA Research Web Site as well.

UCM remains a young and growing HSI campus with a great mission and great potential to support our community and to diversify our scholarship and scholars. We present our SSHA Diversity Statement below (adopted as part of our Strategic/Academic Planning) as a reminder of our goals and the leadership SSHA demonstrates in the spirit of an HSI campus. We will continue to attend to and support the success of all ethnicities we may touch.

School Diversity Statement

SSHA acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, faculty, and staff from all walks of life, including historically excluded populations. We recognize that some of these barriers are persistent and insidious, permeating the university from beyond its walls, but also taking special forms in academia with its long-established traditions of exclusivity. Such barriers may include scholarly and artistic/literary canons, curricular traditions, teaching practices, disciplinary modes of thought, workplace norms, and narrow definitions of "talent" that, in subtle and unsubtle ways, have functioned to marginalize large portions of humanity and/or deny them equal access. We believe that diversity, inclusivity, and equity, broadly speaking, are desirable and it is the responsibility of every SSHA department and office to work actively and persistently in breaking down barriers and seeing that they not re-form.

It is vital to create inclusive spaces that appreciate diverse ways of ways of thinking, acting, and living due to the personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities and disabilities, neurodiversity, differences in disciplines and ideas, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geographic region, and more.

Considerations of diversity in our organization must also include the ideas of inclusion and equity. As goals, equity and inclusion yield a work environment where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute to our school mission. Staff, students, and faculty have a right to community and connectedness, both on and off campus.

Gracias por todo lo que hacen

Jeff Gilger

Andrés Hernández