SOURCES OF INEQUITY OF THE TITLE V PROGRAM:
A CRITICAL QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL AGENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF
HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS' GRANT-SEEKING COMPETITIVENESS

By

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ABSTRACT

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Growing rapidly in numbers and institutionally diversifying, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) play a critical role in the postsecondary education of Latinxs and other traditionally underserved college students in the United States. However, congressional allocations to Title V—a federal grant program for HSIs—have not increased in step with the growth of HSIs. Ultimately, HSIs' ongoing institutional diversification and Title V's anemic funding levels present a ripe condition for inequity. In response, in this critical qualitative study, I interviewed 29 institutional agents at 17 HSIs across the United States and asked: How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants? What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

Based on my analysis, I identified four primary themes, with participants highlighting the ways in which institutional capacity, actions, knowledge, and leadership collectively come to shape an HSI's competitiveness for Title V grants. The findings also made clear, however, that HSIs do not universally share these organizational conditions, thereby calling into question the meritocratic logic ungirding the Title V Program. Even more, considering HSIs' ongoing institutional diversification, the findings of this study provide strong reason to suspect that Title V (re)produces inequity among the very institutions Congress intended to support through this program. In the end, as anemic federal support fosters even greater competition for these grants, HSIs will vie for this funding on increasingly unequal terms, meaning Title V will

perpetuate, rather than ameliorate, educational inequity. To address sources of inequity of the

Title V Program, I offer specific recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Para todxs que no vuelen porque son pichones

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CCRA	College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
CQI	Critical Qualitative Inquiry
DHSI	Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DREAM	Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minor Act
ED	U.S. Department of Education
eHSI	Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
HACU	Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities
HBCUs	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HHEC	Hispanic Higher Education Coalition
HPSA	Highly Persistent Successful Applicant
HPUA	Highly Persistent Unsuccessful Applicant
HSI	Hispanic-Serving Institution
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
LULAC	League of United Latin American Citizens
LNESC	LULAC National Education Service Centers
MALDEF	Mexican American Legal Defense Fund

MSI   Minority-Serving Institution

NCC   Non-competing Continuation

NCES   National Center for Education Statistics

OPE   Office of Postsecondary Education

PWI   Predominantly White Institution

PPOHA   Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans

R&D   Research and Development

RFP   Request for Proposals

RIT   Relational Inequality Theory

ROI   Return on Investment

SIP   Strengthening Institutions Program

STEM   Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TCUs   Tribal Colleges and Universities

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) play a critical role in the postsecondary education of

Latinxs[1] and other traditionally underserved college students in the United States (Cuellar, 2015;

2019; Garcia & Taylor, 2017; Núñez & Bowers, 2011; Núñez & Elizondo, 2012, 2015; Núñez et

al., 2011). As the number of HSIs dramatically increases with each passing year, the role these

institutions fulfill within the U.S. system of higher education continues to grow (Government

Accountability Office [GAO], 2009; Santiago et al., 2016). Specifically, whereas there were only

200 HSIs in 1998, now there are 539 (*Excelencia* in Education [*Excelencia*], 2015, 2020b).

However, juxtaposing HSIs' exponential and projected growth are stagnant congressional

appropriations to Title V of The Higher Education Act (HEA) (Nellum & Valle, 2015; Santiago

et al., 2016; Santiago et al., 2020), a federal grant program for HSIs. Briefly put, funding for

Title V has not increased in step with HSIs' growth.

Figure *1* illustrates this widening gap.

The discrepancy between the number of HSIs and Title V funding implies the

inevitability of either: (a) reduced Title V award amounts, (b) fewer grants, (c) increased

competition among HSIs to obtain these awards, or (d) some combination of these outcomes.

These inevitabilities prompt grave concern among higher education professionals, policymakers,

educational advocates, and HSI administrators worried about these institutions and Latinxs'

postsecondary education. Despite their concerns, little published empirical research currently

exists about Title V.

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[1] The U.S. Census (2010) uses the term "Hispanic" or "Latino" to refer to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto
Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. However, I use the identifier
"Latinx" to denote the pan-ethnic and otherwise diverse group of people, including Mexican Americans, Chicanxs,
Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, and other Latin Americans "linked to U.S. history through immigration,
acquisition of lands, or political upheavals" (MacDonald & García, 2003, p. 18–19). The "x" ending reflects my
choice to use more inclusive language that disrupts gender binaries. See Salinas and Lozano (2019) for further
explanation of the term "Latinx" and its use in higher education.

Figure 1

Title V Part A Appropriations Compared to the Growth of HSIs, 1998–2018
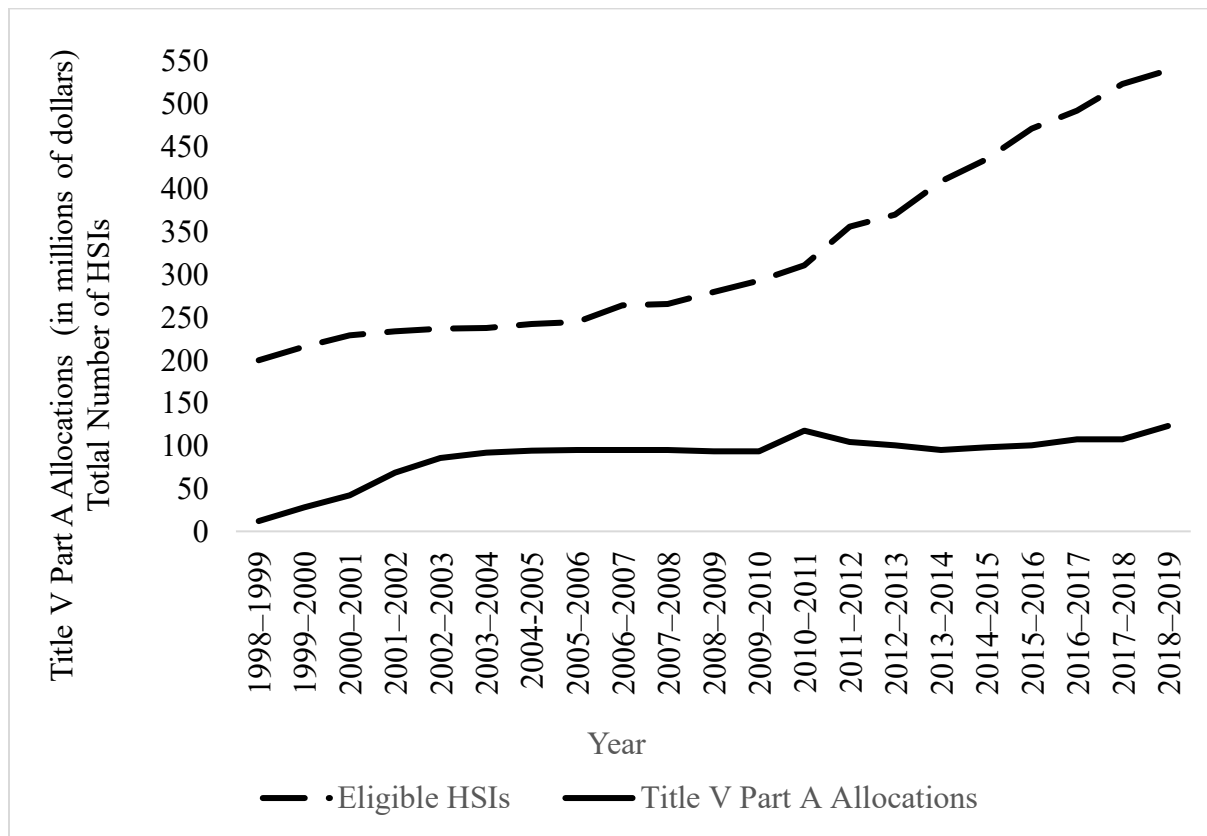
Note. Data for 2009–2010 appropriations are from Salas (2011); data for 2011–2018 appropriations are from the ED Budget Office (2011–2018), and the number of HSIs is from *Excelencia* (2015–2018, 2019b, 2020b).

Moreover, the rhetoric surrounding this policy often centers on scarcity, as educational advocates point to HSIs' increasing numbers compared to Title V's flat funding levels. Basically, they suggest there is a growing demand for a limited or scarce commodity—Title V grants. For example, in a story in *The Hechinger Report*, Smith-Barrow (2018) quoted Antonio Flores, the president of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), saying:

> 'There is still a huge gap [in funding] because the number of HSIs continues to grow more rapidly every year than the amount of dollars coming from Congress…Only about

half or less of all the HSIs get some grant funding in any given year because there is not

enough money for everyone.' (para. 21)

Furthermore, citing these conflicting trends, scholars urge Congress to increase their support of

this program. For example, Garcia (2019) writes, "the budget for federal funding must increase

every year in order to match the growth in the number of HSIs" (p. 133). Emphasizing the

widening gap between the pool of potential applicants and the relatively shrinking pot of Title V

funds, such comments reinforce the scarcity rhetoric surrounding these grants.

Considering the growth of HSIs has come with the increasing institutional diversification

of this group (Núñez et al., 2016), this scarcity framing leaves other matters related to Title V

under-examined, including this program's potential sources of inequity. Pointedly, this singular

attention to scarcity is a rudimentary assessment of Title V, which erroneously assumes that all

HSIs are similarly interested, resourced, and positioned to compete for these grants. Instead,

given HSIs' evolving composition, it is necessary to complexify the analysis of Title V by

examining the equity of this competition and its sources of inequity.

In service of such an analysis, it is important to first clarify the term equity. As part of

their discussion of critical policy analysis, Neumann and Pallas (2015) defined equity, writing:

> *Equity*, as a policy value, can be broadly defined as a fair distribution of resources. But
>
> that definition immediately invokes questions about definitions of fairness. Does fairness
>
> mean giving equal amounts of a valued resource to everyone? Amount proportional to
>
> needs? A minimum threshold below which no one can fall? Equal chances but unequal
>
> amounts? All of these have, in one setting or another, been defined as "fair" ways to
>
> distribute resources. Or is fairness primarily about the *process* by which distribution of a
>
> resource is determined, rather than the amount that each individual received? Additional

questions can be posed regarding which resources count, who is eligible for them or to

distribute them, and who is not. (p. 159, italics in original)

Despite challenges with defining this term, for the purposes of this study, I use equity to refer to

opportunities structured in such a way that all organizations can access them and competitively

pursue them on even footing, despite their varied conditions and positions in society. I leveraged

this understanding to examine the Title V Program, especially amid the increasing institutional

heterogeneity of HSIs. Specifically, I asked:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their

    competitiveness for Title V grants?

    a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

Through these questions, I sought to expose inequity engendered by this so-called

meritocratic grant competition. To provide context for this study, I begin with a brief

introduction to HSIs and Title V. Afterwards, I specify the core problem this study responds to

and explain this study's central purpose. Then, I review the study's basic design, quickly

touching on my conceptual orientation to this work and methodological choices. Next, I clarify

this study's contribution and significance to the field of higher education and HSI scholarship. I

conclude this chapter by outlining the organization for the remainder of this dissertation.

Background on Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Title V

Hispanic-Serving Institutions encompass public and private, 2- and 4-year colleges and

universities in which at least a quarter of the institution's full-time equivalent (FTE)[2]

undergraduate students identify as Latinx and in which at least half qualify for federal financial

---

[2] FTE is the sum of full-time students plus the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all part-time students divided by 12 at an institution (20 U.S.C § 1101a).

aid[3] (Santiago, 2006). Also, HSIs' average educational and general expenditures[4] per FTE

student are low compared to other colleges and universities[5] (20 U.S.C. §1101). While the

precise number of HSIs in any given year often varies across sources, *Excelencia* (2020b)

reported that 539 institutions across 25 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico met the

eligibility criteria for classification as an HSI as of 2018–2019.[6] In other words, HSIs represent

just over 17% of all U.S. colleges and universities or about one out of every six postsecondary

institutions in the United States (*Excelencia*, 2020b).

      Importantly, this growing group of institutions is diverse across several lines, such as

sector, control, selectivity, location, and student racial/ethnic demographics (Benítez & DeAro,

2004; Garcia & Taylor, 2017; Núñez et al., 2016; Núñez & Elizondo, 2012, 2015). Speaking to

this diversity, Garcia (2019) notes, "The only unifying characteristics of these institutions are

that they enroll a significant number of Latinx students, and they are nonprofit" (p. 1). Indeed,

HSIs educate nearly 1.8 million Latinx-identified undergraduates or about two-thirds of all

Latinx undergraduate students in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics

[NCES], 2019c). Also, as of 2018–2019, 215 HSIs offered graduate degrees, collectively

enrolling almost 396,000 graduate students, 29% of whom identify as Latinx (*Excelencia*,

2020b). For context, across the entire U.S. higher education system, Latinxs currently represent

almost 3.6 million students (NCES, 2019b), meaning most Latinx college students enroll in a

---

[3] In effect, these students qualify for federal assistance like Pell Grants and the Federal Work-Study Program under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Often also described as low-income or working-class/poor, these students generally come from households earning less than 150% of the federal poverty level (OPE Financial Aid, 2018).
[4] Educational and general expenditures refer to money an institution spends on instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, institutional support, scholarships, fellowships, operations, physical maintenance, and mandatory transfers (20 USC § 1101a[a][1])
[5] HSIs must operate with low average educational and general expenditures per FTE undergraduate student compared to other accredited, degree-granting higher education institutions in the same state (20 U.S.C § 1101a).
[6] I rely on *Excelencia's* data because this advocacy group is one of the principal disseminators of research on HSIs, having released factsheets each year since 2005 identifying institutions that meet the 25% Latinx FTE threshold (Pineda, 2010). Thus, its data are the most commonly used in scholarship and within many policy circles.

small proportion of all U.S. colleges and universities (Santiago et al., 2016). Notably, this trend has held for more than 20 years. In 1998, Margarita Benítez, a long-time HSI researcher and advocate, indicated that "more than half of Hispanics in postsecondary education [were] concentrated in about 177 institutions with 25 percent or more Hispanic enrollment" (p. 59).

Beyond these enrollment statistics, HSIs also confer more associate and baccalaureate degrees to Latinxs than all other U.S. postsecondary institutions combined (Harmon, 2012). Specifically, HSIs award nearly 60% of all associate degrees and 40% of all baccalaureate degrees to Latinx college students (Cunningham et al., 2014).[7] HSIs also graduate a large share of Latinx students with advanced degrees. Santiago (2012) indicated that of the 25 top institutions in 2009–2010 at awarding master's degrees to Latinx students, 13 were HSIs. Furthermore, Malcom-Piqueux and Lee, Jr. (2011) found that about a quarter of all doctoral-holding Latinxs earned their terminal degrees from an HSI.

Demonstrated by these findings, HSIs serve as a prime access point to higher education for Latinxs in the United States and confer the lion's share of college degrees to this community. In short, the significant role HSIs play both in Latinxs' access to higher education and in their educational outcomes cannot be understated (Laden, 2001). Countless higher education scholars and policymakers, both today and in the past, share this view. For example, paraphrasing former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley's remarks in a press release from March 2000, Laden (2001) wrote, "It is not an overstatement to assert that HSIs' presence and role in educating Hispanics—and other minority groups—can neither be underestimated nor ignored any longer as vital players in higher education" (p. 74). A decade later, Malcom-Piqueux and

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[7] Converting these shares into raw numbers, the NCES (2019c) reported that in 2017–2018, HSIs awarded 138, 106 associate's degrees, 99,718 bachelor's degrees, 19,938 master's degrees, and 2,299 doctoral degrees to Latinx-identified students.

Lee, Jr. (2011) stated, "HSIs are central to the expansion of educational opportunity for this historically disadvantaged group" (p. 1). More recently, Garcia (2019) asserted, "HSIs are essential to increasing the postsecondary participation of students living on the margins of a highly racialized society" (p. 73). As suggested by these comments, HSIs are more than just key players in the postsecondary education of Latinx students; they also heavily serve working-class and first-generation college students (Cuellar, 2015; Núñez & Bowers, 2011; Núñez & Elizondo, 2012; Núñez et al., 2011). For instance, Núñez and Elizondo (2015) found that, on average, 53% of all students at 4-year HSIs received Pell Grants, and Núñez, Crisp, and Elizondo (2015) found nearly 60% of Latinx students enrolled at Hispanic-Serving community colleges were first-generation collegegoers.

HSIs also play a pivotal role in educating many other historically underrepresented and underserved college students, including racially/ethnically minoritized students, adult learners, non-native English speakers, immigrants, and transfer students (Garcia & Taylor, 2017). For instance, HSIs enroll more Black/African American and Indigenous college students than Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). More precisely, Núñez, Hurtado, and Calderón Galdeano (2015) reported that "In 2012–2013, HSIs enrolled 59% of all Latina/o students in higher education, and also enrolled 28% of Asian American, 16% of Black, 14% of American Indian, and 10% of White students nationally" (p. 5). This trend of HSIs enrolling racially/ethnically minoritized students has also persisted over time. Over two decades ago, Benítez (1998) shared that "more than 65 percent of the students enrolled at HSIs belong to diverse minority groups; they are not exclusively Hispanic" (p. 62). Furthermore, documenting changes among HSIs from 1994–2018, Santiago et al. (2020)

indicated that HSIs now enroll slightly more racially/ethnically diverse students, with 71% of students at HSIs identifying as non-white[8] in 1994 compared to 75% in 2018.

While acting as a central access point to higher education for such students, HSIs have historically been and presently are unevenly and under-funded compared to non-HSIs (20 U.S.C. §1101). Longitudinal data spanning 1999–2010 show steady reductions in state and local funding to higher education; these data also indicate that 2- and 4-year public HSIs persistently received less state and local aid than non-HSIs (Ortega et al., 2015). Within these 11 years, public 4-year non-HSIs averaged $9,913 per student compared to $8,636 per student for 4-year public HSIs, meaning state and local governments invested 13% more per student at 4-year public non-HSIs (Ortega et al., 2015). More simply, HACU (2017) reported that HSIs receive approximately 69 cents for every dollar allocated to non-HSIs. In fact, Congress enacted Title V at the urging of educational advocacy groups, such as the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition (HHEC) and HACU, partly because of HSIs' chronic underfunding (*Excelencia*, 2014; Valdez, 2015).

Brief Description of Title V

Congress enacted Title V in 1998 to build HSIs' capacity to serve Latinx students and students with financial need. Unlike most federal college-enrollment programs, which directly fund students (Perna et al., 2008; Wolanin, 1998), Congress directly subsidizes HSIs via Title V, reasoning that recipient institutions will use these grants to advance the campus's overall stability and quality, as well as student learning and degree attainment. In other words, "The key assumption underlying the rationale for the Title V program…is that institutional-level interventions will translate into improvements in student-level outcomes" (Pineda, 2010, xii). However, the Department of Education (ED) does not guarantee Title V funds to all eligible

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[8] In line with other scholars such as Garcia et al. (2019), I lowercase the "w" when referring to white as a race or racialized group to decenter whiteness.

HSIs. Instead, HSIs must apply for and compete with other HSIs for the limited number of grants issued each year. Speaking to this point, Deborah Santiago, co-founder and chief executive officer of *Excelencia* in Education, stated: "This is a competitive program, with only about 25 percent of all institutions that meet basic HSI eligibility actually receiving funds, so receiving program eligibility does not guarantee funding" (Gross, 2014, para. 5). Similarly, Beatriz Ceja, the HSI Division director, explained that even highly scored applicants do not obtain Title V grants (Gross, 2016).

Adding to the competitiveness of Title V is the large, young, and burgeoning Latinx population in the United States and its impact on higher education. Latinxs are the largest racially/ethnically minoritized group in the United States, representing 17.6% of the total population (Flores et al., 2017), and with a median age of 29, Latinxs are the youngest racial/ethnic group in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a; HACU, 2018b). Latinxs are also the fastest-growing racial/ethnic group, increasing at a rate of 61% from 2000–2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b). Critical to this study, this growth affects the landscape of U.S. higher education, especially for HSIs—institutions predicated on Latinx undergraduate enrollment (Santiago, 2006). More specifically, as the Latinx population in the United States has increased, so has the number of Latinx collegegoers and, thus, the number of HSIs. Meanwhile, Title V funding has not increased in step with the growth of HSIs (Nellum & Valle, 2015; Santiago et al., 2016), thereby generating concerns for advocates of Latinx students and HSIs.

Problem Statement

Although a growing research focus, HSIs remain grossly understudied in higher education scholarship (Núñez, 2017a; Núñez, Hurtado, & Calderón Galdeano, 2015). Since 1992, only about 230 peer-reviewed journal articles mention HSIs in any way, and only about

130 of these articles directly focus on HSIs (Marin & Aguilar-Smith, 2019). In contrast, a quick

ProQuest search of the term "liberal arts college" in the ERIC database yields 1,617 peer-

reviewed journal articles since 1992. Furthermore, little published peer-reviewed research

focuses on Title V. Instead, the scant work on Title V mostly takes the form of institutional

reports, news releases, policy briefs, and advocacy groups' legislative agendas (see, e.g.,

Espinosa et al., 2017; *Excelencia*, 2014; HACU, 2018b; Moltz, 2010; Smith-Barrow, 2018;

Villarreal & Santiago, 2012). As such, the field of higher education has overlooked a key

educational policy related to HSIs and, in turn, to the postsecondary education of millions of

students. In short, as a field, we know little about what amounts to well over a $2 billion

investment by the federal government over the last 20 years—a figure that excludes all the costs

associated with managing this program.

Despite the limitations of this research, many educational researchers and advocates still

call on Congress to invest more in Title V, citing the growing number of HSIs compared to

current spending levels. However, without reports documenting which or how many HSIs apply

for these grants each year, researchers frequently treat the number of eligible HSIs as a proxy for

the number of Title V applicants. To illustrate, Table 1 estimates Title V's annual rejection rate,

assuming every HSI applies. Problematically, this estimation assumes (a) all institutions

satisfying the criteria for HSI status apply for this designation[9] and (b) all HSIs apply for a Title

V grant. However, not all HSIs are eligible for this funding any given year,[10] and not all eligible

institutions apply (Aguilar-Smith & Yun, 2019); thus, this approach overestimates the rejection

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[9] An institution can meet the eligibility for HSI designation one year, but not the following year, so the ED requires institutions to apply for HSI status on an annual basis. Only officially designated HSIs can apply for Title V grants.
[10] An HSI cannot concurrently receive a Title V grant and grants under Title III-A or -B programs (Hegji, 2017). Also, an HSI cannot concurrently receive a Title V Part A and Part B grant.

rate. Moreover, myopically focused on the number of awards versus the number of HSIs, such approaches contribute to the notion that Title V grants are exceedingly scarce and difficult to obtain. With such a focus, however, these approaches leave unclear how this policy, informed by meritocratic and neoliberal logics, engenders inequity among HSIs, especially amid their evolving profile.

Table 1

Estimating the Odds of Title V Part A Grant Obtainment, 2009–2019

Year	Eligible HSIs (#)	HSI Annual Growth Rate (%)	Title V Part A Funding (in millions of dollars)	%Δ Title V Part A Funding (%)	New Grants (#)	Rejection Rate (%)
2009–2010	293		93.2		29	90.10
2010–2011	311	6.14	117.4	25.97	78	74.92
2011–2012	356	14.47	104.4	-11.07	11	96.91
2012–2013	370	3.93	100.4	-3.83	20	94.59
2013–2014	409	10.54	95.2	-5.18	11	97.31
2014–2015	435	6.36	98.6	3.57	38	91.26
2015–2016	471	8.28	100.2	1.62	96	79.62
2016–2017	492	4.46	107.8	7.58	30	93.90
2017–2018	523	6.30	107.8	0.00	20	96.18
2018–2019	539	3.06	123.2	14.29	24	95.55

Note: Data for new grants are from the HSI Division (2020b). Data for 2009–2010 funding levels are from Salas (2011); data for remaining funding levels are from the ED Budget Office (2011–2018). Data for the number of HSIs are from *Excelencia* (2015–2018, 2019b, 2020b).

Several scholars, however, have called attention to issues of equity with Title V. For example, Cortez (2015) found that leaders at under-resourced 4-year HSIs worried about competing with more-selective, better resourced HSIs for these funds and feared that this funding would funnel away from places serving the most Latinx students. Garcia (2019) also pointed out a potential source of inequity with this program, remarking:

I call on legislators to consider the institutional diversity of HSIs and the impact this may

have on their ability to be competitive in a grant competition. In particular, as the number

of HSIs classified as high research institutions increases, the stratification of HSIs will

also become enhanced, with high research universities potentially having a greater ability

to compete for federal grants. This must be taken into consideration so that the

distribution of federal resources remains equitable and institutions get the support they

need with consideration of their institutional characteristics and strengths. (p. 134)

Basically, Garcia warns that given Title V's current structure, as the composition of HSIs

diversifies, Hispanic-serving community colleges will compete with Hispanic-serving research

universities for these same funds. In practice, this would be mean the University of California,

Santa Barbara, a research university enrolling 21,942 FTE undergraduates of which 26.7%

identify as Latinx, could compete for the same Title V funds as Dodge City Community College,

a community college enrolling 1,218 FTE undergraduates of which 42.7% identify as Latinx

(*Excelencia*, 2019b). The well-established resource disparity between 4-year and 2-year

institutions identifies the potential for inequitable outcomes (Desrochers & Hurlburt, 2016).

To summarize, the number of HSIs has rapidly increased, but congressional funding to

Title V has plateaued, leading educational leaders to argue that these grants are exceedingly

scarce and difficult to obtain. At the same time, trends indicate that as this group has grown, it

has also institutionally diversified, now encompassing institutions with varied organizational

conditions. In light of this evolving context, it is necessary to analyze the Title V Program more

fully and, in particular, critically examine the equity of this "meritocratic" competition.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this critical qualitative study is to provide a more nuanced understanding of Title V, which moves beyond scarcity, highlighting instead how this federal policy perpetuates inequity among HSIs. In particular, I ask:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants?

   a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

To answer these questions, I interviewed 29 institutional agents at 17 HSIs across five regions of the United States.

My rationale for pursuing this line of inquiry is two-fold. First and primarily, studying the equity of Title V matters because these federal grants are a "purposive course of action" (Anderson, 2011, p. 7) in response to a societal problem. Specifically, Title V serves as recompense for HSIs' unequal funding relative to predominantly white institutions (PWIs)[11] and aims to expand the educational opportunities and increase the academic attainment of Latinx students at HSIs (20 U.S.C. §1101). Since the potential inequities of Title V may jeopardize the opportunity for HSIs to realize their pivotal role in the postsecondary education of Latinxs, this study is necessary. Second, as the number of HSIs grows and this group further diversifies, the need to examine Title V from an equity perspective also becomes more pressing.

Thus, this study calls attention to equity-laden implications of changing contexts (i.e., HSIs' institutional diversification) specifically within the Title V Program. Without such research, certain HSIs will likely be unable to access or fully benefit from this opportunity,

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[11] PWIs are 2-year and 4-year degree-granting institutions in which most students (50% or more) identify as white (Brown, II, & Dancy, II, 2010). In the literature, PWIs are also called historically white institutions, white-serving institutions, and mainstream colleges.

particularly as this group further diversifies. In sum, enrolling, educating, and graduating—serving—millions of underserved college students in the United States, the opportunities afforded to HSIs via this federal funding matter.

Study Design Overview

Conceptual Lens

I borrowed from several theoretical bodies of literature to conceptually orient myself to this study, in which I critically examine the equity of Title V from the perspective HSIs with varied experiences with this program. Namely, I drew on the logic of meritocracy, social equity theory, and concepts from relational inequality theory (RIT). In brief, the logic of meritocracy alongside social equity theory allowed me to trouble Title V's competitive structure in which all HSIs may meritocratically apply for the same Title V grants despite their different organizational conditions and needs. Meanwhile, Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt's (2019) conceptualization of RIT reinforces how relationships within and between organizations (i.e., HSIs) (re)produce inequalities. Altogether, this conceptual lens informed my understanding of how an HSI's conditions, including relationships, shape the opportunities it pursues and its competitiveness in these pursuits. Chapter 2 provides more specifics about how I blended these bodies of literature to guide this study.

Critical Qualitative Inquiry

To conduct this study, I used critical qualitative inquiry (CQI). Denzin (2017) explains that critical qualitative inquiry advances multiple goals within its broader emancipatory agenda, such that researchers using this approach "reveal sites for change and activism," "[use] inquiry and activism to help people," and "[affect] social policy by getting critiques heard and acted on by policymakers" (p. 9). Thus, although policy analyses assume various forms and may rely on

quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or multi-method research designs, I used CQI for two reasons.

For one, this study is not purely a scholarly endeavor; instead, my aim is to pinpoint sources of

inequity of Title V. I also used CQI to learn from those directly affected by this policy. Thus, in

line with both policy analysis and CQI, I reviewed organizational documents and interviewed 29

institutional agents at 17 HSIs to understand Title V from an equity perspective.

Contribution and Significance

This study contributes to the field of higher education and HSI scholarship in several

ways. First, this study expands the severely limited research on Title V and adds nuance to how

Title V is currently understood, elevating sources of inequity with this federal policy. Second,

this study complexifies the existing analysis of Title V by interviewing institutional agents at a

range of HSIs, including campuses that have persistently applied for this funding (successfully

and unsuccessfully) and ones that have opted out of this opportunity. Third, much of the limited

empirical research on Title V employs quantitative methods (see, e.g., Aguilar-Smith & Yun,

2019; Lacagnino, 2019; Perdomo, 2020; Perez, 2018; Pineda, 2010) or strictly relies on

document analyses (see, e.g., Santiago et al., 2016; Vargas & Villa-Palamino, 2018), making this

one of the first qualitative studies of Title V.

This study's significance lies in its exposure of how institutional agents at various HSIs

understand their competitiveness for this federal funding, particularly considering the constraints

and opportunities consigned by their institution's distinct organizational conditions. In addition,

this study helps explain why a segment of eligible institutions does not pursue this funding.

Given the breadth of research upholding the strong positive relationship between institutional

resources and student outcomes (see, e.g., Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Gansemer-Topf & Schuh,

2003, 2006; Pike et al., 2006; Ryan, 2004; Webber & Ehrenberg, 2010), this study matters

because it surfaces equity-laden consequences given HSIs' increasing institutional heterogeneity. All told, this study foregrounds implications of HSIs' many—and mounting—differences, revealing how these institutions' distinct organizational conditions translate into their varied abilities to competitively seek and, thus, access Title V funding—an opportunity designed to expand their capacity to better serve students.

Organization of Dissertation

I organized this dissertation into four additional chapters and multiple appendices. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review in which I (a) historicize HSIs and Title V, (b) describe HSIs' current profile, (c) note trends in Title V appropriations, (d) synthesize existing Title V research, and (e) discuss the conceptual lens for this study. In Chapter 3, I share my positionality and orienting paradigm and explain my methodology, research design, and analytical approach. Chapter 4 presents the findings based on my analysis of participant interviews. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I discuss these findings and their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Towards understanding an HSI's competitiveness for Title V grants and what this may mean for the equity of this policy, I reviewed a gamut of empirical and theoretical literature. Specifically, given the dearth of peer-reviewed literature on Title V and HSIs, I review a wide range of sources (e.g., book chapters, institutional reports, policy briefs, and journal articles) in this chapter. First, I historicize Title V, contextualizing this policy given the emergence and evolution of HSIs within the U.S. system of higher education. Second, I summarize HSIs' historical versus contemporary profile. Third, I synthesize the limited research explicitly on Title V, highlighting the program's management, usage, benefits, beneficiaries, and effectiveness. Then, I offer a critical commentary on these studies. I close the chapter by describing this study's literature-informed conceptual lens.

Historicizing Title V and Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Since the legal and political recognition of HSIs and subsequent enactment of Title V rests on the passage of several federal statutes, I frame the story of HSIs and provide the historical and contemporary context of this study accordingly. As part of this historicizing, I also highlight the concerted advocacy efforts undergirding these legislative actions, namely the tireless work of the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition (HHEC) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) (*Excelencia*, 2014; Rivera, 1981; Rodríguez et al., 2018; Valdez, 2015). Collectively, the information below helps contextualize the legislative and sociopolitical landscape, which educational advocates confronted as they attempted to harness resources for the Latinx community. These details also demonstrate how public policies (ideally) react to sociopolitical shifts. See Appendix A for a detailed timeline of advocacy efforts related

to Latinxs' postsecondary education. To begin, I briefly discuss the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as this watershed piece of federal legislation sets the foundation for Title V.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 and Title III

The 1960s in the United States conjures poignant images of radical cultural and political upheaval. Indeed, this era—a modern Renaissance of sorts for U.S. society—saw unbridled public dissent and civic activism, as evidenced by, for example, the Civil Rights Movement, El Movimiento, the Gay Liberation Movement, and the American Indian Movement. Responding to public outcries for profound societal transformation, President Lyndon B. Johnson spearheaded numerous policy initiatives to alleviate poverty, abate crime, and address pervasive inequalities in the United States—an agenda now commonly referred to as The Great Society (Andrew, 1998). Toward these ends, President Johnson turned to education, stating in an address before Congress on January 12, 1965:

> Every child must be encouraged to get as much education as he has the ability to take. We want this not for his sake—but for the nation's sake. Nothing matters more to the future of our country: not our military preparedness—for armed might is worthless if we lack the brainpower to build a world of peace; not our productive economy—for we cannot sustain growth without trained manpower; not our democratic system of government—for freedom is fragile if citizens are ignorant. (p. 3)

In this evocative speech, President Johnson also explicitly recognized the rampant inequalities within the U.S. educational system, making the pithy remark: "There is a darker side to education in America" (Johnson, 1965, p. 1). In exposing this darkness, President Johnson advocated for more collegiate opportunities for poor/working-class families, increased financial

support for under-resourced colleges, and better academic libraries to help mitigate ongoing

national issues (McCant, 2003). This concerted push ultimately led to the passage of the HEA.

Signed into law on November 8, 1965 by President Johnson, the HEA aimed to bolster

resources for colleges and universities and financially assist students in pursuing higher

education (Higher Education Act, 1965). Over time, through various extensions and

reauthorizations of this act, Congress (a) increased appropriations to degree-granting institutions;

(b) established federal financial aid programs, such as Pell Grants, the Federal Work-Study

Program, and Stafford loans; (c) formed student support services like TRIO Programs (e.g.,

Upward Bound, Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement, and Talent Search); and (d)

created the National Teachers Corps (Benítez, 1998; Rodríguez et al., 2018; Santiago et al.,

2016). Additionally, with the most recent reauthorization of the HEA in 2008, Congress

instituted new reporting requirements for public colleges and universities (Kelchen, 2018;

Lowry, 2009). In short, through these various measures, Congress tried to respond to negative

externalities stemming from higher education's colonial heritage and massification.[12] Germane

to this story, however, is that through the HEA, Congress formally recognized the stratification

of resources across the higher education system, subsequently authorizing federal funding to

under-resourced institutions under Title III.

Enacted with the initial passage of the HEA, Title III established the Strengthening

Developing Institutions Program to "strengthen the academic quality of developing institutions

which have the desire and potential to make a substantial contribution to the higher education

resources of the Nation" (20 U.S.C. §1057). In the context of the late mid-1960s, Congress

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[12] Massification refers to the dramatic and unprecedented expansion of the U.S. system of higher education post-World War II, often marked by the creation of hundreds of new community colleges and other broad-access institutions (Gumport et al., 1997).

broadly defined a *developing institution* as "4-year colleges, junior or community colleges, and institutions accredited or making progress towards accreditation" (*Institutional Aid Under Title III*, 1985, p. 2) that are financially or otherwise constrained. With such a vague definition, Title III provided money to a range of postsecondary institutions. That said, one of Title III's leading roles was (and still is) directing formula grants to HBCUs[13] "to remedy discriminatory action of the states and the federal government against Black colleges and universities" (GAO, 2004, p. 6). In sum, Title III introduced the federal subsidization of historically under-funded institutions.

The 1970s: Early Latinx-Related Advocacy Efforts

In the aftermath of the 1960s and The Civil Rights Movement, many grassroots groups organized more formally (MacDonald & García, 2003). For example, during the early 1970s, the following organizations formed: National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens; League of United Latin American Citizens' National Education Service Centers (LNESC); and National Chicano Council for Higher Education (Arciniega, 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2018). Leaders from each of these burgeoning groups lobbied for a series of initiatives to redress myriad issues adversely affecting Latinx communities. For instance, on October 9, 1975, Richard Salvatierra, the assistant national director of LNESC, testified before a congressional subcommittee, arguing for the expansion of Title III to increase Latinx students' access to and persistence in higher education (*HEA Amendments*, 1976). As part of this testimony, Salvatierra also decried the inequitable allocation of Title III grants and provided startling figures. Explicitly, he stated:

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[13] As a point of clarification, HBCUs receive both mandatory and discretionary grants under Title III. Technically, under Title III Part B, HBCUs "apply" for grants; however, the U.S. Secretary of Education nearly always provides HBCUs these awards (20 U.S.C. §1063a), rendering them essentially mandatory (guaranteed) grants. HBCUs may also compete for discretionary grants under Title III Part F (20 U.S.C. §1067q).

In 1972, black institutions were awarded 96 grants totaling over $30 million. Grants for support of programs for the Spanish-speaking[14] in the same year totaled 18 in the amount of over $2 million. This is a difference of over 1,100 percent in grant funds for blacks as opposed to Spanish-speaking programs. Taking one more step, we discover that the average grant for the black program was $322,000, while for the Spanish-speaking program, it was $156,000…We in no way wish to suggest that funding for black programs be reduced. We simply want to point out that the Hispanics are not receiving an equal share. *(HEA Amendments,* 1976, p. 477)

In short, Salvatierra condemned the Office of Education[15] for disproportionately channeling Title III grants to 4-year Black colleges while, at the same time, attempting not to incite racial animosity between Black and Latinx communities.

During these congressional subcommittee hearings, the battle for Title III funds ensued. For example, Candido de León, then president of Hostos Community College, alongside José (Pepe) Baron, then executive director of El Congreso Nacional de Asuntos Colegiales, also implored Congress to reevaluate Title III and, in particular, to amend the existing stipulation that "76 percent of the funds be appropriated to 4-year colleges, and 24 percent to community colleges" *(HEA Amendments,* 1976, p. 210). Specifically, de León denounced this stipulation as a "serious deficiency" (*HEA Amendments,* 1976, p. 210) since community colleges like his had assumed the "major responsibility for poor students, for poorly prepared students" (p. 210). Also, de León petitioned Congress to restructure Title III "so that all of the other colleges, which are

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[14] Please note the dated language used in this quote, particularly the term "Spanish-speaking programs." Although many Latinx-identified persons do not speak or are not fluent in Spanish, historically, people have often conflated the ability to speak Spanish with programs and services for Latinx students and communities.

[15] In 1979, Congress passed the Department of Education Organization Act, making the Office of Education the Department of Education (ED, 2010).

struggling as developing institutions, may compete for funds without being placed in the position where we seem to be attacking anyone else's needs" *(HEA Amendments,* 1976, p. 210). Indeed, in calling for these reforms, de León recognized the needs of Black institutions, saying:

> I think that it is unfortunate that in our presentation of the views, it may appear that the views of one group are necessarily against the views of another group…I support all the comments that have been made about the need for the Southern Black institutions and the excellent job they have done. My comments are directed to making sure the constituents I have in our community, which are primarily Puerto Rican, are able to receive just as much support as everyone else is receiving. *(HEA Amendments,* 1976, p. 208)

Evidenced by these testimonies, Latinx representatives across multiple organizations questioned the status quo, particularly how Title III served Latinx students, while remaining sensitive to the plight of Black communities. These testimonies also illustrate the ongoing civic and social organizing among the Latinx community at that time.

Spurred by this sociopolitical momentum, new groups surfaced with a specialized focus on higher education, particularly on improving Latinxs' postsecondary experiences and outcomes (Rodríguez et al., 2018; Valdez, 2013). Notably, in 1978, Abelardo I. Perez, then president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), recruited Latinx experts on higher education (Rivera, 1981). Representing eight organizations,[16] these experts formed the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition (HHEC), whose members, in quick time, testified before several congressional subcommittees to request changes to Title III's

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[16] The eight initial members of HHEC included: ASPIRA of America, El Congreso Nacional de Asuntos Colegiales, League of United Latin American Citizens, MALDEF, National Association for Equal Opportunities, National Council of La Raza (now UnidosUS), Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., and Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, U.S. Catholic Conference (Valdez, 2015). By 1980, this group would also include Latino Institute, Mexican American Women's National Association, National IMAGE, Inc., Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and Spanish American League Against Discrimination (Rivera, 1981).

Strengthening Developing Institutions Program (Rivera, 1981). For instance, the HHEC testified before Congress three times in 1979, reiterating the concerns initially put forth by Salvatierra and de León about the inequitable distribution of Title III grants (Rodríguez et al., 2018). Although most contemporary accounts overlook the central role of the HHEC in the story of HSIs (Rivera, 1981; Rodríguez et al., 2018), this group was a "powerful political force throughout the 1980s" (Aspray, 2016, p. 65) that laid much of the necessary groundwork for the enactment of Title V.

The 1980s: An Era of Educational Reform

Reeling from the economic downtown that stretched across much of the 1970s, the 1980s marked a shift toward privatization and increasing accountability in higher education (Geiger, 2010, 2011). In turn, these shifts spawned a wave of educational reforms designed to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Among such reforms, Congress further specified the criteria for a developing institution under Title III, concerned that its previously definition hindered program assessment (*Institutional Aid Under Title III*, 1985). Specifically, with the 1980 reauthorization of the HEA, Congress redefined a *developing (or eligible) institution* as a college or university with below-average educational and general expenditures that enrolls a significant share of students with financial need (Education Amendments of 1980). Additionally, Congress restructured Title III, subdividing into three major parts—Part A: The Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP);[17] Part B: The Special Needs Program; and Part C: The Challenge Grants Program (Education Amendments of 1980). With this reorganization, the SIP replaced the Strengthening Developing Institutions Program. Pertinent to the history of HSIs, the SIP would become the

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[17] Title III Part A programs include the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities program; the Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions program; the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions program; and the Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions program (34 CFR § 607.2).

initial vehicle through which HSIs received federal funding and, thus, served as a springboard for

Title V—a point I discuss later.

The 1980 reauthorization of the HEA, however, failed to materialize the HHEC's slate of

recommendations for colleges and universities largely serving Latinx students. Undeterred, the

HHEC rallied, seeking to capitalize on the momentum incited by Congress's moves to more

intentionally direct resources to under-resourced institutions. Testifying before Congress in 1982,

1984, and 1985, the HHEC advocated for the expansion of Title III to explicitly include

institutions heavily enrolling Latinx students (Rodríguez et al., 2018). Expectedly, the HHEC

and others in the policy arena extensively argued over how many or what percentage of Latinx

students constituted a sufficiently large amount to qualify an institution for Title III funding (see

Rodríguez et al., 2018; Valdez, 2015 for more detail). In the end, per the 1986 reauthorization of

the HEA, for the purposes of eligibility for Title III funding, a *Hispanic Institution* referred to

"any institution of higher education which has an enrollment of which at least 20 percent are

Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Hispanic students, or combination thereof"

(Higher Education Amendments of 1986). Given the present understanding of HSIs, this label—

Hispanic Institution—and definition may seem odd. But in the mid-1980s, no formal label

existed to describe colleges and universities that overwhelmingly served Latinx students, as these

institutions were not yet legally or politically recognized. In fact, the term "Hispanic-Serving

Institution" did not surface until the creation of HACU (Revilla-García, 2011).

In 1986, the HHEC ceded much of its lobbying efforts over to the newly founded HACU

(*Excelencia*, 2014; Valdez, 2015), reasoning that transitioning from a coalition to an association

was "vital for continued advocacy and sustainability" (Rodríguez et al., 2018, p. 24). Established

by a group of HSI leaders, HACU's founding and ongoing mission is "to champion Hispanic

success in higher education" (HACU, n.d.c., para. 1) by advocating for HSIs, among other initiatives. As part of these efforts, HACU coined the term "Hispanic-Serving Institution" (*Excelencia*, 2014; Valdez, 2015) and launched its lobbying platform—an agenda it continues to advance today.

Before segueing to HACU's major victory—the federal recognition of HSIs—this unsung chapter in the story of HSIs merits reflection. The often uncelebrated work of these early Latinx leaders resulted in Title III's restructure. All told, in response to these demands, Congress gradually redefined the eligibility criteria for Title III grants. Eventually, only under-resourced institutions that enroll sizeable shares of financially needy and racially/ethnically minoritized college students were eligible for these discretionary federal grants (Hegji, 2017; Mercer, 2008). In effect, through the various reauthorizations of the HEA, Congress more intentionally allocated Title III funding, only allowing colleges and universities now commonly referred to as Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) to receive this money.[18] Although Congress has amended and reauthorized the HEA eight times (in 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2008), I focus on the three reauthorizations that most immediately relate to the story of Title V and HSIs—those of 1992, 1998, and 2008.

The Early- to Mid-1990s: The Federal Recognition of Hispanic-Serving Institutions

In 1992, Senator Claiborne Pell introduced S.1150, federally recognizing Hispanic-Serving Institutions—*not* Hispanic Institutions—under Title III's SIP (Espino & Cheslock, 2008; *Excelencia*, 2014; Flores, 2011; Valdez, 2015). Simply put, this statute codified HSIs' legal and political identity, which is significant in two primary ways. First, this designation acknowledged

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[18] At the time of this writing, Title III authorizes funding for HBCUs, TCUs, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, and Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions with the expressed purpose of strengthening these institutions' academic, administrative, and fiscal capabilities (Espinosa et al., 2017; Hegji, 2017).

a new kind of MSI—one predicated on enrollment. Second, with this official designation, Congress approved $10 million of Title III funds be set aside for HSIs (Rodríguez et al., 2018).

The Introduction of the Enrollment-Dependent Minority-Serving Institution

The federal designation of HSIs is remarkable not only because of the federal funding associated with this policy but because HSIs were fundamentally unlike any other recognized MSI at that time. Although established at different points in U.S. history, educational leaders intentionally devised HBCUs and TCUs to meet the schooling needs of communities excluded and grossly mistreated by the U.S. higher education system (Gasman et al., 2015; Laden, 2001). Specifically, beginning with the initial chartering of Howard University soon after the passage of the 13th Amendment, HBCUs opened with the explicit mission of educating Black students (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Allen et al., 2007; Dyson, 1921; Gasman et al., 2015; Jewell, 2001; Redd, 1998; Southern Education Foundation, 1995). Meanwhile, in the late 1960s, amid the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and indigenous communities' charge for self-determination, tribal nations established TCUs to preserve their respective tribal identity and sovereignty, as well as to provide more socioeconomic opportunities for their communities (American Indian Higher Education Consortium, 1999; Crazy Bull & White Hat, 2019; Nelson & Frye 2016). More aptly, Guillory and Ward (2008) explain that TCUs—place-based and land-grant institutions—were created "by Indian people for Indian peoples as a way to maintain Indian identity and sovereignty in light of government and educational systems that sought for centuries to assimilate American Indians into mainstream society" (p. 99).

In contrast, most HSIs were not founded with the deliberate mission to serve Latinx students;[19] instead, this designation reflects an institution satisfying an enrollment threshold. As such, HSIs organically surfaced in areas with an established (or growing) Latinx population (Ballysingh et al., 2017; Benítez, 1998; Laden, 2001; MacDonald et al., 2007; Olivas, 1982; Santiago, 2006). In short, gaining this designation because of their Latinx enrollment and *not* because of their founding missions, HSIs differ remarkably from HBCUs and TCUs (Gasman et al., 2015). HSIs are also remarkable compared to other MSIs because they are the primary educators of the racial/ethnic group to whom they owe their designation (Mercer & Stedman, 2008), meaning most Latinx college students attend HSIs. In contrast, most Black college students do not attend HBCUs (Mercer & Stedman, 2008). Even more, unlike numerous HBCUs, which have labored to recruit Black students over time (NCES, 2018), Latinx students increasingly attend HSIs. Evidencing this trend, in 1994–1995, HSIs enrolled almost half of all Latinx college students, whereas today, they educate two-thirds of these students (Santiago et al., 2016). More specifically, whereas in 2018–2019, HSIs enrolled over 2.1 million Latinx undergraduates, these institutions only enrolled 490,000 such students in 1994, which represents

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[19] A few notable exceptions include the now-defunct Spanish-American Normal School at El Rito and National Hispanic University. Established in 1909, legislators tasked the Spanish-American Normal School at El Rito with the vocational training of Spanish-speaking New Mexicans as public-school teachers (MacDonald & García, 2003). Meanwhile, in 1981, Dr. B. Roberto Cruz founded National Hispanic University, a small private, 4-year independent college in Oakland, California. Closing August 23, 2015, the mission of National Hispanic University was "to enable Hispanics, other minorities, women, and others to acquire an undergraduate degree or certificate using a multicultural educational experience to obtain a professional career in business, education, or technology" (National Hispanic University, 2018, para. 1). Another exception includes Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, which opened in 1968 amid mounting pressure from Latinx leaders who demanded that the State of New York found a college to meet the needs of the South Bronx community (Laden, 1999; Olivas, 1982). In saying this, I want to clarify that HSIs in Puerto Rico historically have and presently still enroll mostly Latinx college students.

a 329% increase over this period (Santiago et al., 2020). See Appendix B a table of all currently federally recognized MSI types.

In sum, with the adoption of S.1150, Congress introduced a novel type of MSI—one contingent on student enrollment and, thus, responsive to migratory and demographic shifts. Although this development is remarkable, it also bears mentioning that, during this socio-historical moment, HSIs encountered some of the same constraints HBCUs and TCUs endured. Primarily, HSIs likewise received (and still receive) less funding than PWIs (GAO, 2009; Hegji, 2017; Hubbard & Stage, 2009; O'Brien & Zudak, 1998; Raines, 1998; Southern Education Foundation, 1995; Wolanin, 1998). Given such inequitable funding, HSIs operated, and often still do, with constrained budgets and varying levels of financial insecurity (Hegji, 2017), made worse "by lower levels of corporate support and alumni commitments" relative to "mainstream institutions" (Raines, 1998, p. 77). Ultimately, this very financial precarity is what justified HSIs' need for Title III grants.

Eligibility to Receive Title III Grants

With the 1992 reauthorization of the HEA, Congress could award Title III grants to a newly recognized group of institutions—HSIs. Notably, unlike a Hispanic Institution, which required 20% of an institution's students to identify as Latinx (Higher Education Amendments of 1986), an HSI, at that time, referred to "any institution that had at least a 25 percent Hispanic undergraduate enrollment share and an Hispanic undergraduate population in which 75 percent were low-income and the first generation in their families to attend college" (Espino & Cheslock, 2008, p. 259).[20] As the definitional changes between an Hispanic Institution and an HSI suggest,

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[20]At that time, Title III considered an HSI to be a postsecondary institution with an FTE undergraduate enrollment of at least 25% Latinx, of which at least half were low-income and first-generation college students, and of which an additional 25% of the institution's Latinx students were either low-income or first-generation college students (Higher Education Amendments of 1992).

Congress set narrower eligibility parameters in terms of which institutions counted and, therefore, could apply for Title III grants. Thus, although Congress heeded educational advocates' request to better support colleges educating most of the country's Latinx students, Congress confined the number of institutions eligible for such aid with this more restrictive definition. Nevertheless, operating with this definition, Congress appropriated $12 million in competitive Title III grants for HSIs in 1995 (Salas, 2011).

This victory, however, was *not* universally celebrated; operating from a zero-sum logic, some educational advocates worried that this new measure (i.e., HSIs' federal recognition) would come at the expense of other groups. As Gándara and Jones (2020) argue, through each reauthorization of the HEA, "different entities (e.g., students, institutions) receive either benefits (e.g., aid) or burdens (e.g., taxes) through the revised law" (p. 123). In this specific case, this legislative change fomented tensions between HBCUs and HSIs (Dervarics, 1997; MacDonald et al., 2007). On the one hand, HBCU leaders feared the loss of their relative share of Title III funding (Gasman et al., 2015), "noting that cutting the economic pie more ways would simply mean that everyone would get less" (Raines, 1998, p. 77). On the other hand, proponents of HSIs argued that HBCUs received a disproportionate number of Title III grants and that HSIs were, in fact, "being shortchanged in congressional funding compared to HBCUs" (Benítez, 1998, p. 64). An article published in *The Washington Post* in 1998 highlights this precise intergroup rivalry:

> "They can get everything they want under the current structure. They don't need a
>
> separate part in the law," said Henry Ponder, president of the National Association for
>
> Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, which represents black colleges. "I know
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> Hispanics have had an unfavorable history in terms of discrimination, but it in no way

compares to what has happened to African Americans." (Fletcher, 1998, p. A10 as cited

in Benítez, 1998, p. 65)

As evidenced by the excerpt above, this competition over Title III grants proved divisive.[21] This

combative situation also jeopardized MSIs' ability to reach their institutional goals, including

serving students (Raines, 1998). This deleterious situation ultimately led to Title V's enactment.

In summary, Title III is a central chapter in the story of HSIs, marking Congress's formal

recognition and response to these institutions' acute resource constraints. Title III is also a

pivotal point to this study since it serves as the prequel to Title V.

The Late 1990s: The Enactment of Title V

Given the battle over Title III funds, HSI leaders lobbied Congress to restructure Title III.

Heeding these repeated requests, with the 1998 reauthorization of the HEA, Congress enacted

Title V, earmarking competitive grant funding for HSIs (Dayton et al., 2014; Espino & Cheslock,

2008; MacDonald et al., 2007; Mercer, 2008). Simply put, Congress sought to appease both HSI

and HBCU leaders by removing HSIs from Title III and creating Title V.

Congress provided five primary reasons to justify this decision and, subsequently, to

increase funding for HSIs. First, Congress held that Latinxs have a "high risk" of not accessing,

persisting, and completing higher education (20 U.S.C. §1101). Second, Congress pointed to the

widening disparity between the educational attainment of Latinxs and non-Latinx whites,

stipulating: "Between 1973 and 1994, enrollment of white secondary school graduates in 4-year

institutions of higher education increased at a rate two times higher than that of Hispanic

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[21] As noted earlier in this chapter, although extensive evidence points to the mounting tension between HBCUs and
HSIs, members of these communities also attempted to quell this division. For example, William Blakely, legal
counsel for the United Negro College Fund, clarified that in advocating for more federal funding for HBCUs, he was
not pushing for decreased funding for HSIs (Gasman et al., 2015). Indeed, Blakely and other educational activists
expressed concern positioning Black and Brown communities against one another (Gasman et al., 2015).

secondary school graduates" (20 U.S.C. §1101). Third, Congress conceded that HSIs

disproportionately educate Latinx college students with limited resources to sustain and further

develop their academic programs (20 U.S.C. §1101). Fourth, Congress admitted that HSIs

received less state and local funding per FTE student than other postsecondary institutions (20

U.S.C. §1101). Lastly, Congress stated that funding HSIs aligned with national interests (20

U.S.C. §1101). To this last point, Wolanin (1998) astutely commented:

> Aid to the HSIs…is not based on such a special relationship between the government and
>
> Hispanics. Instead, it derives from the broader 'federal mission of equality of educational
>
> opportunity.' To serve the national interest and promote the national welfare of the
>
> United States, the federal government has a role in providing an equal educational
>
> opportunity for all Americans. Hispanic Americans are a large group that has a low level
>
> of participation and achievement in higher education. The federal government should,
>
> therefore, make a special effort to improve the opportunities for the higher education of
>
> Hispanics. Because Hispanics are concentrated in relatively few higher educational
>
> institutions and because these institutions 'are schools without substantial wealth or
>
> financial resources,' an effective strategy for improving opportunities for higher
>
> education for Hispanics would be to provide direct federal support to HSIs. (U.S. Senate,
>
> 1991, pp. 19–20 as cited in Wolanin, 1998, p. 30)

Whether Title V advances a nationalistic agenda, however, is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Instead, relevant to this study is how Congress redefined HSIs and structured this program.

To follow, I first discuss Title V's codification of the legal criteria still used to designate

HSIs and award grants. Second, I describe the structure of the Title V Program, including an

explanation of the distinct types of Title V grants. Lastly, I cover a few general provisions on

Title V eligibility and applications, waivers and reporting, and management before providing

information on the contemporary institutional characteristics of HSIs.

The Legal Definition of Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Under Title III, an HSI referred to postsecondary institutions in which at least 25% of its

undergraduates were Latinx, 75% or more of whom also classified for federal financial aid and

as first-generation collegegoers (Espino & Cheslock, 2008). Concerned that this narrow

definition would exclude too many institutions pivotal to Latinxs' education, HSI advocates,

such as Congressman Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX), called for a broader definition (Santiago, 2006).

Congress responded to this request, replacing Title III's confining definition with the following

four primary criteria. First, to be legally designated as an HSI, an institution must maintain a

minimum Latinx FTE undergraduate enrollment of 25% the year immediately preceding its

application (20 U.S.C. §1101a). Second, 50% or more of the institution's Latinx undergraduate

students[22] must be eligible for need-based aid, such as Pell Grants and the Federal Work-Study

Program, under Title IV of the HEA (Higher Education Amendments of 1998). In practice, this

means that at least half of an HSI's Latinx undergraduates must come from households earning

less than 150% of the federal poverty level (OPE Financial Aid, 2018). Third, an HSI cannot

operate for profit (Stearns & Watanabe, 2002). Finally, an HSI must have relatively low

educational and general expenditures[23] per FTE undergraduate student, meaning the institution

spends less on areas such as instruction, research, public service, and student services than other

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[22] With the passage of the Third Higher Education Extension Act of 2006, this stipulation changed, making it so that an HSI needed to enroll 25% or more FTE Latinx undergraduates and 50% or more undergraduates who classified for need-based federal financial aid (Mercer, 2008).

[23] Educational and general expenditures refer to the total amount expended by an institution for instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, institutional support, scholarships, fellowships, operations, physical maintenance, and mandatory transfers (20 USC § 1101a[a][1])

postsecondary institutions[24] (20 U.S.C. §1101a). Importantly, these four criteria not only redefined an HSI but satisfying these criteria also made an institution eligible for Title V funding. Given the focus of this study, I now explain the distinct types of Title V grants.

Title V Part A Grants

Title V authorizes capacity-building grants for HSIs, given the historical neglect many these institutions experienced (and continue to encounter). Specifically, Title V seeks to improve Latinxs' educational opportunities and attainment as well as advance HSIs' academic quality, student support services, institutional management, and fiscal stability (20 U.S.C. §1101). Toward these ends, Title V has expanded over time, albeit not in perfect measure, with HSIs' growth and institutional diversification. While now Title V is a competitive two-part program, it initially only included Part A.

Title V Part A, the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program (DHSI), centered undergraduate education, as it continues to do so today. Specifically, the DHSI Program "provides grants to assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for and improve the attainment of Hispanic students. These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability" (HSI Division, 2020a, para. 2). This original emphasis is sensible given the institutional makeup of HSIs at that period. Until quite recently, "the vast majority of HSIs have included community colleges and teaching-focused comprehensive universities" (Marin & Pereschica, 2017, p. 155). Briefly put, Congress envisioned the DHSI Program catering to the needs of most HSIs—at least at that time.

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[24] Specifically, an HSI must average low spending on educational and general per FTE undergraduate student in comparison to other accredited, degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the same state (20 U.S.C § 1101a).

Toward these goals, Title V Part A includes three types of grants: 5-year individual development grants, 5-year cooperative development grants, and 1-year planning grants. As the name suggests, individual awards go to only one HSI. For example, in 2019, Long Beach Community College received a $3 million grant to establish a program called DESTINO: Developing Engaging STEM Through Innovative New Opportunities, which aimed to innovate the institution's pedagogical practices to better support historically underrepresented and underserved STEM students at the college (HSI Division, 2019). In contrast, cooperative grants finance projects shared between two or more colleges and universities—ideally reducing duplication costs (GAO, 2009).[25] For example, in 2018, California State University, Fresno (Fresno State) received a DHSI cooperative development grant in partnership with Fresno City College and Reedley College to improve transfer pathways into Fresno State's Teacher Education Program (HSI Division, 2018).Lastly, 1-year planning grants are uncommon; however, technically the U.S. Secretary of Education reserves the right to award such a grant to an HSI attempting to submit a DHSI grant proposal the following year (20 U.S.C. §1101c).

Unlike 1-year planning grants, both individual and cooperative DHSI grants sponsor a range of activities, such as (a) the construction and renovation of instructional facilities; (b) the purchase of educational materials (c) the development of tutoring and counseling services; and (d) the creation transfer articulation agreements (20 U.S.C. §1101b). See Appendix C for a complete list of authorized activities. Although these grants may support similar projects, each carries its own monetary value. The maximum yearly award amount for individual DHSI grants has ranged between $650,000 in 2010 and $525,000 in 2015 (HSI Division, 2010, 2015). To this

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[25] In the case of cooperative development grants, technically only the lead applicant must be an HSI, whereas partner institutions may or may not be eligible for Title V funds (20 U.S.C. §1103c; GAO, 2009). In other words, "Cooperative Development Grants permit one eligible HSI to seek federal funding in cooperation with one or more non-HSIs to accomplish mutually beneficial goals" (Vargas, 2018, p. 4).

point, Vargas (2018) reported that "Nearly all Title V Developing HSI grant recipients are allocated approximately $500,000 to $650,000 annually over 5 years, for a total of nearly $2.5 million per grant awarded" (p. 5). In contrast, the maximum yearly award for cooperative development grants has ranged between $775,000 in 2010 and $650,000 in 2015 (HSI Division, 2010, 2015). Thus, whereas individual awards extend about $2.5 million to a beneficiary over 5-years, cooperative development grants, on average, provide just under $4 million to beneficiaries. Despite the dollar differences between these two types of grants, the intention behind them is similar: finance projects (otherwise unaffordable) that ideally strengthen the recipient's institutional stability and educational offerings.

Title V General Provisions

While advancing these aims, these grants come with stipulations. Specifically, Title V has various general eligibility provisions and application requirements, as well as stipulations regarding waivers and reporting and the application review process. Incorporated across many of these provisions are also several accountability measures.

Eligibility and Applications. In terms of eligibility, an institution must be federally designated as an HSI, fulfilling the four main criteria for HSI status outlined earlier in this chapter. However, a few additional, trickier points about eligibility for Title V funds bear discussion. For one, branch campuses may also apply for Title V grants, even if it does not meet state-level authorization and/or accreditation requirements (Hegji, 2017). Second, HSIs may simultaneously receive individual and cooperative development DHSI grants (GAO, 2004, 2007).[26] Indeed, based on the GAO's (2004) report, 32 HSIs received both an individual and a cooperative development DHSI grant in 2003. DHSI awardees may also "receive a grant under

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[26] Discussed later, HSIs may not concurrently receive awards under both parts of Title V (Mercer, 2008).

any of the Title III-F programs in the same fiscal year" (Hegji, 2017, p. 37). Third and relatedly, current Title V awardees cannot receive funding under any Title III Part A (i.e., SIP) program (Hegji, 2017).[27] HSIs also cannot forfeit their Title V grants to receive any funding under Title III Part A (20 U.S.C. §1101d).

In terms of application requirements, HSIs must propose a project, list its intended goals and projected outcomes and include an assessment plan (20 U.S.C. §1103). Notably, although applicants must propose projects that comply with the list of authorized activities, their projects are not required to directly cater to Latinx or Pell-eligible students (Moltz, 2010). Instead, their projects should reflect the competitive preferences and invitational priorities outlined in that year's call for proposals. For instance, in 2017, the OPE prioritized projects that:

> establish or enhance a program of teacher education designed to qualify teacher candidates to teach in public elementary schools and secondary schools…Projects that develop or enhance articulation agreements and/or student support programs designed to facilitate the transfer from 2-year to 4-year institutions. (Notice inviting applications for new awards: DHSI, 2017, p. 11442)

Waivers and Reporting. The U.S. Secretary of Education can issue waivers to petitioning institutions under certain conditions (20 U.S.C. §1103a; Malcom-Piqueux & Lee, 2011). As a result, some institutions may receive Title V grants but not meet all the eligibility requirements. In terms of reporting, awardees must submit yearly reports summarizing the status of their project(s) (20 U.S.C. §1103). Again, however, these reporting guidelines "do not require the recipients to show that the spending reaches Hispanic students or that it improves their academic outcomes" (Moltz, 2010, para. 1).

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[27] Although HSIs cannot simultaneously receive Title V and Title III Part A funding, HSIs have repeatedly pursued and obtained grant funding via Title III Part A (see, e.g., OPE, 2021 for evidence).

Application Review Process. A panel of experts selected by the U.S. Secretary of Education anonymously reviews applications, evaluating and scoring proposals according to a set rubric (20 U.S.C. §1103b).[28] Based on this peer-review process, the OPE rank orders applicants and recommends funding to those with the highest scores (GAO, 2009). Based on these recommendations, the U.S. Secretary of Education then issues awards (20 U.S.C. §1103b).

In sum, 1998 marked a pivotal turning point in the story HSIs. The HEA reauthorization introduced the main criteria still used to designate HSIs. This reauthorization also created the DHSI Program. The DHSI Program's narrow focus on strengthening *undergraduate* education, however, led to the eventual expansion of Title V a decade later.

The Early 2000s: The Expansion of Title V

Each year, increasingly, more institutions become eligible for HSI status, drastically shifting this group's makeup over time. In the wake of these shifts and general concerns over Latinxs' collegiate opportunities and outcomes, educational advocates pushed for a slightly broader set of criteria for HSI status. Heeding these demands, on September 30, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law the Third Higher Education Extension Act of 2006, which amended two parts of Title V (Mercer, 2008). First, through this act, an institution qualified for HSI status if at least a quarter of FTE undergraduates are Latinx-identified and at least half of *all* of undergraduates (rather than 50% of Latinx undergraduates) are eligible for need-based federal financial aid (Third Higher Education Extension Act of 2006). Second, with this act, Congress did away with the mandatory 2-year wait-out period, which required Title V awardees to wait two years after their grants ended before reapplying for a new one (Mercer, 2008).

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[28] The U.S. Secretary of Education is responsible for guaranteeing (a) that reviewers do not evaluate applications for which they have any conflict of interest and (b) impartiality in the application review process (20 U.S.C. §1103b).

Around the same time, educational advocates also petitioned Congress for additional resources for graduate education programs at HSIs. For example, in 2003, Antonio Flores, president and chief executive officer of HACU, spoke at a hearing of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, stating:

> We must afford our largest population the opportunity to acquire the advanced skills and knowledge required to build a better future for our nation. This bill does not address this. Less than 5 percent of Hispanics obtain a graduate or professional degree. I urge you to include within this important legislation the authorization of $125 million for a new Part B under Title V to increase and improve graduate education for Hispanics. (*The Expanding Opportunities in HEA*, 2003, pp. 15–16)

The following month, at a congressional subcommittee field hearing in Edinburg, Texas, Miguel A. Nevarez, then president of the University of Texas-Pan American, also requested additional grants and financial aid for graduate students (*Expanding Opportunities in Higher Education*, 2003). Responding to these calls, Senator George Miller (D-CA) sponsored H.R. 44314—the Higher Education Opportunity Act—on November 9, 2007. Becoming public law on August 14, 2008, this act amended the HEA to also include Title V Part B. Known as the Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans Program (PPOHA), Title V Part B applies to HSIs that confer postbaccalaureate certificates or degrees and aims to:

> 1) expand postbaccalaureate educational opportunities for, and improve the academic attainment of, Hispanic students; and 2) expand the postbaccalaureate academic offerings as well as enhance the program quality in the institutions of higher education that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic and low-income students complete postsecondary degrees. (20 U.S.C. §1102)

In short, Part B mirrors the purpose of Part A, but at the graduate level, providing HSIs competitive grant funding to "expand postbaccalaureate educational opportunities for Hispanic and low-income students" (Heji, 2014, p. 20). With similar purposes, the PPOHA grants may fund many of the same activities as DHSI grants, such as the construction of instructional facilities, curricular development, and faculty exchanges (20 U.S.C. §1102b; see Appendix C for a full list of authorized activities). Furthermore, Part B also includes both individual and cooperative development grants of comparable value to that of DHSI awards (see Table 2 for an overview of Title V grants).

All told, the expansion of Title V in 2008 to include Part B may be viewed as a response—a policy solution—to HSIs' increasing institutional diversity. That is, with more HSIs offering postbaccalaureate options, this expansion attempted to meet HSIs' changing realities and needs. Yet, the DHSI Program's structure endured, meaning the enactment of Part B was not at the expense of Part A. Rather, some HSIs became eligible for PPOHA grants while still retaining their eligibility to compete and receive funding under the DHSI Program. Next, considering the purpose of this study, I discuss the current profile of HSIs, highlighting this group's evolution over time.

Table 2

General Characteristics of Title V Grants

Enacted (Year)	Grant (Type)	Defining Characteristics	Duration (Years)	Max Grant Amount ($)
Part A: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program				
1998	DHSI Individual Development Grant	Awarded to a sole beneficiary, these grants may finance any of the 16 authorized activities to strengthen an HSI's undergraduate education.	5	$650,000–$525,000
1998	DHSI Cooperative Development Grant	Shared between two or among a few institutions, these grants may finance any of the 16 authorized activities to strengthen an HSI's undergraduate education.	5	$750,000–$650,000
1998	DHSI Planning Grant	In rare cases, the U.S. Secretary of Education extends this grant to an HSI to prepare application materials for an individual or a cooperative development grant.	1	—
Part B: Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans Program				
2008	PPOHA Individual Development Grant	Awarded to a sole beneficiary, these grants may finance any of the 8 authorized activities to strengthen an HSI's graduate education.	5	$575,000
2008	PPOHA Cooperative Development Grant	Shared between two or among a few institutions, these grants may finance any of the 8 authorized activities to strengthen an HSI's graduate education	5	$575,000

Note: The dash indicates that data were unobtainable. Data for PPOHA maximum awards are from the Notice inviting applications for new awards: PPOHA (2014), and data for DHSI maximum awards are from the HSI Division (2010, 2015).

Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Contemporary Institutional Profile

Hispanic-Serving Institutions, a type of MSI, are a heterogeneous group of postsecondary institutions; their differences span multiple dimensions, including sector, level of control, degree of urbanization, selectivity, student demographics, and organizational identities. (Benítez & DeAro, 2004; Cuellar, 2019; Garcia & Taylor, 2017; Merisotis, 2005; Núñez & Elizondo, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016). In this section, I provide general data on HSIs, including information on their spread and size, as well as on their sector and prestige-related characteristics (e.g., selectivity and graduation rates). Afterward, I include a brief overview of indicators of HSIs' general financial health. While presenting a population-level description, I emphasize the variation among HSIs with empirical data and discuss this contemporary profile in the context of historic and ongoing trends. With this approach, I attempt to demonstrate some of the ways this group has evolved over time as well as HSIs' varied organizational conditions.

Size and Spread

As of 2018–2019, 539 institutions met the criteria for HSI status, and this group educates the majority (67%) of Latinx undergraduates in the United States (*Excelencia*, 2020b). Furthermore, because of the United States' shifting racial/ethnic demography, the number of HSIs has grown dramatically in recent years (Santiago et al., 2020),[29] and projections indicate they will continue to grow in number for the foreseeable future (HACU, 2017b; Hussar & Bailey, 2018). Illustratively, in the decade from 2007–2017, the number of HSIs increased by 98%—from 266 to 523 institutions (*Excelencia*, 2019b), and since 1994, the number of HSIs has increased 185%—from 189 to 539 institutions as 2018–2019 (Santiago et al., 2020).

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[29] Santiago et al. (2020) reported that "the growth of HSIs has accelerated in the last 9 years. In 2010–11, the number of HSIs surpassed 300 (311 HSIs) and has accelerated since then to reach the 539 HSIs today, (an increase of 228 HSIs in just 9 year)" (p. 7).

Furthermore, when considering the most recent data on emerging HSIs (eHSIs), institutions with an FTE undergraduate Latinx enrollment between 15–24% (Santiago & Andrade, 2010),[30] there are an additional 345 institutions (*Excelencia*, 2020a). Collectively, this means 884 institutions presently have Latinx FTE undergraduate enrollment rates of 15% or higher.

In terms of enrollment size, most HSIs, including both Hispanic-serving community colleges and PPOHA-eligible HSIs, are small to medium-sized institutions. Specifically, 62% of all HSIs matriculate 5,000 or fewer FTE undergraduate students, and 16% enroll fewer than 500 FTE students (*Excelencia*, 2020b). In their descriptive analysis of 140 U.S. mainland HSIs with both undergraduate and graduate programs, Garcia and Guzman-Alvarez (2019) found that most HSIs ($n = 51$) had a total enrollment between 1,000–4,999 students, followed by HSIs ($n = 30$) with enrollments between by 5,000–9,999. However, while most HSIs are and historically have been rather small, these institutions vary by enrollment. In 2008, for example, the largest reported HSI enrolled 36,075 students, the smallest a mere 23, and the average 6,173 (Núñez et al., 2016). Within the last decade, more 4-year comprehensive universities and research universities have become HSIs (Marin, 2019), and with this shift, HSIs' average enrollment size has incrementally grown. *Excelencia* (2020b) indicated that, as of 2018–2019, nearly 20% of HSIs enrolled between 5,000–10,000 students, and almost 20% enrolled 10,000 or more students. For instance, data from 2018–2019 indicated that the University of Central Florida enrolled a whomping 48,700 FTE students (*Excelencia*, 2020b).

In terms of geographic spread, given Latinxs' historical immigration and migratory patterns, HSIs have been and remain concentrated in the west and the southwestern United States (Santiago et al., 2020). Indeed, nearly 70% of HSIs span only three states and Puerto Rico

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[30] Emerging HSIs do not meet the enrollment threshold needed for HSI status, but given projected demographic shifts and Latinxs' college-going trends, these schools may soon become HSIs (*Excelencia*, 2020a).

(*Excelencia*, 2020b). More specifically, as of 2018–2019, California was home to 176 HSIs, Texas 96, and New York 34 (*Excelencia*, 2020b). Demographic projections, however, indicate this concentration will wane over time as Latinxs venture to and settle in new geographic areas of the country. In their exploratory study, which used population projections, Torres and Zerquera (2012) found that HSIs will surface in seven new states by 2020—areas not previously considered Latinx enclaves.[31] Similarly, Santiago et al. (2020) reported that "more states not typically known for having a large Latino population have HSIs" (p. 6), pointing out states such as Arkansas, Idaho, and Wisconsin that, as of 2018–2019, each has at least one HSI. A final note about the spread of HSIs, although regionally concentrated, as of 2018–2019, this group spans 25 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (*Excelencia*, 2020b). Also, *Excelencia* (2020b) reported that as of 2018–2019, eHSIs span 34 states and Puerto Rico. Cumulatively, therefore, when excluding Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, there are only 16 states with neither an HSI nor an eHSI and nine states with only eHSIs (*Excelencia*, 2020a, 2020b).

Sectorial Characteristics

As of 2018–2019, slightly more than half (54%) of all HSIs are 4-year institutions (*Excelencia*, 2020b); this is a point worth emphasizing since HSIs have long been cast as resource-limited community colleges. For instance, in their rendering of the history and emergence of MSIs, Gasman et al. (2015) describe HSIs writing, "These institutions are predominantly public and 2-year, urban, and significantly underresourced" (p. 134). Furthermore, among 4-year HSIs, privates marginally outnumber publics at 152 and 140 institutions, respectively (Santiago et al., 2020). Although when considering both 2-year and 4-

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[31] Torres and Zerquera (2012) projected the seven following states would gain HSIs: Arkansas, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Of these seven states, they reported that, at the time of their analysis, only Arkansas and Oregon had eHSIs.

year HSIs, most (69%) are still public institutions (*Excelencia*, 2020b). Despite public HSIs'

enduring stronghold, it bears noting that there was a 171% percent increase in the number of

private 4-year HSIs over the last 25 years (Santiago et al., 2020). Separately, 43% of HSIs—the

largest single sector—are public 2-year colleges (*Excelencia*, 2020b). However, with the

tremendous growth of 4-year HSIs, namely of public 4-year HSIs,[32] the relative share of public

Hispanic-serving community colleges has slightly waned over time (Santiago et al., 2020).

Specifically, while presently 43% of HSIs are public 2-year colleges (*Excelencia*, 2020b), just 10

years ago, these institutions accounted for 54% of all HSIs (Núñez et al., 2016).

 Further demonstrating such sectorial changes, the number of HSIs with graduate

programs has increased by a remarkable 348%, from 48 to 215 institutions in 1994 and 2018,

respectively (Santiago et al., 2020). In other words, almost 40% of HSIs as of 2018–2019 offer

graduate degrees (*Excelencia*, 2020d), and if trends hold, most will offer postbacculearatute

options in the near future. Addressing this point, Marin and Pereschica (2017) explain, "due to

changing enrollment, research universities with the highest research activity (Research 1

institutions) are adding HSI to their list of classifications, deliberately or not" (p. 155). Table 3

provides a snapshot of the key characteristics discussed.

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[32] 4-year public HSIs experienced a 367% percent increase between 1994 and 2018 (Santiago et al., 2020).

Table 3

HSIs' Changing Profile, 2017–2018 vs. 2012–2013

	HSIs			Emerging HSIs			HSIs with Graduate Programs		
	Y2	Y1	%Δ	Y2	Y1	%Δ	Y2	Y1	%Δ
Sector									
Public, 4-year	133	72	85%	88	65	35%	87	53	64%
Public, 2-year	222	178	25%	134	98	37%	0	0	0%
Private, 4-year	146	105	39%	99	104	-5%	122	86	42%
Private, 2-year	22	15	47%	7	10	-30%	0	0	0%
Total	523	370	41%	328	277	18%	209	139	50%
FTE Enrollment									
Total	3,024,905	2,107,437	44%	1,612,414	1,792,642	-10%	369,723	214,784	72%
Total Latinx	1,387,552	997,858	39%	322,106	352,503	-9%	106,004	73,149	45%
Location									
# of States	25	15	67%	35	31	13%	19	12	58%
# in Puerto Rico	63	59	7%	0	0		39	36	8%
# in DC	1	0	100%	0	0	0	1	0	0%

Note. Y2 indicates 2017–2018, and Y1 indicates 2012–2013. The percent change represents the change in values between Y2 and Y1 divided by the absolute value of Y1. Public, 4-year institutions include HSIs that offer advanced degrees. All institutions included are non-profits. FTE enrollment for HSIs and eHSIs refers to the FTE enrollment of undergraduates across all the institutions within that category. Although HSIs with graduate programs obtain their HSI status based on their FTE enrollment of Latinx undergraduate students (in addition to other criteria), the numbers provided for this category under FTE enrollment reflect the FTE enrollment of graduate students across all institutions within this category. Total enrollment accounts for students across all racial/ethnic groups. This table relies on the legal definition of HSIs, not the number of institutions that have applied for HSI status. Data for 2012–2013 are from Santiago et al. (2015), and data for 2017–2018 are from *Excelencia* (2019a, 2019b, 2019d).

Prestige-Related Metric*s*

Institutional Selectivity

When considering selectivity, a measure of the difficulty of admission,[33] most HSIs are

broad-access or open-access institutions (Núñez, 2017a; Núñez et al., 2016; Núñez & Rodríguez,

2018).[34] Specifically, Núñez et al. (2016) indicated that most HSIs in 2008–2009 admitted most

applicants, with HSIs, on average, matriculating about 85% of all applicants each year, and Perez

(2018) reported that as of fall 2007, 4-year HSIs had an average admission rate of 72%.

However, a few HSIs have selective admissions. For example, the University of California,

Santa Barbara and the University of California, Irvine boast acceptance rates of only 32.3% and

28.8%, respectively (Regents of the University of California, 2019a, 2019b). Furthermore, based

on the list of eHSIs, this group will soon include a greater number of admissions-exclusive

institutions. For instance, Pomona College, an eHSI, advertised a mere 8% acceptance rate in

2019 (U.S. News & World Report, 2019).

Graduation and Transfer Rates

In terms of traditional outcome measures,[35] HSIs are the primary providers of higher

education to Latinxs and one of the leading producers of Latinx graduates at the associate,

baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels (Cunningham et al., 2014; Harmon, 2012; Malcom-

Piqueux & Lee, 2011; Santiago, 2012; Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Empirical studies have also

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[33] For 4-year colleges and universities, selectivity is based on the entrance examinations scores (e.g., ACT or SAT) of its entering first-year students (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2017).
[34] Hillman and Weichman (2016) define *broad-access institutions* as colleges and universities with 75% or higher acceptance or admittance rates. Meanwhile, *open-access institutions* refer to colleges and universities with inclusive admissions that often only require applicants to have either a high school diploma or a GED certificate to enroll.
[35] Many scholars debate and rightfully critique higher education's overreliance on traditional outcome metrics, such as graduation and transfer rates, rather than on process-oriented benchmarks (see, e.g., Franco & Hernández, 2018; Jones, 2014). Even more, multiple scholars have addressed, in particular, how problematic these white normative standards are for HSIs (see, e.g., Garcia, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019; Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimón, 2015; Núñez & Rodríguez, 2018). And so, although I document how HSIs fare in terms of these measures, my point is not to romanticize these white standards or uphold their use in valuing and valorizing HSIs.

found that Latinx students at HSIs boast higher graduation rates than their Latinx peers at non-HSIs. In a quantitative analysis of the completion rates of 89 HSIs and 310 non-HSIs, Nichols (2017) found that 51% of Latinx students with SAT scores between 1,010–1,082 who enrolled at an HSI graduated within six years, while only 46% of their Latinx peers at non-HSIs graduated within this same period. Additionally, Flores and Park (2014) indicated that after controlling for institutional capacity factors, Latinx and Black students at HBCUs and HSIs perform just as well as students at PWIs in terms of graduation rates. Even more, Espinosa et al. (2017) reported that HSIs perform far better than suggested by previous federal reports, writing:

> The completion rate for exclusively full-time students at two-year public HSIs was 40.3 percent using NSC data, compared to the federal graduation rate of 25.5 percent. The NSC total completion rate for public four-year HSIs was approximately 50 percent and 74.1 percent for exclusively full-time students, compared to a federal graduation rate of 42.7 percent. (p. v)

Beyond these promising graduation metrics, a couple of other studies have shown that Latinx students attending Hispanic-serving community colleges are more prepared and more likely to transfer to 4-year institutions (Hagedorn et al., 2007; Laden et al., 2008). Impressively, HSIs have realized these positive outcomes despite many of these institutions' resource constraints.

Financial Health

Most HSIs depend on federal, state, and local resources—on public dollars. Public Hispanic-serving community colleges, which again currently represent 43% of all HSIs (*Excelencia,* 2020b), derive 70% of their revenue from public sources, while other 2-year colleges only derive 57% of their revenue from public dollars (Nellum & Valle, 2015). This means that public 2-year HSIs rely 13% more on federal, state, and local funding than other

public community colleges. Additionally, almost half of the revenue at public 4-year HSIs comes from a combination of public sources, whereas at other public 4-year institutions, such streams only account for 42% of their revenue (Nellum & Valle, 2015).

A closer look at this public support is especially important; again, one of the primary reasons Congress formally recognized HSIs was because they receive(d) far less state and local funding than other postsecondary institutions. Fittingly, Ortega et al. (2015) found that public HSIs (both 2-year and 4-year institutions) received fewer dollars in state and local aid than non-HSIs from 1999–2010. Specifically, during this period, Ortega et al. found that state and local governments invested 13% less per student at public 4-year HSIs compared to what they spent per student at public 4-year non-HSIs. Although startling, Ortega et al.'s findings are unsurprising given Congress's rationale for this designation and, moreover, their continued funding of Title V. However, more unexpectedly, this unequal and inequitable public investment in HSIs also occurs at the federal level. Recent data show that, on average, HSIs receive "$3,117 per student from all federal revenue sources, compared to $4,605 per student for all degree-granting institutions, just 68 cents on the dollar received by other institutions to educate a disproportionately low-income student population" (HACU, 2018b, p. 7). Taken collectively, most HSIs depend more on public dollars than non-HSIs, while simultaneously receiving comparatively less in state, local, and federal money.

In the wake of continued public divestment in higher education (Mitchell et al., 2018), this reliance on unevenly allocated public resources introduces further financial insecurity for HSIs, especially since most HSIs have few alternative revenue streams (e.g., minimal private donations and restricted latitude in raising tuition and fees) and limited endowment holdings (Drezner & Villarreal, 2015; GAO, 2009; HACU, 2018b; Mulnix et al., 2002, 2004; Ortega et

al., 2015). Furthermore, many HSIs have limited organizational support to seek extramural funding opportunities (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012). For instance, Mulnix et al. (2004) found that 62% of their survey respondents—all who were CEOs at HSIs—reported that: (a) their institution only employed 1–3 full-time development officers; (b) 31% did not habitually monitor federal grant options; and (c) 35% did not have staff dedicated to interacting with local, state, and private foundations. Amid declining public investment and minimal resources for institutional advancement, most HSIs operate with some financial duress while maintaining "admissions policies associated with the enrollment of students who need greater academic support" (GA0, 2009, p. 12). Historicizing the long-standing nature of this dilemma, over 20 years ago, Benítez asserted:

> It is no exaggeration to describe the financial condition of a large number of HSIs as precarious. Many HSIs are underequipped and understaffed, and they are unable to do competitive hiring, develop baccalaureate or graduate programs, maintain modern research facilities, or offer high-tech learning and working environments. In light of these problems, some questions may be raised about the quality of instruction and the possibilities for student and faculty advancement at HSIs. (1998, p. 63)

Plainly, Benítez connects resources to an institution's academic quality and opportunities, suggesting that HSIs' chronic underfunding may limit their capacity to serve students.

Found across multiple studies, low revenues restrict institutions' capacity-building efforts, such as their ability to expand facilities and academic programs (Mitchell et al., 2016). Unsurprisingly, given the criteria for HSI designation, Merisotis and McCarthy (2005) found that HSIs allocate proportionally fewer resources to instruction, academic support, and student services than other postsecondary institutions, meaning they invest less in areas such as formal

instruction, curriculum development, faculty training, and co-curricular programs. Specifically, "revenues at HSIs are 42 percent less [*sic*] ($5,742 less per FTE student) than at all other institutions, and endowments at these institutions are 91 percent less than at all other institutions" (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005, p. 49). In short, most HSIs have limited financial resources—a reality which has prompted concern among top HSI leaders (de los Santos & Cuamea, 2010).

In line with other characteristics of this group, HSIs' financial contexts also vary considerably. In her quantitative analysis, Perez (2018) indicated that 4-year HSIs' average expenditure per FTE student on instruction, academic support, and student services was $7,063, $1,858, and $2,049, respectively. Meanwhile, Núñez et al. (2016) reported that in 2008–2009, HSIs, on average, invested about $5,000 on instruction per student, while some spent a mere $160 per student. These figures collectively suggest that while many HSIs pursue opportunities under financially constrained conditions, others have far more financial flexibility. And recognizing HSIs' varied financial resources is especially important to this study since institutional agents likely make sense of their campus's competitiveness for Title V grants in light of their respective organizational conditions.

In sum, as more institutions have become HSIs, this group has radically evolved. Importantly, these ongoing shifts have significant implications for an HSI's competitiveness for Title V funding. Specifically, these changes likely inform how institutional agents at these colleges and universities understand their options and approach pursuing this funding.

Funding to Hispanic-Serving Institutions under Title III and V

With the 1992 reauthorization of the HEA, Congress approved a $10 million set aside for Title III grants specifically for HSIs, but this fiduciary commitment went unfunded until 1995 (Rodríguez et al., 2018; Santiago, 2006). In 1995, Congress kept its promise, approving a $12

million allocation to Title III for competitive grants for HSIs (Salas, 2011). However, upon enacting Title V in 1998, Congress removed HSIs from Title III and increased federal funding to HSIs by slightly more than 10% (Dayton et al., 2014; Espino & Cheslock, 2008; MacDonald et al., 2007; Mercer, 2008). Notably, for much of the first decade following the adoption of Title V (i.e., 1998–2005), Congress markedly increased appropriations to Title V (Salas, 2011), which then only included the DHSI Program. Specifically, in 1999, Congress approved a $28 million appropriation to Title V and awarded 39 HSIs a DHSI grant (GAO, 2004, 2007). A year later, in 2000, Congress nearly quadrupled its initial 1998 investment in Title V, authorizing $42.3 million (Salas, 2011). More than doubling its 2000 allocation, Congress delivered just under $95 million in the form of 172 DHSI grants in 2006 (GAO, 2007). However, because HSIs may simultaneously receive individual and cooperative grants, there were only 151 HSI beneficiaries for the 172 DHSI total grants in 2006 (GAO, 2007). Ultimately, between 1995–2005, federal investment in HSIs, either in the form of Title III or Title V Part A grants, increased by a staggering 692%, averaging an annual 28% rate of growth (Salas, 2011). In raw figures, this represents the percent change between Congress's $12 million appropriation to Title III in 1995 and its $95.1 million investment in Title V in 2005 (Salas, 2011).

Contrasting this upward trend, in 2006, federal appropriations to the DHSI Program ever so slightly declined, representing a loss of $200,000 relative to the 2005 funding level (Salas, 2011). However, this minor divestment came while the number of HSIs grew 7.1% over the same period (*Excelencia*, 2015). In other words, this cut occurred when HSIs exponentially grew in numbers. Similarly, in the years immediately following (i.e., 2007–2009), Congress made

additional budgetary cuts to this program (Salas, 2011).[36] Despite these subtle reductions, Congress approved nearly the same annual appropriation for the DHSI Program—an average of $94 million per year—from 2003–2009 (Salas, 2011). This steady, albeit slightly declining, federal stream persisted until 2010.

Peaking in 2010 at $117 million (Salas, 2011), appropriations to the DHSI Program have since declined and remained mostly constant from year-to-year, annually averaging $102 million from 2011–2018 (ED Budget Office, 2011–2018). This 2010 peak in DHSI funding, while noteworthy, is not shocking; this uptick coincided with the creation of the PPOHA Program, which carried with it mandatory appropriations for the 2009–2014 fiscal years under the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (HSI Division, 2020c). Furthermore, once absorbing Part B, the Title V Program mostly received an even level of congressional funding, averaging just under $118 million each year from 2011–2017 across both parts. However, as is the case with all averages, this average obscures nuances in the authorized funding levels for Part A and B. Notably, this value minimizes the pronounced budget cuts to the PPOHA Program beginning in 2015, which plummeted from a yearly average of $21 million for 2010–2014 to a mere $9.5 million for 2015–2017. Simply put, Congress slashed the PPOHA Program's budget by more than half in 2015.

Table 4 provides the authorized funding levels under Title III and Title V from 1995–2017. Included in this table are also the annual percent change in appropriations to the DHSI Program and the cumulative year-to-year percent change across both parts of Title V. Lastly, the table juxtaposes these trends against HSIs' growing numbers during this period. By sharing this

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[36] Counterbalancing these cuts, the 110th Congress enacted the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008, thereby codifying Title III Part F or the HSI STEM and Articulation Program (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012). Like Title V, this is another competitive HSI grant program. However, as likely suggested by its name, the overriding aim of these funds is to improve Latinx students' access to and persistence in STEM (Malcom, Dowd, & Yu, 2010).

information in this way, my intention is to highlight the incremental decline in federal spending on the DHSI Program despite HSIs' rapid growth.

The specific dollar amount of these annual allocations is consequential. Specifically, the OPE relies on the authorized level of federal funding each year to determine: (a) how many new Title V grants to award, (b) maximum award amounts, and (c) whether to invite applications for new grants. Illustratively, because of limited funding in 2011, 2013, and 2016, the OPE did not accept applications for new DHSI grants (HSI Division, 2020b).[37] In 2011, for instance, the HSI Division revisited former submissions and funded-down, offering awards to 2010 applicants who had earned high scores (89.67–87.67 points) (HSI Division, 2011). See Appendix D for HSI-related grant allocations and awards.

Beyond these actual dollar amounts, the trends in this federal funding particularly matter when juxtaposed against the growing pool beneficiaries. As introduced in Chapter 1, "the growth in the number of HSIs has exceeded the number of institutions receiving funds under the Developing HSIs program" (Santiago et al., 2016, p. 12). While these conflicting trends are troubling, without robust research on Title V, researchers incompletely understand the implications of this widening gap. Nevertheless, the extant literature on Title V and HSIs supplies critical insights on this policy, which I synthesize next.

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[37] In 2011, the HSI Division recommended grants to highly scored 2010 applicants and did not plan to reduce the dollar amount for non-competing continuation (NCC) awards. In 2013, the HSI Division used its allocation to fund 139 existing NCC awards and 11 new grants, which were awarded to the highest-scored 2012 applicants. In 2016, the HSI Division again did not hold a DHSI grant competition but funded the 30 highest-scored 2015 applicants.

Table 4

Approved Federal Allocations to Title III and Title V from 1995–2018

Year	Eligible HSIs (#)	HSI Annual Growth Rate (%)	Title III Part A Funding (millions of dollars)	Title V Part A Funding (millions of dollars)	Title V Part A Funding Δ (%)	Title V Part B Funding (millions of dollars)	Total Funding (millions of dollars)	Total Funding Δ (%)
1995–1996	189		12.0				12.0	—
1996–1997	191	1.06	10.8				10.8	-10.00
1997–1998	190	-0.52	10.8				10.8	0.00
1998–1999	200	5.26		12			12	11.11
1999–2000	216	8.00		28	133.33		28	133.33
2000–2001	229	6.02		42.3	51.07		42.3	51.07
2001–2002	234	2.18		68.5	61.94		68.5	61.94
2002–2003	237	1.28		86	25.55		86	25.55
2003–2004	238	0.42		92.3	7.33		92.3	7.33
2004-2005	242	1.68		94.5	2.38		94.5	2.38
2005–2006	245	1.24		95.1	0.63		95.1	0.63
2006–2007	264	7.76		94.9	-0.21		94.9	-0.21
2007–2008	266	0.76		94.9	0.00		94.9	0.00
2008–2009	280	5.26		93.2	-1.79		93.2	-1.79
2009–2010	293	4.64		93.2	0.00		93.2	0.00
2010–2011	311	6.14		117.4	25.97	22.0	139.4	49.57
2011–2012	356	14.47		104.4	-11.07	20.8	125.2	-10.19
2012–2013	370	3.93		100.4	-3.83	20.5	120.9	-3.43
2013–2014	409	10.54		95.2	-5.18	19.4	114.6	-5.21
2014–2015	435	6.36		98.6	3.57	19.5	118.1	3.05
2015–2016	471	8.28		100.2	1.62	9.0	109.2	-7.54
2016–2017	492	4.46		107.8	7.58	9.7	117.5	7.60
2017–2018	523	6.30		107.8	0.00	9.7	117.5	0.00
2018–2019	539	3.06		123.2	14.29	11.1	134.3	14.30
Total			33.6	1,726.7		141.7	2,025.2	

Note: Missing data is due to legislative changes. From 1995–1997, Congress allocated funding to HSIs under Title III. From 1998 onward, Congress nested funding for HSIs under Title V, and in 2008, they enacted Title V Part B. Data for appropriations from 1995–2010 are from Salas (2011), and data for appropriations from 2011–2018 are from the ED Budget Office (2011–2017). Data for the number of HSIs are from *Excelencia* (2015–2018, 2019b).

Synthesis of Research on Title V

As introduced in Chapter 1, there is scant research on Title V and HSIs because the field of higher education has traditionally concentrated on highly selective, prestigious, or otherwise elite institutions (Deil-Amen, 2015; Posecznick, 2017). Hence, broad-access institutions and MSIs, including HSIs, remain understudied (Gasman et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2006; Li & Carroll, 2007; Stevens, 2015). Since research on Title V often goes together with research on HSIs, I first quickly clarify a few issues with the literature on HSIs before moving into my synthesis of research specifically on Title V.

Until recently, the U.S. government did not issue a list of HSI-eligible institutions. As a result, researchers have used other lists as a proxy, such as the ED's (n.d.) *Institutions with High Hispanic Enrollment* list, which includes all non-profit degree-granting institutions with an FTE Latinx undergraduate enrollment of at least 25% based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Database System (IPEDS) from fall 2006. Other organizations, including HACU and *Excelencia* in Education, have developed their own lists using inconsistent parameters to identify and determine HSI-eligible institutions (Santiago, 2011). These varying approaches have introduced substantial discrepancies in the figures used across studies and have "complicate[d] efforts to set a collective understanding of HSIs, their strengths and needs by researchers, policymakers, advocates and students" (Santiago, 2011, p. 1). Furthermore, even now, the public lists provided by the OPE include all institutions eligible for either Title III or Title V grants, meaning they do not specify if an institution is eligible for either Title III, Title V, or both (OPE, 2019). The U.S. government also does not publish a list of institutions that have *applied* for HSI status (Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012); this list is essential because the ED does not

designate institutions as HSIs when they meet the eligibility criteria; instead, institutions must apply for HSI status (Santiago, 2011).

Bearing in mind these issues with the literature on HSIs, in this section, I discuss the limited scholarship on Title V and conclude with how this body of work gives way to this critical qualitative study. As alluded to at the onset of this chapter, much of the extant research on Title V and HSIs documents the rich history and development of these institutions, including the active advocacy efforts on their behalf by the HHEC and HACU (Garcia et al., 2019; Valdez, 2015). Additionally, various studies grapple with the complicated organizational identity of HSIs and how this status—now codified by Title V—does, could, and should translate into serving Latinx students (see, e.g., Andrade & Lundberg, 2018; Contreras et al., 2008; Doran & Medina, 2017; Flores & Leal, 2020; Garcia, 2017a, 2017b, 2019; Garcia et al., 2019, Garcia et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Hubbard & Stage, 2009; Hurtado & Alvarado, 2015; Malcom, Bensimón, & Davila, 2010; Marin, 2019). Within this literature base, there are also multiple descriptive accounts of Title V, summarizing the policy's legislative definitions, allowances, and provisions (see, e.g., Hegi, 2017; Mercer, 2008; Santiago, 2006). However, within this subset of work on Title V, few researchers have explored Title V's management, usage, benefits, beneficiaries, and effectiveness. Hence, I use these five categories to organize this synthesis, and I begin by reviewing studies on the federal and institutional management of Title V because this research largely represents the earliest work on Title V.

The Management of Title V

Federal Management

In an era of growing demands for accountability, especially in the use of public funds, many of the first studies on Title V focused on its federal and institutional level management. In

terms of the former, for instance, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has rigorously

researched the ED's subpar monitoring and management of Title V awardees, releasing official

reports (i.e., GAO, 2004, 2009) and testifying before congressional subcommittees to this effect

(i.e., GAO, 2007, 2010).[38] For example, the GAO's (2004) research-based report[39] stated:

> We found that only one-quarter of staff did two required site visits, and most visits that
>
> were conducted were not selected based on the requisite risk criteria. Also, staff members
>
> were not aware of updated department guidance and, as a result, did not always correctly
>
> monitor grantees. We also found that Education's ability to provide technical assistance
>
> was limited. For example, Education has acknowledged that its failure to provide
>
> information on eligibility criteria has resulted in uncertainty about the eligibility of over
>
> three-quarters of Title V grantees. (para. 3)

Similarly, the GAO's 2007 congressional testimony noted the ED's creation of outcome-based

objectives and performance measures, as well as its efforts to improve the monitoring and

technical assistance of awardees but concluded that the ED could not systemically track

grantees' performance. Additionally, the GAO (2007) deemed that the ED's feedback

mechanisms discouraged open communication, which weakened the department's targeted

assistance to Title V grantees. Basically, in 2004 and 2007, the GAO determined that the ED

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[38] I address distinct parts of these GAO publications throughout this synthesis, which may inadvertently suggest that there are far more empirical research studies on Title V than there are presently available. To clarify, at the time of this writing, the GAO had published two official reports and released three testimonies, which largely reaffirmed the findings of their 2004 and 2009 reports. For example, the GAO's second congressional testimony, published in 2010, largely reiterated the conclusions of its 2009 report.

[39] Using a stratified random sample of Title V individual development grant recipients ($n = 28$), the GAO analyzed grant recipients' application materials, performance reports, and related correspondence, as well as conducted site visits to three HSIs in Texas between July 2003 and August 2004 (GAO, 2004).

poorly monitored and assisted Title V grantees. Based on data collected over nearly two years,[40] the GAO released another report in 2009, summarizing: (a) characteristics of Title III and Title V eligible institutions, (b) reported grant implementation challenges, and (c) their assessment of the ED's monitoring and management of awardees. Like before, the GAO recognized the ED's improved monitoring mechanisms but reaffirmed its earlier conclusions,[41] stating that the ED "lacked a coordinated approach to guide monitoring efforts" (GAO, 2007, p. 28).

Institutional Management

The GAO (2009) report also documented several questionable practices among awardees, such as the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse, totaling upward of $150,000 across four of the seven campuses they visited. For example, they found that one institution spent $4,578 of Title V money to buy an airplane global positioning system, although the institution did not own an airplane. Amid such troubling discoveries, the GAO urged the ED to further refine its monitoring and technical assistance efforts, such as by following up with awardees potentially misusing funds, disclosing implementation challenges, and adopting better feedback mechanisms.

Altogether, these GAO publications, the last of which is now a decade old, highlight *how* the ED monitors and manages Title V awardees. These governmental reports also expose awardees' noncompliance with submitting required documentation, impairing the ED's ability to determine this program's overall impact or effectiveness. Although the GAO's publications cast a light on the federal and institutional management of Title V, these reports examine both Title

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[40] The GAO's 2009 report drew on multiple data sources. Between September 2007 and June 2009, the GAO analyzed 2006 IPEDS data and data from the 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. Also, the GAO: (a) conducted a content analysis of a representative sample of grant applications *(n = 78)* based on the entire population of 511 Title III and Title V grant recipients for fiscal year 2006, (b) analyzed 503 annual performance reports, (c) interviewed both administrators at 27 recipient institutions and ED officials, and (d) conducted seven site visits.
[41] Specifically, the GAO (2009) maintained the ED had: (a) not formulated plans to continue developing its monitoring and technical assistance, (b) hardly resolved skills gaps amongst its staff, and (c) infrequently conducted mandatory site visits, which hammered the department's management of Title III and Title V Programs.

III and Title V together, thereby minimizing the significant differences between these two programs. Furthermore, although empirically grounded, these reports omit vital information, such as the names of the HSIs visited and the interview protocols used. Additionally, none of the reports provide details about participants, including the number of interviewees per site or participants' job titles and employment history. Thus, it is unclear what exact information the GAO gleaned from HSI administrators in terms of how they manage these grants.

A few other articles also delve into the management of Title V funds, emphasizing, in particular, the evaluation of such projects. For example, based on their implementation of Title V-funded teaching and learning communities, Christie et al. (2004) explored the use of internal and external evaluators. Specifically, they describe their experience with creating collaborative evaluation teams, explaining how this practice positively transformed the community college's institutional planning and research office and the campus's overall perception of evaluation. Along the same line, Christie et al. (2005) described their use of emergent design evaluation within the context of their college's Title V-funded cohort-based, interdisciplinary teaching and learning community program. A few years later, Christie and Klein (2009) authored a book chapter richly describing how their participatory approach to evaluation, which they adopted after receiving a Title V grant in 2000, positively transformed the college's evaluation methods at the institutional, departmental, and classroom level.

More recently, using a single-site case study design, Villarreal's (2014) dissertation also touched on the institutional management of Title V. Drawing on semi-structured interviews and organizational documents, Villarreal investigated the influence of institutional culture on the University of Texas-Pan American's Title V grant cycle. Informed by Kuh and Whitt (1988) and Tierney's (1988, 2008) frameworks on institutional culture, she uncovered multiple forces not

accounted for in three frameworks, which she argued informed the university's process of seeking, evaluating, and managing Title V grants. Specifically, she found that the centrality of race/ethnicity within both the university's culture and external forces shaped how the university sought and managed its Title V grant, leading her to propose a new framework for understanding HSIs' institutional culture. As a whole, Villarreal's dissertation expands the field's understanding of HSIs' organizational culture and identity and, in particular, how this culture informs an HSI's Title V grant-seeking and management practices. However, as a single case study design, it is unclear how other HSIs engage in these practices.

The Usage of Title V

A few studies offer initial insights on how HSIs use Title V grants. The GAO's (2004) report, for example, indicated that HSIs used their DHSI grants to improve four principal areas: academic quality, student services and outcomes, fiscal stability, and institutional management. More specifically, the GAO (2004) report showed that most of the sampled HSIs—a whopping 78%—used their DHSI grant to improve the institution's academic quality, such as by developing programs to enhance faculty instruction or by purchasing educational materials.

Secondarily, 67% of sampled HSIs cited using their DHSI grant to support student services (e.g., tutoring, counseling, and learning communities) and student outcomes (e.g., retention rate, course pass rates, and persistence rates) (GAO, 2004). For instance, The University of Texas at San Antonio established learning communities, including clustered courses and a first-year seminar (GAO, 2004). In comparison, less than half of the sampled HSIs (48%) indicated using their DHSI grant to support institutional fiscal stability (e.g., establishing a development office or endowment fund), and only 11% said they used their Title V funds for institutional management (e.g., technological infrastructure, training non-instructional staff, or

establishing an institutional research office) (GAO, 2004). All told, the GAO (2004) report starts to tell the story of *what* kinds of projects the OPE values.

Likewise interested in the usage of Title V grants, Santiago et al. (2016) conducted a content analysis of Title V Part A grant recipients' abstracts and final reports from 1995–2014, finding that most recipients "invested in capacity building efforts consistent with the intent of the program" (p. 4). More specifically, they found that "70 percent of Title V grant recipients invested their funds in either faculty and curriculum development (33 percent), student support services (26 percent), and/or fund and administrative management (11 percent)" (Santiago et al., 2016, p. 4). This also means that 30% of recipients used this grant money toward other ends. Accordingly, they found that 9% of recipients invested in the construction or improvement of facilities, 7% on internet or distance education technologies, and 14% on a combination of other authorized activities. In short, Santiago et al.'s (2016) report distills 20 years of data on the use of Title V grants into a descriptively useful and accessible source for administrators and lobbyists. Also, by analyzing data through 2014, their content analysis builds off the GAO's (2004) report and helps clarify what projects HSIs use Title V grants to fund. On the other hand, this report overlooks potentially rich insights from the data. For one, Santiago et al. (2016) analyzed recipients' proposal abstracts and final reports, but they do not discuss if or how these sources align or diverge. That is, did the authors notice if recipients used their grants in the ways proposed in their applications?

In sum, the GAO's (2004) report and Santiago et al.'s (2016) report describe the usage of Title V. By focusing on awardees, these reports offer little insight on the Title V application process. These reports also show that awardees use their DHSI grants in ways that evidence suggests promotes students' academic achievement, as well as institutional quality and stability

(Santiago et al., 2016; Villarreal & Santiago, 2012). Other scholars, however, have been more critical about how Title V recipients use these grants. For example, based on their quantitative analysis of student outcomes at HSIs in California, Contreras and Contreras (2015) argued that colleges often commodify Latinx students as a means of securing federal funding and implied that many campuses seek Title V grants to finance wide-sweeping institutional improvements with little attention to how these projects benefit Latinx students. However, neither the GAO's (2004) nor Santiago et al.'s (2016) report commented on how awardees connected their grant-funded projects to serving Latinx students.

The Reported Benefits of Title V

Along with documenting the usage of the Title V grant, the GAO's (2004) report also listed what awardees identified as the benefits of these grants. Of the 28 HSIs included in its sample, 89% stated that DHSI grants benefited their campus's academic quality, which is unsurprising since most recipients (78%) indicated using this money on projects intended to improve educational quality (GAO, 2004). Similarly, 63% of awardees reported that DHSI grants benefited their campus's student services and outcomes. However, surprisingly, although less than half of HSIs sampled indicated using DHSI grants for institutional management, 85% claimed that this award benefited campus management. More inconsistently, 56% of HSIs stated that DHSI grants helped their institution's fiscal stability, although only 11% of recipients spent this money on fiscal stabilizing activities (GAO, 2004). Thus, an initial comparison between the reported usage and benefits of Title V suggests that these grants may do more than fund one-off projects, and other research substantiates this finding.

In 2007, Santiago released a brief summarizing her interviews with the presidents of 13 HSIs. As part of these interviews, she asked: "How does your Title V Developing HSIs grant impact Latino student success?" (Santiago, 2007, p. 15). In response, one participant said:

> While HSIs are defined by Latino enrollment, the Title V grant is not solely about Latino students. While there is sensitivity that the institution is "non-majority," the Title V funds and designation as an HSI allows us to talk about Latinos and conduct activities that target Latino students. Our activities funded by Title V, while targeting Latinos, address retention overall, which benefits all students. (Santiago, 2007, p. 16)

Another participant said: "Our Title V grant is used to improve retention and graduation rates. We see little difference between Latinos and all students but know that there is residual impact: if we serve all our students, we will serve Latino students" (Santiago, 2007, p. 16). In brief, her participants suggested that Title V grants support broad-base institutional efforts.

The Beneficiaries of Title V

While earlier research on Title V documented *what* awardees cited as the benefits of these grants, a couple of recent studies more critically analyze *which* institutions benefit from this program. Among such work, a few scholars have considered the racialization of HSIs and Title V funding. For example, concerned by how HSIs serve Latinx students with Title V, Vargas and Villa-Palomino conducted a content analysis of awarded DHSI proposal abstracts from 2009–2016 ($n = 220$). Based on this analysis, they found that most Title V recipients deficiently described Latinx students:

> In their quests to secure funding, HSIs frequently problematize their Latinx student populations as lacking necessary academic skills, knowledge, and preparation…these descriptors are rarely contextualized as arrangements of marginalization that have

disproportionately shaped their experiences but rather as student characteristics that

universities must overcome. (Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2018, p. 7)

Furthermore, like the responses Santiago (2007) received, Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2018)

found that most proposals (85%) did not center Latinx students. Instead, the proposals described

programs designed to serve *all* students, leading them to argue that HSIs decenter the very

students who enable their eligibility for this money.

All told, Vargas and Villa-Palomino's (2018) content analysis provides a critical, race-

conscious appraisal on "how HSIs conceptualize their roles as federally funded MSIs but also the

programmatic efforts that the state legitimizes as adequate to serve Latinx students" (p. 5). In this

way, this study complicates the promising findings of earlier work on this topic. And yet, given

the design of this study, it leaves other questions answered. For one, the pair excluded the

proposal abstracts for cooperative development grants and those from HSIs in Puerto Rico. This

omission leaves unknown if HSIs approach cooperative development grants differently and how

HSIs in Puerto Rico frame and use Title V funding.

Castro Samayoa and Corral (2018) also systematically analyzed these abstracts from

2009–2016 ($n = 309$). Guided by critical policy analysis, the pair reached similar conclusions,

finding that more than half of the abstracts construed Hispanicity as deficient whereas few

positioned the institution as a barrier to student success. Fundamentally, both content analyses

suggest that color neutral white logics persist at HSIs, which leave Latinx educational

inequalities unaddressed.

One last study also critically considers who benefits from Title V from a race-conscious

lens. Vargas (2018) conducted a multivariate analysis to investigate patterns in the allocation of

Title V funds among HSIs. Primarily testing the relationship between an HSI's student

racial/ethnic demographics and DHSI grant obtainment, Vargas found that HSIs with larger

white and smaller Black student bodies received more DHSI grants and that the proportion of

Latinx and Asian students was unassociated with grant obtainment. Basically, he found that HSIs

that enroll more Latinx students were no more likely to obtain DHSI grants compared to HSIs

with fewer Latinx students, which lead him to argue that an HSIs' proximity to whiteness and

distance from Blackness seemed to influence grant obtainment. Plainly, according to Vargas, the

OPE funnels *racialized funds*—monies expressly allocated to support Latinx educational

attainment—to HSIs with whiter student bodies. Additionally, he found a positive correlation

between the length of time an institution had been an HSI and grant receipt, meaning that HSIs

with longer legacies of enrolling Latinx students were more likely to receive DHSI grants.

Lastly, he found no significant relationship between sector (i.e., 4-year vs. 2-year HSI) and grant

obtainment or between total student enrollment and grant obtainment.

Although Vargas's (2018) study offers one of the first critical analyses on the allocation

of Title V funds, these results should be cautiously interpreted for a few reasons., First, his

approach used IPEDS data from 1982–2015 to pinpoint the year that each current HSI (current

as of 2015)"first reported a 25 percent Latinx student body" (Vargas, 2018, p. 4) but, as

explained, HSI status hinges on other criteria. For example, a college or university may enroll the

required threshold of Latinx undergraduates but not the necessary percentage of Pell-eligible

students. Second, Vargas, like other researchers (see, e.g., Garcia & Guzman-Alvarez, 2019;

Perez, 2018; Vargas &Villa-Palomino, 2018), excluded cooperative development grants and all

HSIs in Puerto Rico. Third, he used a dichotomous dependent variable, meaning he assigned a

number one to HSIs that had received an individual DHSI grant sometime between 2011–2015

and a zero to those that had not. Although Vargas sensibly set and explained this 5-year time

parameter,[42] this timeframe could exclude some HSIs. For instance, depending on when the application cycle opened, not all 2010 DHSI grant recipients would be eligible to reapply for a new DHSI grant. Also, recently re-eligible HSIs may not immediately re-apply for another Title V grant. Furthermore, any HSI administering a PPOHA grant during this period would be ineligible. Lastly, he did not account for whether an HSI applied for a DHSI grant. As introduced in Chapter 1, the assumption that all HSIs apply for Title V grants is problematic and likely skewed his results. Despite these limitations, Vargas's (2018) analysis is valuable, as he suggests systematic patterns in the allocation of this funding and invites critical questions about *what* and *how* mechanisms in place contribute to its inequitable distribution.

The Effectiveness of Title V

Several studies empirically consider whether Title V satisfies its intended goals, considering questions such as: "Has the impact of this investment [Title V] increased HSIs' capacity and educational quality for the students they enroll? Has the federal investment in HSIs improved Latino students' educational achievement?" (Santiago et al., 2016, p. 7). Specifically, within this set of literature are two main types of studies. Some research examines the outcomes of Title V-funded projects at specific institutions, which collectively offer institutional-level evidence of Title V's effectiveness. Meanwhile, other research provides a more system-level analysis of Title V's effectiveness.

Institutional-Level Effectiveness

This scholarship includes only a handful of studies that provide both detailed descriptions about a specific Title V project and its outcomes. For example, using a multimethod

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[42] Vargas (2018) explained that "Because Title V awards typically last a total of five years, aggregating to a five-year period ensures that all HSIs in the analysis had at least a 1-year window from which they could apply for and receive funding" (p. 4).

ethnographic approach, Keim et al. (2010)—as participant observers—described the implementation and initial results of a Title V-funded bridge program, which encompassed mentoring for preservice teachers and intensive writing and reading workshops. Designed to combat the severe shortage of Latinx teachers within the local area, Keim et al. touted the program as successful, reporting that participants (a) had more self-esteem, self-efficiency, and a deeper understanding of the role of culture within teaching and learning and (b) transferred more to their partner university to complete their degrees in education. In short, Keim et al.'s study not only suggests that their institution effectively used its Title V funding but also that these grants enable HSIs to expand educational opportunities, particularly for Latinx students.

A few years later, Carpi et al. (2013) outlined multiple strategies their institution employed with Title V funds to increase retention rates, particularly for STEM undergraduates. For instance, they developed paced courses for forensic sciences majors. Using longitudinal cohort data, Carpi et al. found that students, who participated in these paced courses, had higher retention and graduation rates, as well as slightly higher mean grade point averages. Additionally, with Title V funds, the college established a math and science resource center, which dramatically expanded its peer-mentoring program for STEM students. Citing several additional examples, they demonstrate how their institution leveraged Title V funding to improve educational opportunities for minoritized students in STEM. Even more, one of the underlying principles of these grants is that recipients institutionalize, at least parts, of the projects they propose. Accordingly, Carpi et al. addressed the effectiveness of these grants, explaining that of 11 strategies discussed, the college institutionalized eight of them.

Lastly, Watt et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of a Title V-funded program designed to improve the retention and time-to-degree rates among first-generation Latinx

students at a university in the Southwest. Using a quasi-experimental design, they found minimal statistical evidence suggesting the intervention was highly effective in retaining students or improving their grade point averages. However, like Keim et al. (2010) and Carpi et al. (2013), they found students benefited from paired classes.[43]

Collectively, these studies go beyond simply providing descriptive reports on how HSIs use Title V money. Instead, these three studies offer institution-level examples of Title V's effectiveness. As noted, other research concentrates more explicitly on assessing the overall effectiveness of this policy across HSIs.

System-Level Effectiveness

One of the first system-level studies of Title V's effectiveness is Pineda's (2010) dissertation. Using IPEDS data and administrative records obtained from the OPE, Pineda performed a difference-in-difference analysis to compare Latinx students' outcomes (i.e., change in FTE enrollment and degree attainment) at Title V recipient institutions against those of applicants that had not received a grant from 2000–2007. Pineda found that DHSI grants had no detectable effect on recipients' Latinx enrollment or degree attainment. Despite the self-reported limitations of her model (e.g., the potential for unobserved time-varying variables and campus-level factors), her findings suggest that Title V may be ineffective at positively affecting Latinxs' enrollment and graduation rates. All told, Pineda's study is insightful particularly because she conducts, not the typical student-level analysis (Stevens, 2015), but an institutional-level assessment that included much-needed descriptive statistics on Title V applicants and recipients.

Almost a decade later, Perez (2018) examined Title V's effectiveness, using a non-experimental, ex post facto quantitative design. Specifically, she tested if Title V grants and

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[43] Paired classes are akin to cohort-based programs and learning communities.

expenditures on instruction, academic support, and student services were positively associated with the educational attainment of Latinx students. Based on her national sample of 4-year HSIs ($n = 76$), her hierarchical multiple regressions showed that expenditures in academic support and student services were positively associated with the educational attainment of Latinx students. Perez also unexpectedly found that "instruction expenditures were not significantly associated with the percent of degrees awarded to Latinxs" (p. 8); this finding is unexpected, as it contradicts a long line of research upholding that expenditures on instruction significantly predict graduation rates (see, e.g., Gansemer-Topf & Schuh, 2004, 2006; Pike et al., 2006; Ryan, 2004; Scott et al., 2006; Webber & Ehrenberg, 2010).[44] Furthermore, in contrast to Pineda (2010), Perez found that Title V grants were a significant predictor of Latinx degree completion, with Title V awardees more likely to confer a greater share of bachelor's degrees to Latinx students than 4-year HSIs without a Title V grant anytime between 1999–2012.

As one of the first empirical, published peer-reviewed studies on Title V, Perez's (2018) study is a forerunning piece. However, as with all research, this study has its limitations. For one, although currently 46% of all HSIs are 2-year colleges (*Excelencia*, 2020b), Perez excluded these institutions from her analysis, reasoning that community college students have educational goals aside from graduation. Second, she stated that the institutions in her sample spanned 10 states, which means she excluded HSIs in Puerto Rico. Third, her dependent variable reflects "the percent of Latinx students in the fall 2007 cohort of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students who earned a bachelor's degree six years later" (p. 4), meaning her model does not account for Latinx students who "stop in and out of college" (Contreras & Contreras, 2015, p.

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[44] Perez (2018) offered a few explanations for this unanticipated result, but, in her discussion, she overlooked that many HSIs use their Title V grants to finance projects directly related to instruction (GAO, 2004; Santiago et al., 2016; GAO, 2007, 2009). Hence, it is possible that these Title V grants moderate the significant effect of instructional expenditures on degree attainment.

167). Fourth, she treated Title V—one of her key predictors—as a dummy variable (awardees = 1; non-recipients = 0). Problematically though, like Vargas (2018), Perez did not account for whether an HSI actually *applied* for a Title V grant. Despite these limitations, both Pineda's (2010) dissertation and Perez's (2018) quantitative study provide some of the first empirical analyses of Title V's effectiveness.

Complimenting these quantitative studies is Santiago et al.'s (2016) aforementioned content analysis. In that report, Santiago and colleagues offered two key reasons why evaluating the effectiveness of Title V is especially tricky. First, they explained that the relative size of Title V grants compared to most HSIs' overall budgets hinders program assessment. Specifically, Title V grants only represent between 1%–2% of an HSI's annual operating budget, which for most HSIs hovers around $20 million (Santiago et al., 2016). Second, they noted that the absence of student-level data further complicates assessing the effectiveness of Title V. Collectively, these three studies support the need for more empirical research and set the groundwork needed to pursue more micro-level analyses that ask *why* Title V may not be reaching its intended goals.

Moving the Research on Title V Forward

Collectively, this body of research on Title V transitions from more descriptive, fact-sharing accounts on the management, usage, and benefits of the program to more critical studies, which begin the task of more thoroughly investigating Title V's beneficiaries and effectiveness. This evolution in the scholarship is promising, particularly since much of the earlier work on Title V provides useful, albeit decontextualized, information. For example, the GAO's (2009) report includes descriptive statistics on Title V recipients but does not contextualize them against the general profile of all eligible applicants. In this way, this report, along with the rest of the GAO's publications, overlooks *how* resource differences among recipients may inform how

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HSIs' use and benefit from Title V. The connection between institutional resources and the benefit of Title V grants, however, is important as this relationship has implications for the effectiveness and equity of this public program. In terms of the former, money is relative; hence, the per-student value of a Title V grant is much larger for an HSI with 1,000 students than one enrolling 10,000 students. In practice then, Title V grants may be more beneficial to Hispanic-serving community colleges, which, compared to 4-year HSIs, often enroll fewer students (Núñez et al., 2016). And yet, these descriptive reports do not consider the implications of HSIs being differently resourced. Similarly, these earlier studies do not address how resources may shape HSIs' grant efforts. All told, most of the earlier research on Title V answers mostly *what* questions. What has the OPE done to manage the Title V Program? What do recipients use Title V grants to fund? What do recipients indicate are the benefits of Title V grants? With such a focus, this earlier research neglects more critical *how* and *why* questions, which more recent studies take up.

As discussed, the more recent research on Title V falls within two main categories, with one set of work exploring Title V beneficiaries and the other examining the program's effectiveness. The former set, which includes Vargas and Villa-Palomino's (2018) and Castro Samayoa and Corral's (2018) content analyses, as well as the Vargas's (2018) quantitative study of Title V's allocation patterns, begins questioning which institutions seem to benefit most from Title V and theorize as to why this is the case. However, both Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2018) and Castro Samayoa and Corral (2018) rely on organizational artifacts, specifically publicly available proposal abstracts of DHSI grant recipients. Using this data source, these scholars cannot comment on how institutional agents at HSIs understand and approach this competition. Similarly, Vargas issues a polemical critique of this program, asserting that Title V "represents

an otherwise veiled contribution to racial inequality" (2018, p. 9). However, given his quantitative approach, he does not engage with HSI administrators, grant reviewers, or the OPE to understand *why* Title V grants are allocated in the ways they are.

Meanwhile, the second set of research on Title V uses quantitative methods to assess Title V's effectiveness (i.e., Perez, 2018; Pineda, 2010). These studies' conflicting results prompt the need for additional quantitative analyses examining the relationship between Title V grant obtainment and student outcomes. These studies also open the way for more qualitative assessments of effectiveness, which consider, for example, how institutional agents understand the benefit of Title V grants. That said, while such studies may find further evidence of Title V's effectiveness, such work may overlook questions of equity regarding this program.

Taken collectively, there are several major gaps in the Title V literature important to explore from a policy perspective. To begin, researchers often exclude key Title V actors. For instance, although a little over 10% of all HSIs are in Puerto Rico (*Excelencia,* 2020b), no study, to my knowledge, explores Puerto Rican HSIs' involvement, or lack thereof, in this program. And yet, publicly available data make clear that HSIs in Puerto Rico apply for and receive Title V grants. Similarly, some studies exclude Hispanic-serving community colleges (e.g., Perez, 2018), although they represent more than 40% of all HSIs (*Excelencia*, 2020b) and compete for these grants alongside 4-year HSIs.

The existing scholarship often fails to interrogate the program's structure, including its eligibility criteria and reporting requirements. But these provisions, while seemingly benign, assume an HSI has a specific set of skills and resources. Indeed, an HSI's organizational conditions likely shape its ability to put together strong application materials, which is a critical factor in grant acquisition (Hume et al., 2014). Plainly, Title V's structure matters, likely

influencing how institutional agents at HSIs understand their competitiveness for this funding as well as how their campus goes about pursuing these awards. Additionally, nearly all studies exclude cooperative development grants provided under both parts of Title V. Yet, these different arrangements and what they assume about an HSI's organizational conditions have implications for the overall equity of Title V.

Additionally, no known published study explicitly explores Title V Part B, and this is an especially important gap to address. Recognizing HSIs' widening institutional heterogeneity, Congress created the PPOHA Program. However, this expansion of Title V discounted the fact that HSIs with graduate programs may have low core expenses but be better resourced and structured to compete for DHSI grants (for which they are likewise eligible) than Hispanic-Serving community colleges. Put differently, existing research has yet to explore implications of PPOHA-eligible HSIs potentially operating with a relative advantage in the competition over Title V Part A funding.

Evidenced by these gaps, much of the research on Title V fails to contextualize this policy within HSIs' ongoing evolution. Thus, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants?

    a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

To answer these questions, I leaned on several strands of theory, blending them to form the conceptual lens through which I organized and analyzed the data for this study.

Conceptual Lens

A conceptual framework is "a structure for organizing and supporting ideas" (Weaver-Hart, 1988, p. 12); it is a "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories"

(Maxwell, 2005, p. 222) informing a researcher's study. Constructing this orienting structure, therefore, requires intentionality on the part of the researcher. Robson (1993) explains:

> Developing a conceptual framework forces you to be explicit about what you think you are doing. It also helps you to be selective; to decide which are the important features; which relationships are likely to be of importance or meaning; and hence, what data you are going to collect and analyze. (pp. 150–151)

Heeding Robson's advice, I borrowed from several theoretical bodies of literature to conceptually orient myself to this study, in which I explore institutional agents' understanding of Title V competitiveness. This scholarship also served as the lens through which I considered their insights, particularly what they signaled in terms of this program's sources of inequity. More broadly, I pulled from several pieces of scholarship to situate this study within larger structural arrangements, including HSIs' historical and contemporary sociopolitical environment.

Toward describing my conceptual orientation for this study, I first discuss meritocracy, illustrating how this logic undergirds the competition over Title V grants. Although meritocracy is often conceptualized and used to describe individual-level outcomes, I apply it at the organizational level. Specifically, I consider how meritocratic arrangements can, and often do, produce new or deepen existing inequities within the system of U.S. higher education. Afterward, I introduce social equity theory and describe its adoption and interpretation within the field of public policy and administration. As part of this discussion, I integrate several guiding concepts from relational inequality theory (RIT). Leaning on these theories, I flesh out what equity is and, more so, how it unfolds within U.S. higher education, specifically within the Title V Program. Collectively, this section addresses how these theories informed this study.

Conceptualizing Title V as a Meritocratic Grant Competition

As introduced in Chapter 1, scholars, policymakers, and educational leaders frequently cast the problem of Title V as one of scarcity. Problematically, this framing assumes that if Congress invested more money in this program, then it would resolve "the problem." However, this myopic framing overlooks structural issues within Title V, downplaying, for example, the potential inequities of competition among HSIs with varied organizational conditions and positions within the U.S. system of higher education.

As a reminder, Congress's solution to the underfunding of HSIs was to establish a grant competition, requiring HSIs to vie against one another for Title V funding. Such a solution is commonplace in the United States, with countless examples of competitive opportunities specifically within higher education. For instance, students compete for admission to selective colleges and universities, often as if all students benefited from comparable K–12 schooling, standardized test preparation, and college counseling. Yet, this presumption of equality is misguided; extensive research on college access provides robust empirical evidence on differential opportunities and inequitable environments that limit many students from accessing and persisting in college (see, e.g., McDonough et al. 1997; Perna et al., 2008; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Venezia & Kirst, 2005).

Likewise, invested in legitimacy, status, and prestige, colleges and universities compete amongst themselves, "attempt[ing] to sell themselves to potential students and their reputations to the broader public" (Saunders & Blanco Ramirez, 2017, p. 193) in order to advance within the "ranking regime" (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014, p. 3). Indeed, colleges and universities employ various strategic moves toward this end, such as hiring and promoting particular faculty members, prioritizing research productivity, and seeking external funding (Burris, 2004; Dill &

Soo, 2005; Espeland & Sauder, 2007; Gonzales, 2013; Monks & Ehrenberg, 1998). In line with the preceding example, colleges and universities engage in this competition, despite their distinctive histories, missions, and organizational conditions—differences extensively documented across texts on the history of U.S. higher education (see, e.g., Griffin & Hurtado, 2011; Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). Indeed, considering the countless competitive exchanges within and among postsecondary institutions, researchers often describe higher education as a market (see, e.g., Bok, 2003; Newman et al., 2004) in which colleges and universities engage in market-like competition (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). However, higher education does not function as neoclassical market but as a quasi-market which competes for both economic and cultural resources (Leslie & Johnson, 1974; Taylor & Cantwell, 2019). Accordingly, I present these examples, *not* as evidence of the existence of a true neoclassical market, but to provide examples of the U.S. higher education system's tendency to rely on competitions as a means of meritocratically allocating finite resources and opportunities. In many ways, such competitions are very much a U.S. performance—one which aligns with the United States' values of democracy, individualism, and meritocracy.

In his 1958 dystopian sociological satire, *The Rise of Meritocracy*, Michael Young, a British sociologist, coined the term *meritocracy*, pejoratively using it to refer to a system structured on intelligence testing and academic achievement. However, meritocracy now carries a much more positive connotation, describing systems that award opportunities and resources based on talent, effort, or merit instead of on social class and wealth. In effect, meritocracy assumes individuals' or organizations' performance, or proven achievement, determine their advancement within the system or, more simply, that "you get out as much as you put in" (Alvarado, 2010, p. 12).

With its emphasis on actors' (i.e., individuals, groups, or organizations) qualities and effort, meritocracy is remarkably *agentic*, meaning it assumes individuals and organizations hold substantial power in controlling and shaping their lives. With this agency, however, also comes responsibility. This agency functions in such a way that successful, "hard-working" actors may feel deserving of their rewards and unsuccessful actors deserving of their "inferior" conditions (Hoschild, 1995). More aptly, as McNamee and Miller (2009) explain, meritocracy enshrines the notion that "those who are the most talented, the hardest working, and the most virtuous *get* and *should get* the most rewards" (p. 4, italics added for emphasis). Applying the logic of meritocracy in the U.S. context, one may deduce that "America is a land of limitless opportunity in which individuals can achieve as much as their merit allows" (Alvarado, 2010, p. 12).

Translated for higher education, the logic of meritocracy contends that college graduates rightfully earned this achievement because of their merit and that students with lower educational attainment "failed on their own terms" (Liu, 2011, p. 384). Similarly, despite the rather rigid architecture of U.S. higher education, meritocracy assumes that colleges and universities are mainly responsible for their conditions (e.g., faculty composition, available degree programs, and technological and physical infrastructure) and outcomes (e.g., graduation rates, research productivity, and rankings). However, such an uncritical take on meritocracy may overestimate agency and undersell how structural conditions open and foreclose opportunities for individuals and organizations (McNamee & Miller, 2009). Although I do not contend that structural forces are inherently deterministic, these forces still matter in profound ways. Structures broadly define the playing field, affording particular opportunities to specific individuals and organizations and not others. Furthermore, when opportunity, in practice, only

signals the chance to compete, structural arrangements may assume a significant role in actors' ultimate outcomes.

As implied in the examples above, structural arrangements have profound implications for students' experiences and outcomes as well as for those of colleges and universities. In the context of U.S. higher education, competitions unfold within a stratified and hierarchical system shaped by white patriarchy and colonialism (Wilder, 2013) and characterized by entrenched inequalities and inequities (Griffin & Hurtado, 2011). Specifically, the various institutional types within this system (e.g., land grant universities, private liberal arts colleges, and technical/vocational colleges) operate with long-standing resource differences, whereby particular types, or groups of institutions, such as The Ivy Leagues and other private and public research-intensive universities, benefit from a legacy of investment. Meanwhile, other institutional types (e.g., community colleges, 4-year regional universities, HBCUs, and TCUs) contend with histories of underinvestment or, more pointedly, disenfranchisement (Allen & Jewel, 2002; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Mitchell, 2013; Wooten, 2015).

To quickly historicize this arrangement, during World War II, spending on higher education increased substantially as the U.S. government ramped up its investment in university-based research to support the war effort (Thelin, 2011; Heller, n.d.). Later, amid the Cold War, the U.S. federal government increased its investment in university-based research, particularly military-related research, to ensure national and economic security (Geiger, 2011; McPherson & Baum, 2017; Mumper et al., 2011). During that time (as well as presently), mostly only large, elite universities, such as John Hopkins University and Stanford University, received this kind of federal funding (Mumper et al., 2011), not community or technical/vocational colleges or teaching-focused institutions,. Shortly thereafter, with the economic downturn of the late 1970s

and the ongoing energy crisis, public support for higher education declined (Thelin, 2011). As such, higher education began relying more on competitive funding streams, which again generally benefited 4-year institutions. Moreover, this pattern of unequal federal funding persisted. Indicative of the unequal distribution of federal funding, McPherson and Baum (2017) reported:

> In 2013–14, 59 percent ($45.8 billion) of the federal funds provided by these and other federal sources went to 120 public and private institutions out of 3,293 degree-granting public and private nonprofit institutions in the country. The 84 public colleges and universities in this group received $25.7 billion—an average of $306 million per institution, compared with an average of $557 million for the 36 private nonprofit institutions in this group. (p. 19)

Given these unequal funding patterns, there are structural differences between and among U.S. colleges and universities that, over time, have cemented or institutionalized distinct organizational conditions among institutional types. Notably, both these material and immaterial differences—these inequities—likely shape how postsecondary institutions construct choice sets and pursue opportunities, as well as, to some extent, their success in these varied pursuits. In short, organizations maintain agency, as they identify opportunities and decide, albeit not often rationally, on which ones to (and not to) pursue. However, they still operate within a rigid architecture that both constrains opportunities and how they may approach them.

Considering the focus of this study, it is necessary to situate HSIs within this broader structure or architecture. Presently, HSIs—a group of over 500 colleges and universities (*Excelencia,* 2012b)—operate within the stratified, hierarchical U.S. system of higher education, which encompasses over 4,300 2-year and 4-year degree-granting institutions (NCES, 2019a).

Thus, although individual HSIs operate somewhat independently of each other, functioning with their own campus cultures, norms, and resources, they are still part of an extensive postsecondary system. As such, the competition over Title V grants occurs among HSIs—actors who, at the same time, function within a larger inequitable and arguably unjust social arena. Furthermore, with the institutional diversification of this group over time, some HSIs hold more advantageous positions within the system than others. For example, some HSIs, such as the University of California, Santa Barbara or the University of Illinois at Chicago, benefit from resources (e.g., active donors, sizeable endowments, and established offices research and sponsored programs) unavailable at HSIs such as Boricua College or Luna Community College.

Contextualizing Title V within this larger, hierarchical system in which a group of increasingly diverse actors competes for funds is essential. Núñez (2017b) emphasizes the need for such contextualization in HSI research. In the case of this study, a decontextualized take on HSIs may lead to the erroneous assumption that all HSIs share similar histories, resources, and choice sets. And so, as they go about pursuing opportunities, this decontextualized understanding lends support to meritocracy's premise of the "equality of opportunity." Without contextualizing the HSI landscape, researchers may cast HSIs as equally equipped or positioned to compete for Title V grants, despite evidence of the contrary.

Considering the increasing institutional diversification among HSIs, I am suspect of continuous demands for increased federal investment in Title V that do not question the competitive design of this program—one explicitly enacted as a form of recompense for the chronic underfunding of HSIs. My misgiving of such demands arises because they overlook how HSIs are differently positioned and rewarded within the hierarchical U.S. system of higher education. Plainly, open to all HSIs, the Title V Program appear to adopt the meritocratic belief

in the equality of opportunity. However, Title V may, in practice, represent what Norman (1987) describes as an "equal opportunity to be unequal" (p. 103) and, thus, exacerbate—rather than remedy—inequity among HSIs. In the same vein, relational inequality scholars Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt contend: "The notion that we will reduce inequalities by imposing utopian 'free markets' is a policy prescription to empower already powerful market actors" (2019, p. 4). In short, since HSIs do not compete in a neoclassical market, this grant "competition may not spur efficiency and opportunity. Indeed, [I] think it is likely that competition will simply provide occasions for already successful institutions to accumulate even more resources" (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 84). This means already powerful HSIs, at least relative to the others within this group, may simply continue to accrue more advantage and success in this arena.

To better undertake this study and the implications for inequality and inequity introduced by such meritocratic competitions, I turn to scholarship that wrestles with the values of equality and equity more directly. Specifically, I draw from theoretical work implicating structural arrangements (e.g., public policies) and the relationships between and among organizations in the access and distribution of opportunities and resources.

Conceptualizing Equity Within the Title V Grant Competition

Considering HSIs' evolving profile in relation to Title V, I primarily drew on social equity theory. However, to further supplement this analysis, I also incorporated a few key concepts from RIT. I begin with social equity theory because this work describes and differentiates equality from equity. This foundation is useful before discussing RIT, which focuses on how relational processes generate inequalities.

Social Equity Theory

Social equity theory grapples with the notions of fairness, justice, and righteousness (Nalbandian, 1989), and it often evokes ideas about potential solutions to societal inequalities, the redistribution of resources, and equal treatment (Svara et al., 2004). Although historically rooted in the philosophic notion of the social contract (see, e.g., Hobbes, 1982; Locke, 1986; Rousseau, 1968), scholars across various disciplines now widely apply social equity theory in their work. However, since Title V exists because of federal legislation, I was interested in the conceptualization of social equity as a public policy value. Consequently, I drew on literature from the field of public policy and administration.

Many scholars attribute U.S. political philosopher John Rawls and his acclaimed 1971 book, *A Theory of Justice*, with surfacing the importance of equity within the policy arena. Alongside Rawls, others also cite H. George Frederickson, a long-time generalist in the study of public service and administration. Amid the socio-political upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Frederickson wrote about his disgruntlement about the prevailing theories in the field of public administration, which centered on efficiency and effectiveness (Guy & McCandless, 2012). At that time, public administration scholars focused on finding ways to increase productivity while minimizing waste or costs (e.g., time, resources, and effort) (Nagel, 1986). Simply put, the field of public administration emphasized "maximizing the output for a given array of inputs: getting the biggest bang for the buck" (Neumann & Pallas, 2015, p. 159). Meanwhile, the field also rampantly searched for ways to improve effectiveness or the completion of goals (McLeod & Atwell, 1992).

The emphasis on these two coupled concepts, however, concerned a group of scholars including Frederickson. Their growing concerns along with the public's "urgency for

government to be an instrument of change to correct the power imbalance between the advantaged and the disadvantaged" (Guy & McCandless, 2012, p. 56) prompted the 1968 Minnowbrook Conference, where scholars popularized and debated the place of social equity in public administration. Afterward, Frederickson introduced "social equity into the canon of public administration theory, research, and practice, joining it with efficiency and effectiveness as a foundational value" (Guy & McCandless, 2012, p. 56).

Frederickson was not alone in these efforts. Following the conference, more publications addressed equity and the distribution of public resources (see, e.g., Chitwood, 1974; Dyckman, 1971; Lucy & Birkhead, 1977), and now, social equity is an integral part of public policy and administration (Rosenbloom, 1983; Svara & Brunet, 2005; Svara et al., 2004). However, unlike effectiveness and efficiency, social equity has been a far more elusive value to operationalize and enact. In response, in 2000, The National Academy of Public Administration, a non-partisan, non-profit organization that supports governmental management, assembled a panel tasked with developing a working definition of social equity; they offered this definition:

> The fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just, and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy. (Svara et al., 2004, p. 101)

With this definition, the Academy disrupted the conflation of *equality* with *equity*. Equality demands that persons or organizations receive equal measures of opportunities and resources; "equity is a more flexible measure allowing for equivalency while not demanding exact sameness" (Guy & McCandless, 2012, p. S5). Notably, this nuanced distinction between equality and equity recognizes that people have varied identities and privilege and that organizations have

unique resources and positions in society and, thus, require distinct levels or kinds of supports to access opportunities and succeed. In this way, "while the former [equality] creates parallel lines on a ledger sheet, the latter [equity] perturbs power relations" (Guy & McCandless, 2012, p. S5).

Social equity theory, therefore, recognizes that inequity unfolds across material and immaterial arrangements. As already discussed, tangible or material resource differences exist among U.S. colleges and universities. Even more, these inequities also outfit how colleges and universities organize themselves. For example, some postsecondary institutions have extensive organizational structures, which divide labor among specialists and include multiple layers of accountability (Birnbaum, 1988). Meanwhile, other organizations are infrastructurally less complex but often more laboriously demanding on individuals. To provide a readily accessible parallel, there are structural inequities at the organizational level between a tech start-up company in which employees assume multiple roles and a multinational conglomerate like Amazon or Google (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Similarly, in the context of higher education, there are structural differences between community colleges and small private colleges with limited endowments compared to research universities, leading these institutions to organize and manage themselves in distinct ways (Birnbaum, 1988).

Inequities between and among colleges and universities also manifest in how institutions are equipped to learn, particularly how they are prepared to read and scan their respective environments. For example, a university with an established office of sponsored programs and research in which specific staff members explicitly work to identify external funding is well equipped to scan its environment for such opportunities. Such a university has dedicated human capital for such specialized work and likely access to other resources that enable success in grant acquisition (e.g., skilled grant writers, budget developers, and program evaluators).

Inequities also manifest in the different connections or relationships colleges and universities have as well as the ones they can build and sustain. Illustrating this point, through 100 semi-structured interviews with students at Yale University and Southern Connecticut University, Mullen (2014) found that very few members of Yale's community knew about Southern Connecticut University, even though these universities are only about 2 miles apart. As discussed later in this section, connections among both institutional agents and organizations inform actors' choice sets, decision-making, and activities. To sum, social theory equity acknowledges that inequity stems from both material and immaterial arrangements.

The introduction of social equity into public policy and administration also moved the conversation about resource allocation from one centered on the question of "who gets what" to who ought to get what" (Guy & McCandless, 2012, p. 58). Although people still heatedly debate what social equity means in theory and praxis, people generally accept that it extends far beyond fairness within organizations and in the delivery of public services to include policy formation, rulemaking, and outcomes (Bardach & Patashnik, 2016; Guy & McCandless, 2012). Fully ensconced across the policy process (from formation to evaluation), social equity theory was particularly useful for this study for multiple reasons. Most fundamentally, this theory supported this analysis by differentiating efficiency, effectiveness, and equity and clearly distinguishing equity from equality. Through this study, my intention was not to evaluate Title V's efficiency, meaning I was not examining the costs of the policy relative to its benefits (Nagel, 1986). I also was not analyzing Title V's effectiveness, as I was not primarily concerned with how grant recipients use their awards or the effect of these grants on HSIs' institutional stability or student outcomes. Instead, I foregrounded equity, concerned with how this presumably meritocratic competition reinscribes or even exacerbates inequity among HSIs. In particular, amid HSIs'

ongoing institutional diversification, I was interested in understanding how institutional agents at HSIs make sense of their respective campus's competitiveness for Title V funding and what sources of inequity come to bear from their insights.

In addition, social equity theory is well-suited for structural analyses, as it recognizes that equity is contextually contingent and relational. Lewin (1976) explains that the meaning of some fact (i.e., equity) is situationally dependent on its position in a field. For example, the competitiveness of job candidates for a particular position depends upon the strength of their credentials, professional experience, and social ties with the employer compared to other candidates. At the organizational level, a college or university's competitiveness for a particular opportunity depends on the set of actors likewise pursuing this opportunity. In short, this theory enabled me to wrestle with Title V's sources of inequity in the context of the HSIs' evolving profile and increasingly varied organizational conditions.

Pulling from this theory, I could also consider who ought to get what, meaning which HSIs are best positioned to compete for this federal funding and which may benefit most from it. In this way, social equity theory enabled me to trouble Title V's structure in which all HSIs may apply for these grants despite their unequal organizational conditions and needs. Altogether, this theory provided me a lens through which I could analytically read the data to identify and explain sources of inequity in the competition over Title V funding.

Relational Inequality Theory

In addition to social equity theory, I also drew on concepts from relational inequality theory (RIT) to supplement this analysis because relationships among and between organizations[45] may (re)produce inequality among HSIs. Specifically, I pulled from Tomaskovic-

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[45] In this case, *organizations* refer to socially constructed spaces where individuals coordinate their efforts to collectively fulfill an established goal.

Devey and Avent-Holt's (2019) description of RIT.[46] They explain that in response to the misleadingly individualistic orientation found within the social sciences, scholars drew on macro-level theories, particularly Marxian- and Weberian-bent theories, to propose RIT. In particular, these scholars sought to foreground the role of relationships within and between organizations in resource distribution and the perpetuation of social inequalities.

With this focus on relationships, a fundamental assumption of RIT is *categorization*— that people instinctively attempt to make meaning of the world around them by sorting people and organizations, including colleges and universities, into distinct groups. Acting as a clear example, in 1970, the Carnegie Commission of Higher Education created the Carnegie Classification to identify comparable postsecondary institutions to support research and policy analysis (Carnegie Classification, n.d.). Importantly, however, RIT does not see categorization as either intrinsically good or bad. Instead, RIT asserts that problems arise because people assign distinct meanings and expectations to categories, overlooking variation within categories. Categorization also becomes problematic because people rank groups, thereby creating a hierarchical system in which some groups are better positioned for success than others. Over time, this hierarchical structure produces inequalities among groups in terms of access to and acquisition of resources. Specifically, such asymmetrical arrangements result in the creation of in- and out-groups, whereby in-groups exploit out-groups. To note, the composition of these respective groups (in versus out) is a "historical product of particular societies, cultures, and interactional contexts" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 5). In brief, categorization positions groups in relation to others within a larger social web, and "the hierarchies produced by

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[46] As sociologists who study workplace inequality, Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019) focus on inequalities occurring within profit-oriented firms. Nevertheless, some of RIT's core concepts (i.e., resource pooling, exploitation, social closure, and claims-making) still apply within the not-for-profit sector of U.S. higher education.

categorization strengthen the claims of some and weaken those of others, permit practices of exclusion and exploitation between categories of people [and organizations], and steer access to organizational produced resources" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 43). Altogether, this process of maximizing group differences serves as "the human building block of social inequalities" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 44), as social distinctions engender discrimination even between only minimally distinct groups (Tajfel, 1970).

Beyond categorization, RIT proposes four key ideas: resource pooling, exploitation, social closure, and claims-making. First, RIT contends that organizations are *resource pooling devices*; they actively work to amass—or pool—resources by configuring their internal production processes and claiming resources from their environment or field. Furthermore, "the volume of resources accumulated shapes resource inequalities between organizations" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 63). Second, adapted from the Marxian notion of the labor theory of value, *exploitation* refers to powerful actors benefiting at the expense of less powerful actors; this mechanism engenders inequality "when a more powerful group appropriates organizational resources from categorically distinct and less powerful actors" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 55). Third, RIT foregrounds the idea of *social closure*—"the exclusion of some actors from participation in the organizational production of resources or from valuable organizational positions or opportunities with institutionalized claims on resources" (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 5). Simply put, social closure means some actors limit other actors' access to resources; this occurs in two primary ways: opportunity hoarding and exclusion. *Opportunity hoarding* happens when opportunities are reserved for in-groups, and *exclusion* refers to denying opportunities to out-groups. Notably, the line between social closure and exploitation is a fine one. For example, "the difference between no access to

credit and access to credit with high interests is the conversion of [social] closure to exploitation"
(Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019, p. 5). Lastly, actors engage in RIT's notion of *claims-making* when they claim they are more deserving of any given resource or opportunity than other
actors.

Bringing these four concepts together to explain the crux of RIT, Tomaskovic-Devey and
Avent-Holt (2019) write:

> Resources are generated and pool[ed] in organizations. Actors with legitimated claims
> gain access to those resources. Some people and potential trading partners are denied
> access to organizational resources through processes of social closure. Others appropriate
> organizational resources based on their ability to exploit weaker actors in production and
> exchange relationships. Actors are more or less powerful in these claims-making
> processes to the extent to which they have cultural, status, and material advantages in
> resource distributing relationships. These power-generating resources tend to be
> associated with categorical distinctions such as ownership, occupation, gender, education,
> citizenship, race, and the like. Which categorical distinctions are the basis for claims-
> making are institutionally and organizationally variable. Organizational and institutional
> fields influence, but do not determine, action and opportunities. Rather, actors use
> cultural and other tools to invent local strategies of action. (p. 6)

This theorization was useful to this study for multiple reasons. To start, categorization is a
defining feature of U.S. higher education; colleges and universities are grouped into categories
based on numerous factors, such as their mission, sector, and size. Consequently, RIT supported
this analysis by reckoning with the problematic underbelly of categorization, specifically that
people ascribe distinct attributes and expectations to groups, which then, groups leverage to pool

resources, exploit others, and withhold and claim opportunities. In this way, RIT assumes that the strong, most powerful actors tend to win. With this understanding, I could consider, for example, if/how institutional agents at particular groups of HSIs (e.g., 4-year universities) appear to exclude other HSIs from this competition (e.g., Hispanic-Serving community colleges).

RIT also informed this study because, with its focus on relationships, it acknowledges *fields*. Relationships between and among actors—whether people or organizations—occur within a relational structure or field, and they create and sustain this structure. Expounding on French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) theory of social fields, Hilgers and Mangez (2014) describe a field as follows:

> A field is a structure of relative positions within which actors and groups think, act, and take positions…In their position-taking, person and groups—sometimes unconsciously— pursue interests linked to their relative positions in the field, which may consist in preserving or transforming the position they occupy and the resources associated with it. The position of an actor or a group depends not only on the way in which it manages to renew itself but also on the ways in which all the other actors in the fields evolve or seek to evolve. (p. 10)

Institutional agents at HSIs and other colleges and universities, for example, scan their environments, form their choice sets, and weigh their competitiveness and chances of success in any given opportunity in relation to other actors. Subsequently, RIT recognizes how actors' (e.g., institutional agents at HSIs) interpretation of and response to their location within a field is implicated in the production of inequality. In view of the present study, RIT pushed me to consider how an HSI's relative position among HSIs and within the broader grant landscape (i.e., field) connects to inequality.

Lastly, well-suited for qualitative research, RIT was helpful for this study. Specifically, it allowed me to qualitatively explore how the (re)production of inequality and, therefore, inequity partially hinges on sets of HSIs behaving in particular ways. For example, does a segment of HSIs employ specific strategic moves to secure Title V grants? Are particular types of HSIs able to develop more compelling, competitive proposals? In the end, informed by RIT, I realized that the equity of Title V largely depends on how institutional agents at HSIs make sense of their position and competitiveness for this funding among their peers because this understanding likely shapes their actions, specifically their engagement in this competition.

To summarize my conceptual lens, I leveraged the logic of meritocracy, social equity theory, and RIT to organize my research design and inform my analysis. Informed by this scholarship, I conceptualized HSIs as actors subsumed within the architecture of U.S. higher education engaged in a specific field competition. Furthermore, this theoretical grounding allowed me to interrogate competitive exchanges among HSIs while considering the intersection between an actor's organizational conditions and opportunities. This latter point is significant for this analysis given HSIs' evolving institutional makeup. In brief, this conceptual lens enabled me to explore inequities of Title V.

Summary of the Literature

In this chapter, I (a) historicized HSIs' development and Title V's enactment, (b) juxtaposed HSIs' historical versus contemporary profile, (c) presented trend data on Title V's federal appropriations levels, (d) synthesized research on Title V, and (e) presented my conceptual orientation to this study. To quickly summarize the rich history of HSIs, these institutions' legal and political recognition was the result of concerted advocacy efforts, particularly by groups such as the HHEC and HACU (Valdez, 2015). Similarly, Congress

enacted Title V in 1998 and expanded it in 2008 in response to the concerns raised by such educational activists (Valdez, 2015).

Regarding the evolving profile of HSIs, this set of institutions has grown dramatically over the years and diversified across several lines. For instance, HSIs are diverse in terms of their sector, size, geographic location, and student demographics, among other dimensions. To offer one prime example, while 20 years ago, the vast majority of HSIs were public community colleges, more than half of HSIs today are 4-year institutions (Santiago et al., 2020).

As far as the research on Title V, the literature is quite sparse. That said, the limited work in this area addresses the program's management, considering both its federal management (see, e.g., GAO, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010) and institutional-level management (see, e.g., Christie et al., 2004; Christie et al., 2005; Villarreal, 2014). A few institutional reports examine the usage and benefits of these grants (see, e.g., GAO, 2004; Santiago et al., 2016), and other work explores the program's beneficiaries (see, e.g., Vargas, 2018; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2018). Lastly, a few studies examine Title V's effectiveness at the institutional level (see, e.g., Carpi et al., 2013; Keim et al., 2010; Watt et al., 2013), while others take up this question at the more system level (see, e.g., Perez, 2019; Pineda, 2010). Collectively, this limited, albeit growing, area of research has significant gaps, which merit further exploration. Namely, much of the Title V scholarship, to date, has pursued what-framed questions: What has the ED done to manage this program? What capacity-building efforts have these grants funded? Although recent studies have started to explore more critical *how* and *why* questions, more studies are needed, such as this present one.

Lastly, I pulled from various theoretical bodies of literature to conceptually orient myself to this study. Specifically, key to my thinking was the logic of meritocracy, specifically how meritocratic competitions can, and often do, perpetuate inequity. Additionally, I drew on social

equity theory and RIT's four core concepts: resource pooling, exploitation, social closure, and claims-making. These two complementary theories ultimately shaped my thinking on what equity is and how it unfolds within the U.S. system of higher education and, in particular, within the Title V Program. Guided by this conceptual lens, in the following chapter, I present my specific methodological choices.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, I describe my approach to this study in which I asked: How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants? What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V? In service of these questions, I organized this chapter into three parts. First, I state my positionality to this study. Second, I discuss the paradigm ungirding this research—critical realism. In the last section, I outline the study's design, including details about data collection and analysis.

Positionality Statement

"Scientists firmly believe that as long as they are not conscious of any bias or

political agenda, they are neutral and objective, when in fact they are only

unconscious" (Namenwirth, 1986, p. 29).

In their introduction to a volume on critical approaches to studying higher education, Martínez-Alemán et al. (2015) explain that:

> Researchers further influence inquiry from their own subjective positions. In critical
>
> inquiries, researchers must consider their own subject positions in order to take into
>
> account their own preconceptions that result from their own social positions. The
>
> decisions researchers make about the choice of topic, method, and its production are
>
> affected by their own agency, their own positions in relations of power and in
>
> disciplinary discourses (p. 2)

Following Martínez-Alemán et al.'s charge, I start by sharing part of my story and core beliefs because, like all researchers, my experiences and identities, as well as how others interpret my identities, color my work (Sears & Cairns, 2015). In sharing this window into my life, my point

is to be forthright about why I am concerned with public policies, primarily educational policies integral to the Latinx community, such as Title V.

I immigrated to the United States in December 1994. Deplaning in Louisville, Kentucky, I immediately knew that we—my family and I—had arrived somewhere unlike anything I had ever known. Born in Brussels to Venezuelan expatriates, the United States was as foreign to me as we were to it—a foreignness made evident to me as I searched for the answers to my peers' questions surrounding my nationality, ethnicity, and language proficiencies. In time, I realized their curiosity was sometimes benign but also often deeply rooted in notions of lingualism, nativism, and racism—terminology I learned much later into adulthood. Even without the "words to describe, to unpack, to frame the world around me" (Mckesson, 2018, p. xi), I still sensed a profundity in their comments and understood that our story—and our status—differed from that of many of my "American" classmates. [47] I also learned how rules and policies both foreclosed and expanded opportunities. Simply, the sum of my lived experiences made it poignant to me that distal forces bore down on my life and on the lives of those around me, and the implications of these structural relationships have long perplexed and fascinated me.

At the same time, my parents imbued in my siblings and me the precarious place we occupied as Latinx immigrants in U.S. society, explaining how our actions and inaction reflected upon *nuestra comunidad* and, in turn, reified or disrupted the narrative about Latinxs. Moreover, they were unequivocal; we were to thrive in ways that honored and uplifted *nuestra gente*. Perhaps unconsciously subscribing to Grubb and Lazerson's (2004) notion of the education gospel, the belief that formal schooling can solve society's wide breadth of social and economic

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[47] I refer to my classmates from the United States as "American[s]," as a way to trouble the conflation of the term "American" with U.S. citizenry. I argue that the typical usage of the term "American" overlooks other people from North America and those from Central and South America, who are also American.

problems, my parents expected us to earn college degrees. Although I hold a far more tempered view about higher education's democratizing potential, I cautiously recognize that it still serves as a lever, albeit a faulty one, to socioeconomic security and mobility in the United States (Ma et al., 2016). Moreover, I value postsecondary education, as it renders real benefits in people's lives and to greater society through, for example, lower crime rates, better health outcomes, and a more active citizenry (Bloom et al., 2006; Stacy, 1997; Trostel, 2015).

Informed by these circumstances, I am deeply interested in Title V because this line of inquiry connects my most enduring commitment—to be of service to *mi comunidad*—with my long-held interest in educational policies. By exploring equity-laden issues with the Title V Program, I see the potential to advance educational equity at the organizational and individual level. Ultimately, I see this research as one way to realize, at least in small part, the expectation placed before and assumed by my siblings and me.

Paradigmatic Orientation

Researchers' ontological, epistemological, and axiological values shape their paradigm for understanding the world, thereby influencing the questions they ask, what research they pursue, and how they pursue it. Taking this a step further, Fleetwood (2005) explains:

> The way we think the world is (ontology) influences: what we think can be known about it (epistemology); how we think it can be investigated (methodology and research techniques); the kinds of theories we think can be constructed about it; and the political and policy stances we are prepared to take. (p. 197)

As likely implied by my positionality statement, I enter my work concerned about how system-level structures affect organizations (i.e., HSIs) and, in turn, individuals (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff members, and students). Curious about the interplay between macro- and micro-

level forces, I approach my research as a critical scholar, who accepts multiple Truths, the subjectivity of reality, and that "denying subjectivity breaches its [research's] emancipatory commitment" (Martínez-Alemán et al., 2015, p. 3). As a critical researcher, I also view reality as a social construct forged from a complex set of power dynamics (Sipe & Constable, 1996), and I am concerned with the embroilment and implications of these dynamics within my research.

Within this critical umbrella, I ground myself and this study in *critical realism,* a philosophic tradition attributed to philosopher Roy Bhaskar (Danermark et al., 2002; Fletcher, 2016). Broadly described, critical realism rejects the dichotomization of reality as one of realism or anti-realism, contending that "there exists both an external world independently of human consciousness and at the same time a dimension which includes our socially determined knowledge about reality" (Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 5–6). Thus, most critical realists accept that individuals create and maintain structural arrangements (e.g., mores, organizational cultures, and political ideologies), thereby making them real, irrespective of their physical materiality *(*Fleetwood, 2005). Moreover, these arrangements are real if they have "causal efficacy" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199), meaning that they are consequential in people's lives by (a) enabling or foreclosing possibilities, (b) informing societal norms and values, and (c) shaping how individuals or institutions organize themselves (Maxwell, 2012). For example, "God may or may not be real, but the idea of God is as real as Mount Everest because the idea of God makes a difference to people's actions" (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199).

Critical realists also assume that reality may manifest in distinctive, stratified levels or modes (Fleetwood, 2005; Fletcher, 2016). Fleetwood (2005) identifies four separate modes of reality: material, ideal, artefactual, and social. *Materially real* entities, such a library or campus building, "exist independently of what individuals or communities do, say or think"

(Fleetwood, 2005, p. 200), whereas *ideally real* refers to conceptual entities such as stereotypes, symbols, language, or theories. In contrast, *socially real* entities refer to physically immaterial entities that exist because of and depend on human activity, such as the capitalist market, bureaucratic state, marriage, and college rankings. Lastly, the *artefactually real* mode refers to entities that synthesize different modes of reality together, such as laptops and smartphones. That is, artefactually real entities fuse materially and socially real entities together (Fleetwood, 2005).

Accordingly, in the social sciences, researchers often study socially real entities. For instance, scholars investigate higher education institutions' prestige-seeking behaviors and the implications of these practices (see, e.g., Goldman et al., 2004; Gonzales, 2013; Orphan, 2020; Posecznick, 2017). In this current study, I explore how institutional agents at HSIs make sense of their competitiveness for Title V funding and consider what inequities this reveals about the program, particularly given HSIs' ongoing institutional diversification. Although I cannot physically touch or singularly measure an HSI's Title V competitiveness, this entity is real because it reflects how HSIs think about themselves and their peers and, thus, shapes how they engage in this opportunity.

Additionally, although critical realists recognize the role of human agency in the (re)production of social arrangements, they also accept:

> There is…no unmediated access to the world: access is always mediated. Whenever we reflect upon an entity (or a state of affairs), our sense data are always mediated by a pre-existing stock of conceptual resources (which often includes discursive resources), which we use to interpret, make sense of, understand what it is and take appropriate action. (Fleetwood, 2005, p. 199)

More simply, Frazer and Lacy (1993) explain, "our knowledge of the real world is inevitably interpretative and provisional, rather than straightforwardly representational" (p. 182). In short, critical realists accept that "in social life, there is only interpretation" (Denzin, 2017, p. 12) and that individuals diversely experience reality. In the absence of a universal interpretation of the social world, critical realists find merit in exploring how different people understand existing arrangements. To close, critical realism carries these various assumptions, but it does not prescribe a particular set of methods to study phenomena (Fletcher, 2006). As such, I couple my use of critical realism with critical qualitative inquiry (CQI).

Critical Qualitative Inquiry

Although policy analyses assume various forms and may rely on quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or multi-method research designs (Patton et al., 2013), for this study, I used critical qualitative inquiry (CQI). Denzin (2017) explains that CQI advances multiple goals within its larger emancipatory agenda such that a researcher using this approach "reveal[s] sites for change and activism," "uses inquiry and activism to help people," and "affects social policy by getting critiques heard and acted on by policymakers" (p. 9). Similarly, Cannella (2015) describes CQI as research that "is always/already concerned with issues of fairness and equity, and the struggle toward more just and societal transformations" (pp. 7–8). Merriam (2002) further explains the purpose and aims of critical qualitative research, stating:

> Critical qualitative research uncovers, examines, and critiques the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions that structure and limit our ways of thinking and being in the world. The ultimate objective of this type of critique is to free ourselves from these constraints, to become empowered to change our social context and ourselves. Critical research focuses less on individuals than on context…Questions are asked regarding

whose interests are being served by the way the educational system is organized, who

really has access to particular programs, who has the power to make changes, and what

are the outcomes of the way in which education is structured. (pp. 10–11)

Based on these explanations, CQI aligned well with my ontological assumptions as a critical

realist and my interest in exposing equity-laden issues of this public policy that relies on a

competition to "meritocratically" allocate funding to HSIs.

Unlike quantitative studies often intended to offer generalizations about a phenomenon,

this approach allowed me to grapple with Title V's equity-laden issues, particularly considering

HSIs' evolving composition. Indeed, this point bears emphasizing because although researchers

may analyze public policies in myriad ways, most use quantitative approaches or conduct

discourse or document analyses. However, I used CQI because I was interested in learning from

institutional agents at HSIs how their respective campus's seek Title V grants and what sources

of inequity this brings forward about this competition. To close, as discussed at the onset of this

chapter, my position as a researcher and my assumptions as a critical realist inform what I study

and how I study it (i.e., this study's research design).

Research Design

To answer my guiding research questions in a way that aligned with the assumptions of

critical realism and the principles of CQI, I made the following methodological choices. To start,

since HSIs' institutional diversity informs the equity of Title V (a socially real entity), I

categorized HSIs into five exclusive groups based on their recent involvement, or lack thereof, in

the Title V Program and, where applicable, their success in this competition. Then, I conducted

semi-structured interviews with between 1–4 institutional agents (i.e., faculty members, senior-

level administrators, grants office staff members, and Title V-funded staff) at multiple HSIs

within three of the five categories, interviewing 29 participants across 17 institutions in total. In preparation for these interviews, I reviewed organizational documents for each site to gain a better understanding of the institution and its grant activity. Again, to enable this analysis, I first purposively selected institutions.

Site Selection

To identify sites, I placed HSIs into five distinct groups based on institutions' recent involvement, or lack thereof, in the Title V Program for several reasons. First, how an institution seeks grants is likely reflective of its materially real entities (e.g., staff size, financial resources, and physical infrastructure like a grants office). Similarly, an HSI's socially real entities, such as its institutional knowledge and experience with the Title V application process, likely inform the campus's competitiveness for this funding. Also, I created these five distinct categories mindful of critical researchers' concern with the interplay between structural conditions (e.g., access to skilled grant writers) and outcomes (e.g., grant obtainment) (Merriam, 2002). Finally, by dividing HSIs in this way—each category presumably representing HSIs with distinct levels of competitiveness for this funding—I could flesh out sources of equity of Title V, particularly considering HSIs' evolving makeup.

Category Identification and Criteria

I grouped institutions based on their involvement or lack thereof in the Title V Part A Program from 2009–2017. I confined my analysis to this timeframe because the ED had only publicly released information, such as maximum award amounts and awardees' proposal abstracts, for this period when I initially conceived this study in the summer of 2018.

To construct these categories, I used three datasets. First, I obtained data on DHSI grant applicants and recipients from 2009–2017.[48] This data included: (a) the name of the primary applicant institution, (b) if the applicant received the grant, and (c) the amount of money the applicant requested. Second, I used the ED's official list, specifying eligible institutions for HSI status from 2010–2016. Third, I used IPEDS to obtain data on key institutional characteristics for all eligible HSIs during this period. Table 5 outlines these three datasets.

Table 5

Descriptions of Datasets Used to Create Categories

Dataset	Description
Title V Part A Applicant and Recipient Data	All institutions that applied for a Title V grant and all applicants that obtained grants from 2009–2017.
ED Eligible HSI Lists	Names, OPE identifications, and state or territory locations of all eligible HSIs from 2010–2016.
IPEDS Data	Information for each HSI from 2009–2017, such as each institution's sector, total FTE enrollment, percentage of Pell recipients, student racial/ethnic demographics, total expenditures per FTE student, total revenues from grants per FTE students, and total staff per FTE student.

Note. IPEDS collects self-reported data for all Title IV-eligible postsecondary institutions in the United States and its territories. An OPE identification is a number assigned by the ED to identify institutions eligible to receive federal funding from student financial aid programs.

I combined these datasets to form one comprehensive dataset, which includes key institutional characteristics of all eligible HSIs and information on all Title V Part A applicants and recipients from 2010–2017.[49] As shown in Table 6, I initially grouped institutions into the

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[48] This data, obtained via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, is essential to this study because, to date, the HSI Division has only released the abstracts of DHSI grant recipients since 2009, but it has not publicly provided either a list of all DHSI grant applicants or the proposal abstracts of unsuccessful applicants.
[49] I found a list of all eligible HSIs for 2017 on the ED website; it appears, however, that this list has since been removed from the website.

following non-exclusive categories: Non-Applicants, Applicants, Non-Successful Applicants, Recipients, and Multi-Recipients.

Table 6

Basic Schema per Title V Part A Application and Receipt, 2009–2017

Basic Grouping	Description	N
Non-Applicants	Institutions that, although eligible, never applied	145
Applicants	Institutions that applied for at least one grant	339
Non-Successful Applicants	Institutions that applied for a grant(s) but never obtained one	125
Recipients	Institutions that applied for and obtained at least one grant	214
Multi-Recipients	Institutions that applied for and received more than one grant	88

Note. Groups are non-exclusive; to be a recipient an institution must also be an applicant.

Next, through a series of descriptive statistics, I categorized institutions based on their success in this competition. Specifically, I grouped the 484 unique institutions into one of five exclusive categories: Highly Persistent Successful Applicants (HPSAs); Moderately Active Successful Applicants; Moderately Active Unsuccessful Applicants; Highly Persistently Unsuccessful Applicants (HPUAs), and Non-Applicants. Table 7 briefly describes the criteria used to construct each category and provides examples of institutions within each group.

Table 7

Categories of Title V Part A Applicants and Non-Applicants, 2009–2017

Criteria Description	Representative Campuses	N	% Total
Highly Persistent Successful Applicants			
Institutions submitted more than 3 applications and obtained 66% or more of the grants for which they applied, meaning they obtained grants at a notably higher rate than average applicants.	Angelo State University Heritage University Santa Barbara City College	11	2.3
Moderately Active Successful Applicants			
Institutions submitted between 1–3 applications and obtained at least 1 grant. This, for example, includes the 22 HSIs that applied once and received 1 grant during this period.	Colorado State University-Pueblo Northeastern Illinois University Yakima Valley College	203	41.9
Moderately Active Unsuccessful Applicants			
Institutions that applied between 1–3 times but never received a grant.	Boricua College University of California-Merced	96	19.8
Highly Persistently Unsuccessful Applicants[a]			
Institutions that applied 4 or more times but never received a grant, meaning these HSIs failed to obtain a Title V grant at a higher rate than the average applicant.	New Mexico State University University of La Verne	29	6.0
Non-Applicants			
Eligible institutions that never applied for a grant.	City College-Miami St. Philip's College	145	30.0

Note. Representative campuses are in alphabetical order. In the far-right column, the values represent the share each category accounts for across all five categories.

[a] Each of these example campuses submitted between 7–8 applications during this period.

In brief, of the 484 eligible HSIs, I identified 33 as HPSAs, meaning these institutions applied for three or more DHSI grants, obtaining two-thirds or more of these awards across this 8-year period. Of note, from 2009–2017, the average acceptance rate for DHSI grant proposals was approximately 33%; thus, these HSIs' success rates were double (or more) than that of the average applicant. Meanwhile, I identified 203 institutions as Moderately Active Successful Applicants, meaning they submitted anywhere from 1–3 applications and obtained at least one grant during this period. For example, included in this group were 22 HSIs that applied once and received one grant from 2009–2017. Also, within this category are those institutions that applied three or more times but with more limited success compared to their HPSA peers. I also identified 96 institutions as Moderately Active Unsuccessful Applicants; these institutions applied anywhere from 1–3 times but never obtained a grant during this period. Next, I classified 29 institutions as HPUAs, meaning these institutions applied for four or more DHSI grants during this timeframe but were repeatedly unsuccessful. Lastly, forming the second largest group, I identified 145 institutions as Non-Applicants—colleges and universities that, although presumably eligible to compete for these grants, never applied for one during this period. Table 8 provides a descriptive profile of these categories; see Appendix E for the distribution of institutions by category and state.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics by Category, 2009–2017

	HPSAs	Mod. Act. Suc. Apps	Mod. Act. Unsuc. Apps	HPUAs	Non-Apps
Sector					
4-Year	63.64%	48.28%	53.13%	72.41%	58.62%
2-Year	36.36%	51.72%	46.88%	27.59%	41.38%
Public	72.73%	80.79%	75.00%	62.07%	56.56%
Private	27.27%	19.21%	25.00%	37.93%	43.45%
Selectivity					
Highly Selective	0.00%	2.96%	5.21%	13.79%	2.76%
Somewhat Selective	18.18%	10.34%	15.63%	13.79%	12.41%
Non-Selective	81.82%	86.70%	78.13%	72.41%	83.45%
Region					
West	63.64%	50.74%	45.83%	44.83%	41.38%
Midwest	0.00%	3.94%	9.38%	13.79%	8.28%
Northeast	9.10%	9.85%	14.58%	3.45%	12.41%
South	18.18%	23.15%	21.88%	20.69%	22.76%
Puerto Rico	9.10%	12.32%	8.33%	17.24%	11.03%
General Characteristics					
FTE Undergrad Enrollment	8,289	7,783	7,446	8,768	3,586
% Latinx Undergraduate	50.73%	54.49%	43.24%	59.07%	36.57%
Expenses per FTE Student	$9,040	$9,469	$9,793	$8,532	$9,639
%. Pell Recipient	32.73%	36.63%	37.02%	38.41%	37.35%
Latinx Graduation Rate	33.41%	29.83%	30.48%	37.02%	35.20%
Student FTE per Staff	1,016	874	1,035	1,050	582
Revenue per FTE Student	$12,198	$11,120	$11,522	$12,180	$13,454
%. Revenue from Grants	39.37%	49.35%	42.74%	36.43%	37.61%
Multi-campus	72.73%	59.61%	53.13%	48.28%	43.45%
N	11	203	96	29	145

Note. These numbers represent the mean values for each variable across all the institutions within each category during this period. HSIs in Puerto Rico are included within these statistics.

Based on these descriptive statistics and the distribution of institutions across categories, I decided to focus data collection on only three of the five categories, specifically on HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants. Although moderately active actors—whether successful or unsuccessful—could offer additional insight on the topic under investigation, I concentrated on highly persistent applicants for two related reasons. First, given their recent frequency of applying, these HSIs have more current experience with the Title V Program. Thus, at these HSIs, I reasoned that there may be more people with institutional knowledge of Title V and insight about this topic.

I also intentionally included Non-Applicants because it is important in terms of both policy and practice to understand why these potential beneficiaries have not pursued this funding, although seemingly eligible (Aguilar-Smith & Yun, 2019). More specifically, by including Non-Applicants, I could glean whether this state reflects an intentional decision on the part of institutional agents or campus leadership or if it is a byproduct of limited information, resource constraints, and/or something else.

Institutional Sample

Considering the three identified categories, I collected data from seven HPSAs, five HPUAs, and five Non-Applicants, meaning I interviewed institutional agents and reviewed organizational documents for 17 institutions in total. As reflected in Table 9, I also worked to capture HSIs' institutional heterogeneity. Attempting to account for their geographic diversity, these 17 HSIs span five regions of the mainland United States: Far West ($n = 5$), Great Lakes ($n = 4$), Mideast ($n = 4$), Southeast ($n = 3$), Southeast ($n = 1$).

Table 9

Sampled Institutions by Category, Sector, and Region

Category	Sector			
	Private 4	Public 2	Public 4	Total
Highly Persistent Successful Applicants				
Far West	0	3	1	4
Mideast	0	0	1	1
Southeast	0	0	1	1
Southwest	0	0	1	1
Highly Persistent Unsuccessful Applicants				
Great Lakes	1	2	0	3
Mideast	1	0	0	1
Southwest	1	0	0	1
Non-Applicants				
Far West	0	1	0	1
Great Lakes	1	0	0	1
Mideast	0	0	2	2
Southwest	0	0	1	1
Total	4	6	7	17

Note. Institutions regional classification based on Bureau of Economic Analysis's (n.d.) schema.

In terms of sector, six sites are community colleges, seven are public 4-years, and four are private 4-years. Furthermore, each category, with few exceptions, included a mix of private, public, 2-year, and 4-year HSIs across three or more regions. More specifically, HPSAs span five regions and include an even split between public community colleges and public, 4-year HSIs. Subsequently, missing from this group are private 4-year HSIs; however, it bears noting that only 11 HSIs in total met the criteria for classification within this group, and only two were private 4-year institutions. Meanwhile, HPUAs include three private 4-HSIs and two public community colleges, meaning missing from this group are public 4-year HSIs. In this case, too, public 4-year HSIs accounted for a smaller share of all the institutions within this category. Finally, Non-

Applicants in this study span four regions and represent three sectors—public 4-years, private 4-years, and public community colleges.

Overall, by creating these mutually exclusive categories, I attempted to represent HSIs' diversity. However, this sampling approach is time dependent; the composition of these groups is variable overtime. That is, these specific institutions satisfied the criteria for inclusion into these groups from 2009–2017. However, if I extended my analysis to include earlier or more recent data on DHSI applicants and recipients, these same institutions may meet the inclusion criteria for a different category. Indeed, through the course of data collection, these categories proved dynamic. For example, when interviewing an administrator at a HPUA institution, I learned that the campus recently received a DHSI award. Similarly, a seasoned administrator at a different HPUA institution noted that the college won a DHSI grant in the early 2000s.

Additionally, this schema only accounts for institutions' pursuit and success in securing DHSI awards; it does not consider their eligibility for other HSI-related grants. Specifically, it does not take into account if the institution applied for and received either a PPOHA grant or a Title III-Part F (HSI STEM and Articulation Program) grant during this period. However, based on participants' comments and my review of all publicly available information on PPOHA and Title III-Part F awardees, I uncovered that some HPUAs were successful in these other HSI-related grant programs, including some of the institutions in my sample. Likewise, multiple HPSAs also received either a PPOHA or Title III-Part F grant, or even both, at one point in time.

I share these points to offer some additional context for the data included in this study. Importantly, participants' insights and the organizational documents reflect each institution's unique grant-seeking efforts and success across these related grant programs. To follow, I

explain my rationale for selecting the data sources used in this study and provide a detailed

description of each source

Data Sources

Aligned with critical realism and CQI, I conducted 29 semi-structured interviews with 1–

4 institutional agents at each of 17 institutions and reviewed organizational documents from each

as well.

Participants

Given the paradigmatic and methodological assumptions ungirding this study, I

conducted 29 semi-structured interviews with a combination of institutional agents, including

senior administrators, tenured faculty members, and staff members, at multiple HSIs within each

of three targeted categories (i.e., HPSA, HPUA, and Non-Applicants). Aligned with critical

realists' assumption that people experience reality in diverse ways (Denzin, 2017; Fleetwood,

2005; Frazer & Lacy, 1993) and field theorists' principle of singularity (Hilgers & Mangez,

2014; Parlett, 1991), I accepted that institutional agents at HSIs disparately experience and

understand their institution—its structure, grant-seeking priorities, and competitiveness for this

funding. Thus, whenever possible, I interviewed more than one individual at each site. Also,

although as a critical researcher I am interested in organizational or structural-level concerns, I

could not (and cannot) directly interview an organization (i.e., an HSI) and question how its

"interests are being served by the way the educational system is organized" (Miriam, 2002, p.

11). Making a similar point, Gonzales et al. (2018) explained that organizational theorists'

particular focus on organizations "does not preclude them from being interested in questions

related to human perspectives, experiences, or interactions. Indeed, people's experiences and

engagements are very often the entry point for understanding and theorizing about organizations"

(p. 512). Accordingly, I relied on institutional agents at HSIs as my "entry point" (Gonzales et al., 2018, p. 512) into understanding the sources of inequity of Title V because these individuals could speak to how they understand their competitiveness for this funding. Lastly, I interviewed these individuals rather than simply textually analyzing the statutory language of Title V and other relevant documents because "document[s] meaning[s] lie in some interaction among policy text, legislators' intent, and policy-relevant publics' experiences" (Yanow, 2007, p. 116). In other words, the meaning of documents and, thus, their implications are inseparably intertwined with how people read, interpret, and enact them.

Participant Selection Criteria and Identification. I selected participants based on two main criteria. First, participants worked at the institution at a time in which it was eligible to apply for Title V funds. Second, participants served in roles affording them first-hand knowledge about their institution's grant-seeking practices and priorities. Specifically, some participants worked in offices of sponsored programs or research administration, while others worked in different units but helped develop a Title V grant application or implement Title V-funded project within the last decade.

To identify participants, I employed a few tactics, slightly differentiating my approach for applicants versus non-applicants. For applicant institutions, I reviewed publicly available proposal abstracts of DHSI awardees from 2009–2017 in search of each project's primary contact person or primary investigator. Relatedly, I also combed through additional information on DHSI grant applicants from 2009–2017 for any relevant contact information. Then, I crossed-referenced these contacts with current institutional directories to determine if they still worked at the institution and recorded their current contact information when applicable. When I could not locate someone on the institution's public directory, I conducted a wider Internet-based search to

find the person's current employer and corresponding email address. Specifically, in these cases, I performed a basic Google search by inputting the individual's name in the search bar to see if I could surface any information on the person's current place of employment or present contact details. In these cases, I often resorted to scouring LinkedIn and Google Scholar profiles to locate these individual's current email addresses. However, in various cases, such as when someone changed surnames, retired, died, shifted professions, or had either no or limited public social media presence, I was unable to locate their current contact information.

For Non-Applicant institutions, I employed a slightly different approach to identify and, subsequently, recruit participants, since I was not searching for a particular individual associated with a previous Title V grant application in these cases. Instead, I searched each target institution's website, looking for institutional agents whose position suggested they may have relevant knowledge about the institution's grant activity and practices. However, this process was complicated since colleges and universities house grant-related work differently. For example, some institutions have a standalone grants office—an office that assumes a slew of names, such as the office of sponsored programs and research, the office of research administration, and the office of research development, among others. Meanwhile, other institutions fold grant-related work into advancement and development. And yet, other institutions have a less formal structure for this type of work, with a mix of administrators, faculty, and staff seeking and managing grants among their other responsibilities. Thus, to identify participants at Non-Applicant institutions, I performed an extensive search of each potential site's website, collecting contact information for persons employed in an assortment of seemingly grant-related departments, offices, or units (e.g., offices of sponsored programs, offices of research advancement, offices of institutional advancement, and foundations). Also,

considering the positions of contact persons for existing DHSI awards, I collected contact information for people fulfilling similar roles at Non-Applicant institutions, such as vice presidents of academic and/or student affairs.

Participant Recruitment. I organized my recruitment process into multiple waves, sending personalized emails to each person on my list across all categories within a specific region (see Appendix F for recruitment emails). Specifically, I started by emailing people employed at (or once affiliated with) HSIs in the Great Lakes region in late January 2020, detailing to them the dates I would be in the area. From this initial wave, I confirmed interviews with four participants at four separate HSIs, which took place on their respective campuses in mid-February 2020. Following these in-person interviews, I employed snowball sampling and elicited recommendations for additional participants meeting my criteria at that institution. Snowball sampling, a useful method for recruiting participants, "makes use of natural social networks" (Noy, 2008, p. 329) and allows a researcher to connect with more people and access additional social groups who qualify as study participants, especially "when other contact avenues have dried up" (Noy, 2008, p. 330).

The emergence of COVID-19, however, radically interrupted my in-person approach to data collection, prompting me to rely solely on virtual or phone-based interviews for all subsequent interviews. Accordingly, beginning with my second wave of recruitment emails, which I sent in mid-February, I reached out those working at HSIs in the Pacific Northwest, requesting virtual or phone-based interviews. Meanwhile, my third waves of emails targeted individuals working at HSIs in the Mideast, my fourth those in the Southeast, my fifth those in the West Coast, and lastly those in the Southwest. Although I organized my recruitment process by region, interspersed within these waves, I also sent follow-up emails to individuals who had

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not responded to my initial interview request, particularly those who worked at institutions in which I had already confirmed or conducted an interview. Again, given my grounding in critical realism, I wanted to speak with more than one person at each site whenever possible. Also, when emailing people at a Non-Applicant institution, in addition to requesting an interview, I asked if there was anyone else I should reach out on their campus regarding this request. Lastly, toward the end of my multiple rounds of recruitment emails, I reviewed my sample's distribution across categories, sector, and region. To address gaps I identified within my sample, I sent a final batch of targeted emails to people working at Non-Applicant institutions and private 4-year HSIs. Ultimately, data collection spanned 4 months, and through these tactics, I interviewed 29 institutional agents at 17 HSIs between early February and late May 2020.

Participant Profile. In terms of some key participant demographics, 13 participants worked in grant-related units (e.g., offices of sponsored programs, offices of research administration, and offices of institutional advancement and development). Four participants were staff members or directors currently or previously employed on a Title V-funded project. Ten participants were senior administrators—a diverse group of higher education professionals, including college deans, vice presidents, department chairs, executive directors, and even a college president.[50] Finally, two participants were tenured faculty members, although they both also had administrative responsibilities. Despite participants' distinct job roles, all in some capacity: (a) helped develop a Title V grant application, (b) supported the implementation of a Title V-funded project, and/or (c) were intimately familiar with their institution's grant-related practices.

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[50] To note, multiple senior administrators in this study previously held faculty appointments.

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In terms tenure of employment, 10 participants had worked at their institution for more than 15 years, with some nearing retirement after more than 20 years at the institution. Eight participants had worked at their institution between 10–14 years, and four participants had tenure of employment between 4–5 years. The remaining seven participants had worked at their institution for three years or less. Hence, over 60% of participants had 10 or more years of professional experience at their respective institution. Although the remaining participants had less institutional knowledge by comparison, nearly all had extensive professional experience with grant-related work at other U.S. colleges and universities, including other HSIs and MSIs. For instance, Molly recently assumed a position at West Waterside Community College at the time of our interview, but she entered this role with approximately 25 years of work experience across several grants offices at other public community colleges.

Lastly, in terms of gender, 18 participants identified as women and 11 as men. Table 10 and Table 11 present participants' demographic information at HPSA and HPUA institutions, respectively. Table 12 provides this data for those at Non-Applicant institutions.

Table 10

Participant Information at Highly Persistent Successful Applicant HSIs, n = 14

Institution	Participant	Position Type	Employment Tenure (in years)
Northeast Liberal Arts College	Benjamin	Faculty Member	14
	Dominic	Senior Administrator	> 20
Pacific Northwest Community College	Rebecca	Title V Staff Member	10
	Jeremiah	Title V Staff Member	1–2
	Megan	Title V Grant Director	1–2
Southeast College[a]	Pilar	Title V Grant Director	10
Southwest City University[b]	Gary	Faculty Member	12
West Waterside Community College	Raul	Senior Administrator	12
	Tricia	Grant Office Administrator	18
	Diana	Grant Office Administrator	28
	Molly	Grant Office Administrator	< 1
West State University	Linda	Title V Grant Director/ Instructor	> 20
West City Community College	Kevin	Senior Administrator	11
	Garrett	Senior Administrator	20

Note. All participant names and institution names are pseudonyms; all participants could select their pseudonym.

[a, b] These two cases are technically Moderately Active Successful Applicants, but they both nearly satisfied the criteria for classification as an HPSA. Given the few institutions in this group and my interest capturing HSIs' diversity, I included them within this group.

Table 11

Participant Information at Highly Persistent Unsuccessful Applicant HSIs, n = 9

Institution	Participant	Position Type	Employment Tenure (in years)
Midwest Private Aspiring University	Kelly	Grant Office Administrator	1–2
	Manuel	Senior Administrator	1–2
	Polar Bear	Senior Administrator	1–2
Midwest Community College	Carl	Senior Administrator	10
Midwest Multi-Campus College[a]	Liliana	Grant Office Administrator	5
Northeast Private College	Jill[b]	Senior Administrator	5
	Carmen	Grant Office Administrator	20
Southwest Private University	Mary	Senior Administrator	4
	Glow White	Grant Office Administrator	10

Note. All participant names and institution names are pseudonyms; all participants could select their pseudonym.

[a] By the time of data collection in 2020, the institution had received a Title V award.

[b] At the time of our interview, Jill had transitioned to a different institution. However, she shared insights based on experience at Northeast Private College.

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Table 12

Participant Information at Non-Applicant Institutions, n = 6

Institution	Participant	Position Type	Employment Tenure (in years)
Midwest Private University	Joan	Grant Office Administrator	30
Northeast City College	Jacky	Grant Office Administrator	31
Northeast Urban College	Alisha	Grant Office Administrator	5
	Yvette	Grant Office Administrator	15
Southwest State University	Sarah	Grant Office Administrator	15
West Mountainside Community College	Alex.	Senior Administrator	3

Note. All participant names and institution names are pseudonyms; all participants could select their pseudonym. I created these categories using data from 2009–2017. However, by the time of data collection in 2020, none of these institutions had yet applied for a DHSI grant per participants' accounts. Also, according to FOIA data on PPOHA applicants from 2009–2019, none had applied for a PPOHA grant. Additionally, based on publicly available data, none were Title III Part F (HSI STEM and Articulation) awardees.

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Semi-Structured Interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews, rather than open-ended or structured interviews, for several reasons. To start, I heeded Bernard's (1988) advice that this form of interviewing is beneficial when researchers have limited opportunities to interview individuals, as I did in this study.[51] Additionally, by utilizing a semi-structured interview format, I entered each interview with a pre-established protocol or guide, an ordered set of primary questions and probes (Adams, 2015), which was flexible enough for participants to respond in ways that aligned with their campus context and their personal knowledge and experiences. However, while semi-structured interviews afford flexibility both to interviewers and participants, this style also introduces some parameters and systemization to interviews, thereby making data across participant interviews more readily comparable (Adams, 2015; Bernard, 1988). In this case, the use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to compare participant insights across and within categories (i.e., HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants).

Interviews ranged in length, from approximately 30 minutes to a little over an hour. However, all interviews followed a similar format. First, I asked participants about their specific role at the institution and about how the institution organized grant-related work. For instance, I asked if the institution had a grants office and if it contracted external grant writers.

In the second segment, the questions focused on the institution's overall grant priorities and participants' understanding of how and why their institution pursues these opportunities in the ways it does. While I asked all participants these questions, I slighted altered them for applicants versus non-applicants. For example, at Non-Applicant institutions, I asked participants

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[51] Due to pragmatic constraints related to scheduling and conducting interviews amid ongoing social realities (i.e., COVID-19 pandemic and the radical fight against state-sanctioned anti-Black violence), I only scheduled either one in-person or virtual/phone-based meeting with each participant. Additionally, I was wary of overburdening participants, considering the circumstances of the current sociopolitical moment and the busy nature of these institutional agents' daily professional lives.

why their campus had not yet applied for a Title V grant, although presumably eligible for this federal funding. Meanwhile, when speaking with institutional agents at applicant institutions, I asked more pointed questions about the Title V competition. Specifically, informed by my conceptualization of HSIs as field actors engaged in this meritocratic competition, I asked participants to share how their institution views its chances of obtaining a Title V grant, particularly considering HSIs' growth and ongoing institutional diversification. Collectively, these questions enabled me to glean institutional agents' understanding of their own competitiveness for this funding and glean potential sources of inequity within this competition.

In the third segment, I employed two separate lines of questions—one for participants at applicant institutions and another for those at Non-Applicant institutions. In terms of the former group, participants recounted specific details about their institution's Title V grant-seeking practices. For example, they described their institution's proposal preparation process, detailing how their institution devised potential Title V projects and who generally participated in this process. Meanwhile, Non-Applicants discussed their institution's general approach to identifying and preparing grant proposals.

Largely geared toward HPSAs, the fourth segment included questions pertaining to grant management.[52] For instance, participants at HPSA HSIs described their campus's process for preparing and submitting Title V's mandatory annual reports. Meanwhile, participants at HPUA and Non-Applicant institutions described benefits and challenges associated with grant acquisition, more generally.

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[52] To note, given the specific focus of this study on institutional agents' understanding of HSIs' competitiveness for Title V grants, not on these institutions' experience with grant management or implementation, I did not include these data, although collected, in my analysis. Rather, , I simply took this an opportunity to also learn about institutional agents' perspectives on and experience with implementing Title V-funded projects, when possible.

Finally, before wrapping up and seeing if they had any questions for me, I asked participants what changes or recommendations they would offer to improve the Title V Program. This question was especially telling. Often, their responses neatly aligned with issues they had aired during their interview. However, other times, they offered suggestions, which were indicative of issues (and potentially sources of inequity) with the program that they had not previously explicitly or implicitly shared earlier in the interview. In short, their recommendations often brought to light more issues with Title V than what they initially identified as challenges or problems with it. See Appendix G for the general interview protocols I used.

Organizational Documents: Rationale and Collection

I gathered and reviewed organizational documents for a two main reasons. Although I knew some the institutions in my sample, I was unfamiliar with their specific histories, student demographics, and contexts. Thus, prior to interviews, I sourced publicly available organizational documents, such as institutions' fast fact sheets and mission statements, to gain a general understanding of the institution (see Table 13 for a record of these preliminary contextual documents). This groundwork enabled me to ask more generative probing questions during the interviews. For instance, I could ask participants clarifying questions when the documents I had preemptively reviewed signaled divergent information than what they shared. Other times, the documents themselves prompted questions. For example, some institutions' websites created confusion about the campus's organizational structure, particularly around which office (if any) focused on grant-related activities. Overall, preemptively reviewing these documents positioned me to enter each interview with a more informed understanding of each campus context.

Table 13

Preliminary Set of Organizational Documents

	About Us Webpage	Mission & Vision	History	Fast Facts	Strategic Plans	Total
Highly Persistent Successful Applicants						
Northeast Liberal Arts College	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Pacific Northwest Community College	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Southeast College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Southwest City University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
West Waterside Community College	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	5
West State University	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	4
West City Community College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Highly Persistent Unsuccessful Applicants						
Midwest Private Aspiring University	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	3
Midwest Community College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Midwest Multi-Campus College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3
Northeast Private College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Southwest Private University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Non-Applicants						
Midwest Private University	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	3
Northeast City College	✓	✓	×	×	✓	3
Northeast Urban College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Southwest State University	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	4
West Mountainside Community College	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Total						74

Note. Documents sourced via institutions' public websites during Spring 2020. The total may not reflect the number of checkmarks because some sites' "About Us" webpage included the institution's mission/vision statement and/or a brief history of the institution or because some sites had multiple fact sheets or strategic plans.

In addition to reviewing these contextual documents, I also gathered publicly available documents related to institutions' grant-related infrastructure, policies, and processes. As recorded in Table 14, these documents included, for example, institutional policies about grant funding, annual financial reports, and grants office materials. For previous or current Title V awardees, I also collected press releases announcing their receipt of an HSI-related grant, program overviews of Title V-funded projects, and other miscellaneous documents related to the institution's Title V grant-related work. Finally, to mirror my sampling approach and for feasibility, I constrained data collection to documents published 2009 onward.

I briefly read over these organizational documents because, "texts, on their own, also make a difference…texts (especially documents) [contribute] to organizational processes; that is…texts, such as reports, contracts, memos, signs, or work orders, *perform something*" (Cooren, 2004, p. 374, italics in original). As a critical researcher, I was attentive to what this second set of documents signaled about each site's organizational conditions, particularly those relevant to its ability to competitively seek Title V grants. For clarity, I did not systematically analyze each of these documents as I did participant interview transcripts. Rather, I perused them to gain a better sense of these institutions' particular contexts, constraints, and cultures, particularly germane to their grant-seeking competitiveness.

Table 14

Secondary Set of Organizational Documents

	Org. Charts	Grant-Related Policies	Grants Office Materials	Financial/ Annual Reports	Title V Docs	Total
Highly Persistent Successful Applicants						
Northeast Liberal Arts College	1	1	1	1	5	9
Pacific Northwest Community College	1	3	0	6	7	17
Southeast College	1	1	1	0	12	15
Southwest City University	1	1	1	1	4	8
West Waterside Community College	5	7	4	9	0	25
West State University	1	1	13	6	13	34
West City Community College	1	1	3	2	10	17
Highly Persistent Unsuccessful Applicants						
Midwest Private Aspiring University	0	0	0	0	0	0
Midwest Community College	1	0	0	7	0	8
Midwest Multi-Campus College	1	0	5	1	1	8
Northeast Private College	0	0	3	4	6	13
Southwest Private University	0	8	2	0	0	10
Non-Applicants						
Midwest Private University	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast City College	1	1	11	1	0	14
Northeast Urban College	1	0	4	0	0	5
Southwest State University	0	1	1	12	0	14
West Mountainside Community College	2	0	1	3	0	6
Total	17	25	50	53	58	203

Note. Title V documents include Title V-funded project webpages, reports, and press releases.

Risk Minimization

I minimized the risks associated with this study and respected participants' privacy in two primary ways. First, I explained the study's overarching purpose and provided details about the interview's format, duration, and risks to all participants. Second, at the onset of each interview, I made clear to all participants their right to withdraw from the study at any time and obtained verbal and/or signed consent before audio recording and moving forward with questioning. Third, I employed various measures to protect the confidentiality of participants and their respective campus. Namely, I applied multiple masking techniques. For instance, I pseudonymized participants and campuses. To assign pseudonyms, I asked participants if they preferred a specific name; if they did, I pseudonymized them accordingly. Also, I heavily masked each institution by only providing a limited description of the campus. Instead, I more thoroughly described each of the three categories (i.e., HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants).

Beyond informed consent and applying masking techniques, I also protected all sensitive data in a couple of ways. First, I recorded all interviews using a password-protected device. Second, I used Otter.ai, a password-protected, web-based application that securely stores and transmits data, to transcribe the audio-recorded interviews, rather than outsourcing transcription to an individual. Using Otter.ai, I reviewed and edited each transcript and, at that point, applied initial masking techniques to all transcripts (e.g., assigning pseudonyms to participants and campuses). Once I reviewed and masked each transcript, I provided participants their masked transcript for review (See Appendix H for my member checking email template). Following this member checking period, I then deleted the audio file from the Otter.ai dashboard, permanently removing the file from their servers. Third, I stored all interview audio files, masked transcripts, and project-related documents on Michigan State University's OneDrive, which utilizes 2-factor

authentication. Lastly, I protected any sensitive printed materials (e.g., printed transcripts and analytical notes) by storing them in a locked filing cabinet for which I was the sole person with the lock combination.

Data Analysis

As is often the case in qualitative research, I began analyzing data upon its collection (Langley, 1999; Miles et al., 2019). To begin, following each interview, I completed a post-interview reflection using a Microsoft Office Form (see Appendix I for a print version of this online questionnaire). As part of this reflective exercise, I responded to questions, such as: "How does the data from this interview relate to data from all other sites," and "What was the most salient idea, theme, or dialogue of the interview"? As addressed later, this post-interview reflection informed my reflexive journaling and analytical memo writing. Furthermore, in methodologically responding to this same set of questions following each interview, I made preliminary connections among the data and jotted down initial observations, such as: "*limited transparency*," "*opacity*," "*external grant writers/consultants*," "*time-constrained*," "*risk adverse*," "*faculty involvement*" "*innovation*," "*understaffed*," "*overworked*," "*unmet ROI*," "*minor oversight*," "*adaption*," "*relationships*," "*politicking*," "*buy-in*," "*RFP*," "*resource dependency*," *bureaucratic pickiness*," "*trustees/governing boards*," and "*expectations*." I did not, however, use these descriptive words and phrases to code participant interview transcripts. Rather, generating and ruminating on this list of preliminary observations helped orient my initial thinking about the data and informed my analytic process described below.

After finalizing the transcript of each audio-recorded interview, I imported the document into Dedoose to formally begin analysis. Dedoose is a web-based, cross-platform application for managing, coding, and analyzing qualitative data such as text, photos, and audio

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(SocioCultural Research Consultants, 2016). Although I started data analysis while still collecting data, my iterative analysis of interview transcripts still generally followed a sequential, multiple-step process.

Initially, I read both the transcripts and the organizational documents to gain an overall understanding of the data. At this very beginning stage, I did *not* apply codes[53] but simply worked to solidly grasp what each participant said and what each document stated. Afterward, I moved into more systematic structural coding, highlighting and categorizing similar sections of text (Saldaña, 2013). Specifically, I based this structural coding on the main components of the study's interview protocol. These codes included conceptual phrases such as "*Grant-Related Structure*," "*Rationale for (Non)Title V Grant Seeking*," "*Grant-seeking Practices*," "*Benefits and Outcomes*," and "*Recommendations.*" However, as I moved through this stage, I began noticing additional differences and similarities in these codes' corresponding excerpts. Thus, in most cases, I created subcodes (Saldaña, 2013). For instance, I generated multiple subcodes under "Recommendations" to differentiate the range of suggestions participants offered to improve the Title V Program, such as recommendations specifically related to the review and selection process versus ones about the application process.

Afterward, I moved into my 2nd-order analysis. In preparation for this second stage, I revisited the literature and my conceptual lens. Then, I re-read each data source, considering how my initial structural codes connected to my research questions and informed my understanding about HSIs' competitiveness for Title V funding and sources of inequity of this program. At this

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[53] According to Saldaña (2011), "a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 96). Moreover, this code "is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4).

point, I contemplated which of my initial codes were tangential or indirectly related to my primary research questions (Gioia et al., 2012). For instance, as part of my protocol, I asked participants about their thoughts and experience with grant administration, particularly with implementing a Title V-funded project. However, upon reflection, I realized that this data was beyond the scope of this study's focus, and as a result, I excluded this data from further analysis (at least for the purposes of this study). Through this process, I also reexamined and reconfigured some of my codes. For instance, one of my initial structural codes was "Grant-Seeking Practices;" it encompassed a substantial set of data, including an institution's (a) approach to identifying, vetting, and prioritizing funding opportunities; (b) proposal preparation process; and (c) varied grantisanship strategies. Given the unwieldy volume of data, I reconfigured this code. In this specific case, I extracted some excerpts within this code and migrate them into a newly created code, which I labeled "Proposal Development Process." In short, as I continued analyzing the transcripts, I renamed and redefined my codes and shuffled their constituent excerpts before solidifying my analytical schema.

Afterward, I exported all the excerpts for each code and individually reviewed each output file to ensure each excerpt corresponded with its assigned code(s), resolving any issues where present. Specifically, if the excerpt did not align with the code's definition, I moved it to the code it better represented or, in some cases, created a new code. Through this process, I then grouped codes into four main themes: institutional capacity, institutional action, institutional knowledge, and institutional leadership. See Table 15 for examples of some of the constituent codes I bounded together to form each theme.

Table 15

Examples of Constituent Codes within Each Theme

Constituent Codes	Themes
Teaching-forward mission; one-person grants office; well-staffed grants office; understaffed grants office; informal system; grant office(r) responsibilities; hire expert consultants	Institutional Capacity
Cross functional groups; review, recycle, and resubmit; collaborate; relationship building and organizing; campus buy-in and communication; neither the bandwidth nor expertise	Institutional Action
Grantisanship strategies; application-related recommendation; align proposal to RFP; challenging application cycle; burdensome and unclear application; challenging review/selection process;	Institutional Knowledge
Maverick change agents; senior leadership; grant-seeking priorities; choosing a project; leadership (in)action	Institutional Leadership

As a point of clarity, although each theme and its constituent codes represent a specific concept, these themes are not seamless or inherently mutually exclusive. Additionally, participants' responses often illustrated more than one idea. Consequently, I frequently applied multiple codes to an excerpt, at times ones corresponding to discreet themes. Participants' recommendations to improve Title V and grant competitions, more generally, are a prime example of such excerpts as these suggestions also often signaled challenges with the program. Furthermore, while I employed a particular schema to organize my analysis, I concede that others could disparately code and categorize this same data. Nevertheless, I still contend that this approach appropriately reflects participants' insights and supports this study's aims.

As part of my analysis, I also divided my data sources by their respective campus and category(i.e., HPSA, HPUA, or Non-Applicant) after finalizing my coding schema. Accordingly, I established the themes based on all the data, as I wanted to see how the data points within each category (i.e., HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants) mapped onto each theme. In other words, I

did not independently analyze the data within each category and form themes relevant to each one. Instead, considering the study's purposes, I wanted to understand if/how institutional agents within each category understood their competitiveness for Title V funding and if/how their campus's approached grant seeking in similar or divergent ways.

To facilitate the comparison of data within and across categories, I assigned descriptors to each transcript in Dedoose. Specifically, one of the key descriptors was each institution's categorical assignment (i.e., HPSA, HPUA, and Non-Applicant). In this way, I attempted to see if/how institutional agents at presumably different HSIs varied in their understanding and approach to competitively pursuing this funding. In short, through this process, I systemically compared the data across categories and, thus, gleaned equity-laden concerns with Title V, especially considering HSIs' ongoing growth and institutional diversification. In addition, several of Dedoose's analytic visualization tools proved useful, such as its code application chart, descriptor ratio charts, codes by descriptor chart, and code co-occurrence chart. Specifically, these visualizations provided me a clearer sense of the data, showing me, for example, the distribution of codes across the dataset and helping me detect patterns across the dataset as well as among and between HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants.

Empirical Accountability

As a critical realist and a praxis-oriented researcher, I am unwedded to the notion that my work—how I design, interpret, display, and report my findings—is or should be objective. However, I also recognize "the danger of a rampant subjectivity where one finds only what one is predisposed to look for" (Lather, 1986, p. 259). Thus, for this study, I invested in "workable ways of establishing the trustworthiness of [my] data" (Lather, 1986, p. 260). Toward this, in addition to generating a series of handwritten notes and conceptual doodles, I engaged in

constant self-reflection by maintaining an electronic reflexive journal throughout the process of

data collection and analysis to recognize and attempt to limit potential biases (Carlson, 2010).

Also, to gain a thorough grasp of "the phenomenon in question" (Denzin, 2012, p. 82), I also

drew on multiple data sources (e.g., various organizational documents and multiple interviews)

for triangulation. Flick (2007) offers this more extensive definition of triangulation:

> Triangulation includes researchers taking different perspectives on an issue under
>
> study…These perspectives can be substantiated by using several methods and/or in
>
> several theoretical approaches. Both are or should be linked. Furthermore, it refers to
>
> combining different sorts of data against the background of the theoretical perspectives
>
> that are applied to the data. As far as possible, these perspectives should be treated and
>
> applied on an equal footing and in an equally consequent way. At the same time,
>
> triangulation (of different methods or data sorts) should allow a principal surplus of
>
> knowledge. For example, triangulation should produce knowledge at different levels,
>
> which means they go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus
>
> contribute to promoting quality in research. (p. 41)

Therefore, by interviewing between 1–4institutional agents at across 17 campuses and reviewing

a slate of organizational documents, I was able to understand HSIs' competitiveness for Title V

funding and equity-laden concerns with this program more deeply since these various data

sources offered me unique perspectives on this topic.

Additionally, as aforementioned, I conducted member checks, thereby engaging in a

reciprocal negotiation of meaning with participants (Lather, 1986; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To

do this, I provided participants with their masked transcript and asked them to review it for

accuracy and to indicate any portions they would like to clarify or strike from the record. I also

repeatedly shared my initial codes, early themes, and findings with my dissertation chair. Lastly, I talked through this process and my thinking with a critical peer who helped me refine my analysis and findings—a trustworthiness strategy often referred to as peer review or debriefing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Boundaries

Like all studies, this work has its limitations. First, because of employee attrition, I was unable to recruit every primary investigator listed on all the Title V Part A applications from 2009–2017 at each of the institutions in my sample. In particular, since data collection occurred in 2020, it was difficult to locate current contact information for such persons listed on these applications at the beginning of this time period—more than a decade had past. However, as noted in my participant description, almost two-thirds of participants had worked at their respective institutions for more than 10 years ($n = 18$) and had rich insight on their campuses' competitiveness for grant funding. Second, it was unfeasible to interview more than one person at some institutions, as several of the colleges in this study only had one person currently on staff who could knowledgably speak about the institution's grant efforts, particularly regarding Title V. Hence, in these cases, I could not assess if/how colleagues' insight on this topic aligned or diverged. Third, I excluded private 2-year HSIs, meaning I did not consider the insights of institutional agents at these colleges. However, I chose to exclude them because at the time of data collection, such colleges represented only 3% of the entire HSI population (*Excelencia*, 2020c); this presented concerns about participant confidentiality. Additionally, private 2-year colleges were only represented in the Non-Applicant category, not among HPSAs or HPUAs. Fourth, originally planning for only in-person data collection, I constrained my sample to mainland HSIs, which leaves unclear how institutional agents at HSIs in Puerto Rico understand

their competitiveness for this funding or if/how their insights differ from their mainland peers.

Lastly, as previously noted, I used data on DHSI grant applicants and recipients from 2009–2017 to select sites and, subsequently, recruit participants. Subsequently, this approach did not account for an institution's involvement in this program prior to 2009 or after 2017. This also means I did not expressly account for an HSI's pursuit (or obtainment) of other HSI-related grants, including PPOHA and Title III-F awards during this period. However, throughout the interviews, participants regularly discussed their institution's broad grant-seeking efforts, often highlighting their campus's experience pursuing PPOHA grants and other HSI-related grants, if applicable.

Summary of Methodological Choices

To conclude, I conducted a critical qualitative study, interviewing institutional agents at 17 HSIs across five regions of the mainland United States. Furthermore, towards capturing the HSIs' institutional diversity, the sample included a mix of 4-year public ($n = 7$), 4-year private ($n = 4$), and 2-year public colleges ($n = 6$). Additionally, grounded in critical realism, I attempted to interview more than one individual per campus whenever possible, ultimately recruiting and interviewing 29 participants. Lastly, in terms of data analysis, I used applied structural coding and ultimately identified four overarching themes: institutional capacity, institutional action, institutional knowledge, and institutional leadership. In the following chapter, I present these four main thematic findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Through in-depth interviews with 29 institutional agents across 17 HSIs, this study complicates framing the problem of Title V as only an issue of scarcity by exploring the ways in which this program engenders inequity. In particular, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants?

    a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

In discussing their institution's engagement, or lack thereof, with the Title V Program, participants largely praised these grants but shared varying insights on the equity of this federal program. More specifically, through my inductive analysis of participant interviews, I identified four overarching themes related to HSIs' competitiveness for Title V grants. These themes, which reveal sources of inequity, include (a) *Institutional Capacity*, (b) *Institutional Action*, (c) *Institutional Knowledge*, and (d) *Institutional Leadership*. Importantly, while HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants all highlighted the salience of these themes, the institutional agents within these groups often, albeit not always, discussed them in disparate ways given their institution's distinct organizational conditions and experiences with Title V and grant-seeking broadly. Before discussing the themes, however, I first provide background information on the grant-seeking structures of the 17 HSIs included in this study to help situate the findings. Then, for further context, I briefly describe participants' overall understanding of Title V, which then segues into my explanation of each of the four themes.

Campuses' Grant-Seeking Structures

As previewed in Chapter 3, the 17 HSIs in this study span multiple regions of the mainland United States and represent a mix of 4-year public ($n = 7$), 4-year private ($n = 4$), and 2-year public colleges ($n = 6$). These HSIs also differ in other notable ways, including their grant-seeking structures. Nearly all the campuses ($n = 15$) have some formal system in place. However, based on participants' responses and my review of each institution's website, I describe each HSI's grant-seeking structure as either (a) an informal system, (b) a one-person office, (c) an understaffed office, or (d) a well-staffed office. However, towards ensuring participants and their respective campus's confidentiality, I do not include specifics on each institution's particular grant-related structure.

Least represented in the dataset were campuses with informal systems for grant seeking. Specifically, only two HSIs—Midwest Community College and Pacific Northwest Community College—maintain deeply informal systems, depending on a combination of administrators, faculty, and staff across the institution to identify and seek grants. In other words, unlike the other 15 HSIs in this study, these two community colleges do not have an established office or specific employee in charge of grant-related work, including standard pre-award responsibilities (e.g., identifying funding opportunities, researching prospects, and developing proposals[54]) or post-award needs (e.g., ensuring technical compliance, reporting, and auditing).

Five HSIs in this study have one-person offices, meaning these institutions task only one person with grant-related work. Representing such a campus, Tricia described her role at West Waterside Community College, stating: "I am the college's Grants Office. I do not have any

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[54] In the context of grant-seeking within higher education, *prospect research* refers to researching foundations and other funding agencies' grant cycles, giving histories, and general backgrounds, and through this process, an office of research and sponsored programs attempts to assess the institution's overall competitiveness for a particular funding opportunity (Filla et al., 2013).

general funded staff that assists me, so I'm kind of a fly alone." Furthermore, such arrangements often mean that this individual is also responsible for other duties unrelated to grant activity. For instance, Alex at West Mountainside Community College has an expansive role, with his primary areas of responsibilities including: "institutional research, planning, governance, grants, management and leadership, and budgeting to a certain extent, as well as campus life/student success activities, [such as] tutoring, library."

Another five HSIs have understaffed offices. These institutions have established grants offices, but they do not employ the number of people needed to readily fulfill the campus's current or envisioned grant activity. For example, Northeast Private College has a standalone grants office, which employs three full-time staff members—a director (Carmen), an associate director, and a research assistant. However, upon reflecting on her college's grant-seeking efforts, Carmen explained, "There's never enough staff, and everybody is overburdened." Similarly, Mary, who works at Southwest Private University, suggested that the university's 2-person grants office was too small, saying "as with most small institutions, we struggle with enough manpower."

Compared to the other 12 campuses, this study's five remaining HSIs have well-staffed offices; they are equipped with enough personnel to handle the campus's existing and projected grant activities. Specifically, these offices employ a minimum of five full-time staff members to upwards of 100, as in the case of Southwest State University. Despite this considerable range, the grants offices at West State University, Southeast Multi-Campus College, and Northeast City College, on average, have about 10 full-time staff members. Midwest Multi-Campus College's grants office, however, consists of only five full-time staff members. But Liliana, who works there, was emphatic that the office is well-staffed given the college's workload and does not need

any additional employees. For clarity, Table 16 describes this schema of grant-seeking structures and classifies each of the 17 HSIs in this study accordingly.

Table 16

Schema for Campuses' Grant-Seeking Structures

Category	Definition	Institutions
Informal System	The institution depends on a mix of administrators, faculty, and staff to handle the campus's grant activity.	Midwest Community College Pacific Northwest Community College
One-Person Office	The institution employs only one person with grant-related work, and often, this work is in addition to other key responsibilities.	Midwest Private Aspiring University Midwest Private University West City College West Mountainside Community College West Waterside Community College
Understaffed Office	The institution has an established grants office, but it lacks the staff needed to meet the institution's current or envisioned grant activity.	Northeast Liberal Arts College Northeast Private College Northeast Urban College Southwest City University Southwest Private University
Well-Staffed Office	The institution has an established grants office equipped with enough personnel to handle the campus's existing and projected grant portfolio.	Midwest Multi-Campus College Northeast City College Southeast College Southwest State University West State University

Lastly, although people might assume these institutions' grant-seeking structures may be distinguishable by their group assignment (i.e., HPSA, HPUA, or Non-Applicant), this is not the case. As reflected in Table 17, these structures do not clearly differ for HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants. Instead, these categories are represented across each type of grant-seeking structure, barring one exception: no Non-Applicant in this study has an informal system.

Table 17

Campuses' Grant-Seeking Structure by Category

	HPSAs	HPUAs	Non-Applicants	Total
Informal System	1	1	0	2
One-Person Office	2	1	2	5
Understaffed Office	2	2	1	5
Well-Staffed Office	2	1	2	5
Total	7	5	5	17

Again, this context is important and keenly related to the study's findings. Notably, this context partially reflects these HSIs' institutional capacity for grant-seeking. For example, HSIs with well-staffed offices may have greater capacity to pursue external funding than their understaffed counterparts. In other words, an HSI's grants office staff size (relative to its workload) may signal the institution's competitiveness for Title V funding. Additionally, this context may be indicative of leadership's resource allocation preferences and priorities. Ultimately, this context may bring to light inequities with the Title V Program. Bearing this in mind, I now briefly describe participants' overall outlook on these grants.

HSIs' Outlook on Title V: Essential, but Equitable?

As introduced at the onset of this chapter, institutional agents in this study largely praised Title V's purpose and aims. However, they shared mixed views on the equity of the program. To follow, I first review participants' overall favorable perspective of Title V, particularly their description of this federal funding as essential institutional support. Afterward, I document their varied thoughts on the equity of this program.

Essential Support

HPSAs, HPUAs, and even some Non-Applicants applauded Title V. For example, despite Midwest Multi-Campus Community College's limited success in this competition, Liliana, who manages the college's post-award processes, shared:

> Being a Hispanic person myself, I think [Title V grants are] really important, and they target a population that I'm really passionate about. A lot of the characteristics that our student population has, some of the barriers they are facing, I used to always face as a community college student…so, I'm really passionate about HSI grants and what they hope to accomplish.

That is, as a Latina and former community college student, Liliana holds Title V in high esteem, even though her college has repeatedly applied for these grants with minimal success.[55]

Participants not only applauded Title V's purpose, they also generally described these grants as essential institutional support. In particular, several institutional agents (7, 4, and 2 participants representing HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants, respectively) emphasized how critical this money is for HSIs with limited financial recourses. For instance, when asked which institutions she felt would benefit most from Title V funding, Kelly at Midwest Private Aspiring University contended:

> I'm biased, but institutions that have the profile of Midwest Private Aspiring University because we don't have the safety net of 4-year, public research institutions who are also HSIs…We don't have a safety net with cash flow. So, we can't innovate because it's too risky…We're stuck. We need that buffer so we can try new models and evolve.

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[55] As mentioned in Chapter 3, Midwest Multi-Camps Community College met the criteria for classification as an HPUA, having persistently applied and never received a Title V grant between 2009–2017. However, at the point of data collection in the spring of 2020, this institution had recently obtained Title V funding.

Kelly further elaborated on how essential Title V funding is for financially-constrained institutions such as hers, using this provocative metaphor:

It's like if you and I were 18, and we leave our mom and dad's house…If you don't have a safety net, how can you go and explore the world and learn who you are and try to fulfill your full potential as a human being? You're too scared to try something new because you're going to end up homeless.

In short, Kelly frames securing Title V grants as a vital mechanism for survival and innovation. Indeed, this idea was a consistent thread across most interviews, though some participants ($n =$ 12) noted how essential this money is particularly for Hispanic-Serving community colleges (as opposed to both financially-limited 2-year and 4-year HSIs). Even the set of participants who felt that Title V was beneficial to *any and all* HSIs ($n = 7$) echoed Kelly's point, acknowledging that this funding enables HSIs' to innovate or as Garrett put it, "to suck less than you used to or [to] suck less than those guys over there."

Despite the general consensus among participants about the essentialness of this funding, HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants illustrated this idea in slightly different ways given their distinct experiences with this program. In particular, HPSAs impassionedly voiced the wide-sweeping benefits of these grants. For example, Dominic, a tenured faculty member turned senior administrator with over 20 years of experience at Northeast Liberal Arts College, shared:

It's a hugely beneficial program for our institution…[Title V] is a really helpful way to try to address…[grotesque social] inequities and help those institutions that, in some ways, have the most impact…[According to Chetty's social mobility rates], I think we're single digit in terms of the institution that takes the most students from the bottom quartile and moves those students into the upper three quartiles. Now, what that means is,

we're working with students who…are very low-income, that often have the least amount

of extracurricular activities in terms of college prep, mentorship, etc., and we're really

trying to prepare them for careers, not just jobs. And our tuition is among the lowest in

the country. We don't have an endowment. We don't have other sources of income…

Compared to any of your major institutions, our budget is a couple of paper clips, and

yet, we have this enormous impact. And so, [Title V] really is phenomenal in that sense

that it targets these institutions…that are not just demographically, but

socioeconomically, at risk.

Similarly, Pilar, an experienced grant administrator at Southeast College, beamed as she

reflected on the program, saying:

These grants are an incredible opportunity for the college to do things—implement

programs—that maybe they wanted to, but they didn't have the funds to do it…It's a

great source of giving services to our students…especially in our college…a high

percentage of [our students] are needy, meaning their income. The majority of them are

Hispanic or Black. So, they really need the services.[56]

The sentiment reflected by Dominic's and Pilar's comments here exemplify participants' general

outlook on Title V; this federal funding is essential for HSIs. More precisely, these remarks

illuminate the overarching reason behind this praise; Title V provides HSIs—many of which

have limited alternative revenue streams—desperately needed money to develop and/or expand

programs and services for their students.

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[56] It bears noting that Students of Color, particularly Black and Latinx students, do not "need these services" because of some personal failing or deficiency. Rather, these students often come from historically under-funded communities and schools—ones which continue to receive less federal, state, and local funding, particularly given structural inequities within the U.S. tax system.

Meanwhile, HPUAs often spoke hopefully, describing how beneficial this funding *would be* for their campus. For instance, citing Midwest Private Aspiring University's ongoing financial constraints, Manuel and Polar Bear explained that winning a Title V grant would be "transformational" and "game-changing" for their students, faculty, and overall campus community. Specifically, this money would enable them to upgrade technological infrastructure, hire more instructors and staff, and ultimately "put more resources where students need it" (Polar Bear), as well as recognize the "self-worth" (Manuel) and valuable contributions of the college's currently overstretched workforce.

Such comments from institutional agents at HPSAs and HPUAs are reasonable. They consistently apply for these grants, presumably because they see Title V's purpose as aligned with their institution's needs and consider this funding essential to addressing these needs. Yet, even Non-Applicants expressed excitement about Title V. For example, anticipating revenue declines given COVID-19, Yvette, who works in Northeast Urban College's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, said, "a lot of people are probably going to need grants to stay afloat or for some of the programs to survive." Thus, she and others on her campus are "super excit[ed]" about the prospect of applying[57] for these grants and the possibility of expanding programming to "attract students" (Yvette). Collectively then, the 29 institutional agents in this study portrayed Title V as an essential federal program and an exciting opportunity for HSIs.

Equitable Support?

Despite participants' overall abundant praise of this program, they ranged in their views about its equity. Interestingly, only about a fifth of participants fully described Title V as an

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[57] To note, a couple of participants speaking from the perspective of Non-Applicants, specifically Yvette, Alisha, and Jacky, indicated that their institutions (Northeast Urban College and Northeast City College, respectively) are eHSIs. However, this information conflicts with data provided by the ED, delineating U.S. colleges and universities eligible for HSI designation.

equitable program. For instance, recounting how her former institution "beat out" her current employer, Mary, a senior administrator at Southwest Private University, shared:

> I was so annoyed…But that also said to me two things. Number one everyone has a shot…it's not clouded by internal favoritism or any of that kind of stuff. [Title V] seems like it is very systematic and very fairly done, and genuinely, *everybody has a chance at it*. So, when…you go back and look at winners in the past, you see a broad representation of institutions, and so, that's very reassuring to me and encourages me to want to keep trying, as opposed to [thinking], "Oh well, we can never do it because we don't have the inside line." (Italics for emphasis)

Aligned with the logic of meritocracy, Mary applauds Title V for embodying the equality of opportunity. Liliana, an administrator at Midwest Multi-Campus Community College—another HPUA institution—also concluded this program was equitable, proposing:

> In terms of the percentage of [the] Hispanic population as well as the low-income part, because you also have to be low income. So, at least that part is showing the need that your population warrants [receiving Title V funding]. I think kind of weeding people out based on the eligibility I think that's equitable.

Reasoning that Title V's eligibility criteria weeds out contenders for this money, Liliana seems to suggest, similar to Mary, that this grant competition is one between equally matched players: "everyone has a chance at it" (Mary).

In contrast to Mary and Liliana's confidence in this program's fairness, without hard evidence on fund allocation or the precise criteria used to evaluate and score applications, a quarter of participants deflected, neither extolling Title V as equitable nor inequitable. Benefitting extraordinarily from Title V funding, most of these individuals ($n = 5$) worked at

HPSA institutions. For instance, Jeremiah, who recently joined Pacific Northwest Community College's staff, said: "I don't know if it's fair or not. I would say our institution receiving it, I'd consider that fair." Somewhat similarly, Tricia, a veteran higher education professional on the brink of retirement from West Waterside Community College, admitted:

> I honestly, I don't know…because…to know whether it's fair or not, you'd have to know all of who applied...So, I don't know that I can really say that it's fair, but we've been treated amazingly good…We've had a lot of success with it, so it is definitely and will remain a favorite program for us.

In short, although unsure about the equity of this competition, Jeremiah believes it is fair that the ED awards this money to his community college, and Tricia acknowledges this program's favored status at her college.

Others, however, were more suspect or outright critical of the equity of Title V. In fact, just over half of all participants ($n = 15$) cited several equity-laden issues with competitive grants and with Title V, in particular. Although these individuals brought forward multiple problems, Benjamin, a tenured faculty member at Northeast Liberal Arts College, summed up well a core concern shared by this group, saying:

> Most broadly, it's fair the way that they run the competition. It's a very transparent program, to be honest, and…at least it doesn't smack as much of backroom dealing as some of the other federal programs…You generally know where you stand and what the criteria are…The unfair aspect is that it doesn't seem to take into account anything about the institution's finances, because there are institutions who are truly needy, who really are underfunded by their state government, and they're on the same footing for applying for these grants as institutions that are fairly resource-rich through endowments, through

fundraising, through other grantmaking. I mean, a lot of them could pay for [whatever project they propose] with their indirect recoveries from other grants without even taking that big of a hit.

In short, Benjamin here surfaces how Title V engenders inequity by treating all HSIs the same, despite evidence of HSIs' increasing institutional diversity (see, e.g., Núñez et al., 2016).

Recapping Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Outlook on Title V

In sum, the 29 institutional agents in this study largely described Title V as an essential program—one woefully needed considering many HSIs' limited revenue streams and unmet student needs. Yet, with varied grant-seeking structures (i.e., informal systems, one-person offices, understaffed offices, or well-staffed offices) and experiences with Title V, HPSAs, HPUAs. and Non-Applicants ranged in their views regarding Title V's equity. Ultimately, however, a closer inspection of participants' comments, including those who lauded Title V as indisputably fair, points to potential inequities with this competition—ones which may worsen over time as HSIs grow in numbers and further diversify. As outlined earlier, I organized these insights into four main themes. To note, while each of these themes represents a key finding of this study, participants' thoughts about (a) *Institutional Capacity*, (b) *Institutional Action*, (c) *Institutional Knowledge*, and (d) *Institutional Leadership* often overlap. Indeed, their responses muddled the boundaries within and among these themes, meaning these themes are not mutually exclusive. Collectively, however, these themes illuminate institutional agents' varied understandings of HSIs' grant-seeking competitiveness and reveal sources of inequity of Title V.

Institutional Capacity

Considering institutions' competitiveness in grant seeking, HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants often focused on institutional capacity, underscoring what Harris (2013) refers to as

institutions' *systemic characteristics* (i.e., institutional type, institutional control, and size) as well as their financial resources and missions. In particular, participants suggested that such characteristics either enable or thwart an HSI's ability to compete for extramural funding. More specifically, beyond just the competition for Title V funds, participants suggested that large, financially healthy institutions with well-staffed grants offices are advantageously positioned for grant acquisition. Furthermore, participants at HPUAs, in particular, treated institutional mission as a defining characteristic of an HSI's competitiveness for extramural funding, specifically positioning an HSI's teaching- versus research-focused mission as a disadvantage in these efforts. In this section on institutional capacity, I share participants' varied understanding of the relationship between an HSI's grant-seeking competitiveness and its (a) *systemic characteristics*, (b) *financial resources*, and (c) *institutional mission*, documenting, where relevant, differences in these views among institutional agents at HPUAs, HPSAs, and Non-Applicants.

Systemic Characteristics

Institutional agents at HPSA, HPUA, and Non-Applicant institutions repeatedly differentiated HSIs by their systemic characteristics—key institutional descriptors, such as institutional type, control and size—and ascribed competitiveness for grant funding to certain systemic characteristics. Specifically, multiple participants maintained or intimated that the most competitive HSIs for Title V funding are large, 4-year universities. However, a few others, specifically institutional agents at *private* HPUAs, emphasized *public* HSIs' competitive advantage for this federal (public) funding. To follow, I present participants' notions about the relationship between institutions' competitiveness for grant funding and the following systemic characteristics: (a) *institutional control*, (b) *institutional size*, and (c) *institutional type*.

Institutional Control: The "Irresistible" Publics

Numerous participants described institutional control (i.e., public or private) as a defining characteristic of competitiveness for Title V funding. In particular, institutional agents at private institutions (e.g., Mary, White Glow, Carmen, and Jill) felt that public HSIs—both 2-year and 4-year institutions—were more competitive for publicly sponsored funds, particularly Title V grants, compared to their private peers. Overall, this cluster of seasoned administrators explained that public HSIs have an advantage because they are "irresistible" (White Glow) to public funding agencies, which attempt to allocate money where it may have the greatest impact. Carmen, a grant administrator with over 20 years of experience at Northeast Private University, conveyed this stance well when describing HSIs best positioned to win Title V grants, saying:

> The state-funded ones…If you look at the list of grantees every year…they seem to be *perennial winners*, but that makes sense. *If you only have certain amount of money to award, you want to get the most bang for your buck*. So, you're going to go with perhaps programs that are going to touch higher numbers of students and get the best outcomes. So, it's understandable from that point of view, you know? You do want to get the most…you know, the ripple effect. When you throw a rock into a pond, you know, it's going to reach a lot of students and do a lot of good. You can't blame [the ED] at all for wanting to fund those programs. (Italics added for emphasis)

White Glow at Southwest Private University offered a similar description, saying:

> The other sector that I think is poised to always capture a good number of the awards are the 4-year publics. Again, the public universities have more affordable price points than the private schools like us. And because they're large, public universities, they can have a big impact on the number of students they serve. The headcount is high, and the students

get a 4-year degree. And so, I think that sector is almost an irresistible grantee to the

Department of Ed. They want to give the money to give money to the UT-Brownsvilles

of the world, [institutions with] 50,000 students [in which] the majority of their students

are low-income, first-gen Hispanic; that's pretty irresistible.

Plainly, reflecting on the slate of Title V awardees over the years, both Carmen and White Glow

felt that the ED favored public HSIs given their larger student enrollments, on average, than their

private counterparts. Indeed, participants frequently called attention to institutional size as well (I

discuss this point further in the section "Institutional Size: The Bigger, The Better.").

This group of institutional agents also rationalized public HSIs' advantage in this

competition given their understanding of governmental priorities. For example, Jill, a former

senior administrator at Northeast Private College, commented:

The community college mission is very aligned with the purpose of the Title V

funding…Community colleges, they can have private donors, but it's not as typical as in

a private institution. So, my feeling is when you've got private HSIs competing with

public[s], and the money is from the federal government, then I think…that community

colleges have a better chance of getting the money, and probably, that's appropriate

because they don't have as many options.

In other words, reflecting on the allocation of public funds and on institutional types' varied

revenue streams, Jill viewed public HSIs, specifically Hispanic-Serving community colleges,[58]

as both more *competitive* and more *deserved* of Title V funding.

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[58] Although Jill does not explicitly specify *public* 2-year colleges, people often use the term "community college" to denote a public, 2-year institution, particularly in the case of HSIs as there are few private 2-year HSIs. In fact, as of 2018–2019, only 3% of all HSIs were private, not-for-profit 2-year institutions (*Excelencia,* 2020c).

Tellingly, only institutional agents at private HPUAs directly connected competitiveness for this funding with an institution's public versus private status. That said, nearly half of all participants, including HPUAs, HPSAs, and Non-Applicants, agreed with Jill, explicitly stating that community colleges especially deserved Title V money. For instance, Pilar at Southeast College (a public HPSA) echoed almost to the letter Jill's point about how beneficial this money is to community colleges given their often limited revenue streams, saying:

I would say 2-year colleges, definitely because there is less funding there from other sources, and there's the most need…So, in that respect, I really think that community colleges would benefit the most and, therefore, should receive the most [Title V funding]. Now, on the other side, the 4-year institutions have a wider scope of providing other services that maybe the Department of Education—that Title V—might be interested in.

Unlike Jill, however, Pilar points out that the ED may favor 4-year HSIs because of their extensive offerings —ones, presumably then, unavailable, uncommon, or less developed across the community college sector.

Institutional Size: The Bigger, The Better

Participants continually treated institutional size as a core characteristic related to HSIs' successful pursuit of Title V grants, specifically positioning bigger as better. For example, weighing Northeast Private College's odds of success in the latest Title V grant cycle, Carmen lamented:

We are concerned because we are not that large an institution. We're a small, fairly small…not that small, I mean, we have around 10,000 students but compare that to universities in Texas or California or Puerto Rico, and you don't stack up that well, or even...with the CUNY system…It's daunting…We go in trying to give it our, we

definitely give it our best. We do what we can…We submit, but we don't have high

hopes for getting funding.

In short, considering her college's longstanding experience as an HPUA, Carmen sees her

college's comparably small size as a key disadvantage—one which has contributed to her

college's limited success in this program. Returning to this idea later during her interview,

Carmen keenly surmised:

> Ironically, they put this—the Department of Ed—put this grant competition together to
>
> recognize that *HSIs don't have the same capacity* and the same opportunities and funding
>
> as Title III schools, you know, the larger schools. So, they created this program to
>
> address that need, but over time now, I think that it's kind of inched up to being back to
>
> where we started, where you have large institutions within the system competing with
>
> smaller HSIs within the same pool. So, it's kind of taking a step back in a way from the
>
> original intent. (Italics added for emphasis)

Interestingly, speaking from the perspective of an HPSA, Gary, a tenured faculty member at

Southwest City University, shared a similar insight, positing:

> It seems to me, large institutions, wealthier institutions, are going to have much larger
>
> grant writing organizations within their institution that can kind of focus and turn these
>
> things out. And I tend to see that as a disadvantage for smaller, less wealthy public
>
> institutions. So, I don't know how level the playing field will eventually be in that regard,
>
> and I think it's possible that it could really hurt smaller institutions.

Like Carmen, Gary understands institutional size as key to an HSI's competitiveness for this

funding, suggesting that the larger an HSI, the better its odds. Furthermore, he elevates the

relationship between size and an institution's financial resources (I elaborate on this point in my

discussion of financial resources). More importantly, Gary speculates that over time, differences across HSIs regarding these characteristics (i.e., institutional size and financial resources) may jeopardize the equity of this "playing field."

Institutional Type: The 4-Year Advantage

In addition to participants' notions about the relationship between two core systemic characteristics (i.e., institutional control and size) and an HSI's grant-seeking competitiveness , they also associated institutional type with said competitiveness. Specifically, approximately a quarter of participants described 4-year HSIs as the strongest contenders for extramural funding not only because of their sizable enrollments but also because of their extensive grant-related expertise and resources. Furthermore, when discussing these qualities, participants typically juxtaposed 4-year HSIs against Hispanic-Serving community colleges, denoting that grant-seeking expertise was peripheral to community colleges given their teaching-oriented mission. For example, Carl, a senior administrator at Midwest Community College (an HPUA), ventured:

> I would think the 4-year research [HSIs] that are used to making these kinds of proposals, and putting them together, and submitting them…They have the resources, generally the expertise…community colleges, not as much. Certainly, some of the larger [community colleges] that can hire resources, more so.

And so, while he conceded that some large community colleges might be able to invest in grant-related efforts, Carl still viewed research universities as better equipped for this work, given their generally more well-developed grant-seeking skills and resources. Indeed, institutional agents at HPUAs widely shared this view, with most describing 4-year HSIs, primarily 4-year publics, as the strongest competitors of publicly sponsored funding.

As noted, institutional agents at HPUAs often linked competitiveness with institutional type (i.e., 4-year HSIs). However, they were not alone in this assumption. A set of participants at HPSA HSIs(i.e., Raul, Pilar, Megan, and Linda) shared a similar understanding. For instance, when asked which HSIs are the most likely to obtain Title V grants, Raul, a senior administrator at West Waterside Community College, posited:

> I definitely would say that 4-year research institutions are always better positioned to win Title V grants for all the obvious reasons—more resources, more staffing. They have a lot of local offices that help them with their evaluations, managing the grants, and so forth, whereas community colleges just don't have those resources. And so, we are the exception at [West Waterside Community College]. I mean, we've been very successful, and that's why a lot of people think of us as like, almost like a research institution, but we've just had very experienced grant writers, and we've been able to compete against big universities.

Thus, despite his college's immense success in this program, Raul concedes that Title V privileges Hispanic-Serving research universities "for all the obvious reasons" and describes his 2-year college as exceptional. Segueing to the next part of institutional capacity (i.e., financial resources), Raul attributes his college's ability to successfully compete against 4-year HSIs to its financial investment in grant acquisition.

Financial Resources

Throughout the interviews, participants made clear that an HSI's financial resources significantly shape its grant-related efforts, including how effectively it can identify and vet funding opportunities, develop high-quality proposals, and implement grant-funded projects. Moreover, they viewed an HSI as competitive for grants based on its financial investments.

Specifically, I repeatedly heard institutional agents at HPSA and Non-Applicant institutions propose that an HSI's success in grant acquisition largely hinged on it investing money in expanding its grant-related infrastructure and hiring expertise. Participants also voiced how an institution's financial resources affect which opportunities it can pursue. In particular, they explained that only colleges and universities with enough money can pursue grants with low to no indirect cost rates, such as Title V.[59] To follow, I first address participants' overarching insight on the impact of financial resources on an institution's grant-seeking competitiveness and highlight how institutional agents at HPUA, HPSA, and Non-Applicant HSIs stressed this point differently. Then, I share, according to participants, how financial resources impact an HSI's ability to (a) *expand grant-related infrastructure*, (b) *hire expertise*, and (c) *apply for grants.*

Financial Resources and Grant-Seeking Competitiveness

While many institutional agents at HPUA HSIs linked competitiveness with an institution's systemic characteristics (i.e., institutional control, size, and type), HPSAs and Non-Applicants tended to describe competitive applicants as institutions that committed financial resources to grant seeking. For instance, when asked which colleges and universities were best positioned to secure external funding, Alex at West Mountainside Community College (a Non-Applicant) responded:

> I would think that people who have put the resources into having a grants office or a focus on grants within the college structure that isn't just part of someone else's job [would be best positioned]. I think that if you put resources towards it, and you put the planning towards it, you're better suited and better prepared [to win].

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[59] "A grantee may not use an indirect cost rate to determine allowable costs under its grant" (Regulations of the Offices of the ED, 1999).

Responsible for a seemingly unwieldy breadth of duties at his college, one of which is grant seeking, Alex repeatedly stressed the importance of an institution investing money in hiring staff dedicated to grant-related work.

Nearly every participant at an HPSA HSI shared Alex's general understanding of competitiveness. For instance, pondering her 25 years of professional experience across multiple HSIs, Molly, who recently joined West Waterside Community College said:

> I mean, the New York Yankees, the New England Patriots, you know, if you can spend the money, and you can get the resources, you're going to win the games. So, those are unfortunately the ones, I believe, that will continue to get this money, and the littler ones will either need to invest, or they will not have access to the pot—the funding…Is that great? Probably not. Do I like to win? Yes, I do.

Considering HSIs' ongoing growth, Gary at Southwest City University shared a similar view as Molly, saying:

> My hunch is that there's going to be a growing number of larger, wealthier, larger, better financed institutions, who are going to become Hispanic-Serving Institutions by default, and they are generally probably more well-positioned to enter into grant competitions, perhaps, then smaller, less financially supported institutions…I think the danger is that you end up with those who have getting more than those who have not. That's the danger.

Plainly, Molly and Gary understand money as key to an institution's competitiveness for grant funding. Moreover, they highlight the "unfortunate…nature of the game" (Molly), specifically how it may advantage wealthier HSIs.

The Ability to Expand Grant-Related Infrastructure

Many participants expressed how critical it is for an HSI to be able to invest money in expanding its grant-related infrastructure. More aptly, they suggested that investing in such infrastructural expansion was pivotal to grant acquisition. Indeed, expansion efforts were a reoccurring topic of conversation across the 29 interviews, particularly among those at applicant institutions. However, unsurprisingly, institutional agents at HPSA and HPUA HSIs diverged in how they spoke of such efforts.

In terms of HSPAs, participants recounted how their campuses had intentionally invested in expanding their grants offices to seek (and manage) extramural funding more strategically and more successfully. For example, Raul discussed at length the radical transformation his college's grants office has undergone over the years amid its mounting success in grant acquisition. Specifically, Raul observed:

> Now, we've become a little bit more sophisticated. There's actually now a central office
> at the district that is taking on more of a more hands-on approach as to writing grants and
> being more strategic about which grants we pursue. They have a number of grant writers
> on staff that assist colleges to develop grant proposals...And, they also identify
> opportunities, and they vet them…And then, at the local level…we actually hired a
> Director of Grants…[and]that person is now in charge of our Grants Committee…So, it's
> much more organized now than it was when I first started at West Waterside Community
> College], and there seems to be a lot more support in writing those grants.

Other HPSAs shared almost identical stories. For instance, noting that "no institution can—survive just on state dollars and tuition," Kevin at West State University further explained:

You've got to be really good stewards of seeking outside funding, which means that you

have to have the infrastructure. So, we have worked very hard to build our pre-award

[infrastructure] in our Office of Sponsored Projects and Grants. We've worked very hard

to put our post-award piece into place because if we're going to advance student success,

it is an all-hands-on-deck experience, and those federal dollars can go a long way in

terms of assisting [us in this]. And we've gotten better over the last decade at doing that,

and now, I think it's a really good operation. I wish I'd had the operation we have now

back when I applied and secured [West State University's first] Title V, but it was

certainly a learning process.

Evident from Raul's and Kevin's insights here is how an HSI's competitiveness in the Title V

Program hinges, in part, on its ability to expand its grant-related infrastructure. Meanwhile,

barring one exception, HPUAs demonstrate how not all HSIs are able to make such investments.

In contrast to HPSAs, without comparable financial resources, HPUAs often spoke about

such expansion efforts in a more aspirational way. For example, forthcoming about Midwest

Private Aspiring University's financial constraints, Manuel, Kelly, and Polar Bear expressed

hopes of expanding the college in numerous ways, including launching an online master's

program, updating its technology, hiring more full-time staff, and building out the campus's

grant-seeking infrastructure. More specifically, Manuel explained: "We do not have a full grant

writing function, but it's what we can afford at the moment, and the intent, of course, is to grow

the department as our resources grow." Manuel's observation here helps illustrate one of the

defining differences between HPSAs or "the big kids on the block" (Garrett) and HPUAs, which

Kelly encouragingly referred to as "the little engines that could." While HPSAs can develop their

pre-award and post-award infrastructure—or their overall capacity—to competitively seek grants, HPUAs cannot readily afford to do so.

As mentioned earlier, my analysis did reveal one notable exception—Midwest Multi-Campus Community College. Lilliana, a grant administrator there, explained that in attempting to aggressively increase the college's grant portfolio, the board of trustees created her office around five years ago and staffed it with five full-time employees. Per Lilliana and my review of the office's public reports, the board's investment realized this goal, with Liliana's office exponentially growing the college's grant portfolio over the last few years. However, again among the five HPUAs included in this study, Midwest Multi-Campus Community College was the only one able to expand in this way.

Altogether, participants made clear that HSIs vary in their financial ability to expand their grant-related infrastructure. Furthermore, this crucial difference between HPSAs and HPUAs underscores one way in which not all HSIs are on an equal footing to compete for these grants. Thus, HSIs' varied financial resources points to a source of inequity within this competition.

The Ability to Hire Expertise

Another through-line across the interviews was the importance of financially investing in expertise. Specifically, participants, especially those at HPSA HSIs, indicated that the ability to contract specialized grant writers is crucial to an HSI's competitiveness for Title V funding. For instance, Megan, an experienced grant director at Pacific Northwest Community College, said:

> I think that those who are best positioned to win are those who have in-house grant writers—people who do this for a living or *that have money to pay people to write grants for them*. Because when you have a smaller institution where people are wearing many hats…you're just adding [another] responsibility [to an already overstretched

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staff]…When you are writing a grant as if your livelihood depends on it, you tend to make sure that all the i's are dotted, and the t's are crossed. (Italics for emphasis)

Sharing Megan's view, Rebecca, who works at the same community college, described the most well-positioned HSIs for Title V funding as:

> Whoever has the best grant writers…a huge piece of it is how that grant is written. So, if you've got people who can write good grants, you can get them. If you don't, even if you have the capacity and the capability of doing really good work [in terms of implementing the grant], you're not going to get them.

These two community college staff members were not alone in this stance. For example, Kevin at West State University—a large, public 4-year HSI—reiterated the importance of allocating institutional dollars to hiring grant writers, saying:

> Having someone who [can] write most of the business-day versus managing an entire division is a plus. So, those are the campuses that are most successful [in winning Title V grants]. They're collaborative; they're consultative, and they put resources on the front end. *When you make a good investment, there's normally a good return*, and I've certainly seen that in terms of some of my colleagues who weren't successful at getting those grants because they were really trying to put those grants together with buttons and lint and didn't have the resources to sustain that grant. (Italics for emphasis)

Kevin's final observation here is especially keen; not all HSIs can hire expertise, meaning they are unequally able to compete for Title V grants.

Much in the same way that not all HSIs can readily expand their grant-seeking infrastructure, HSIs vary in their ability to hire expert grant writers. Liliana's reflections on her college's experience shed light on this reality. Looking back on Midwest Multi-Campus

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Community College's experience with the Title V application process, she said, "It's a lot of work. Maybe colleges don't have the capacity or the people to handle such a big undertaking. That's why…we use[d] an outside consultant because we really want to win." Indeed, after pursuing these grants without success for years, the college ultimately received one with the assistance of said consultant. However, these firms come at an exorbitant price—one inaccessible to countless HSIs. Liliana highlights this source of inequity, explaining:

> [These grant writing consultants] have particular expertise in Title V, [but] they're super expensive. A lot of colleges won't use them because they're particularly expensive…We don't use the grant money to pay for that. We use regular college funds, but [the year] when we got awarded…[this firm] had won like 15 other competitions too. So, they're highly known across the U.S. They're very well known to get awarded.

Liliana was not alone in her assessment. Describing such firms as "the for-profit side of a not-for-profit world," Joan, a seasoned grant writer at Midwest Private University (Non-Applicant), revealed that some such firms charge 10% of the total value of a grant. In practice, this means that for awards like Title V with an estimated $3 million payout, a client must pay approximately $300,000 for this firm's services.[60] Furthermore, as Liliana mentioned, an awardee cannot use any of this federal money to pay for this expense. Rather, HSIs must cover the cost of these consultants through their annual operating budgets. Additionally, Joan explained that many HSIs also contract these firms to help with evaluation and compliance for another $10,000 or so a year. In short, some HSIs are able and willing to spend upwards of $70,000 a year for this expertise.

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[60] To note, neither Joan nor the other participants in this study were forthcoming about the price of these services should an institution not receive the award. And, even after reviewing the public websites of several such services, including Ramona Munsell and Associates, Grove Street Consulting, Kay Floyd Consulting, and Race to The Top Consultants, I could not locate this information.

Indeed, these firms' steep price was a recurrent theme, with multiple institutional agents across HPUAs, HPSA, and Non-Applicants acknowledging this issue. Even more, a few participants—Liliana, Megan, and Rebecca—discussed how their colleges recently forwent this service altogether because of their exorbitant price. For example, despite Pacific Northwest Community College's immense success in winning these awards with the help of a firm, Megan explained that the college recently moved away from using this service because of:

> The cost…While you get this big amount of funding, how this particular organization works is that you pay a percentage each year for the duration of the grant, and that can't come out of grant funds…And so, they're on the hook for this large amount of money, and [Pacific Northwest Community College] would like to be able to not have that amount of money going out if they could develop the capacity in house to write grants.

However, given the college's recent failed applications, Megan strongly questioned this decision.

Despite the heavy price of these services, other HSIs in this study were deeply committed to this investment, with some participants adamantly maintaining that institutions could not likely produce high-quality proposals without such experts. For instance, Garrett, another former faculty member turned senior administrator who works at West City Community College, was especially emphatic about the benefit of such firms. Specifically, when asking Garrett about his thoughts on his college's odds of winning another Title V grant, he answered:

> We're always optimistic, and we're kind of the big kid on the block…In the past 20 years, we've had like 7, 8, or 10 of these things…We have a strategy that I explained that has worked for us. We have a writing consultant that understands us completely. Again, that continuity. We're working with the same people we worked with 20 years ago, and so, there's a narrative that has developed over the past 20 years.

Plainly, a key part of their strategy and their exceptional success, per Garrett, is the college's long-standing relationship with—or ability to afford—this consulting firm.

As a final point, Garett and other HPSAs' esteem for these firms is unsurprising; this investment has paid off exceptionally well. Less anticipated, however, participants at HPUA and Non-Applicant institutions also praised and coveted these firms. For instance, reflecting on Title V's tight turnaround window, Carl at Midwest Community College—a long-time HPUA— exclaimed, "this grant writer has kind of worked magic and miracles for us in terms of helping us" apply for these grants. Plainly, Carl still sees this investment as beneficial expense, although it arguably did not pay off. Similarly, contemplating Southwest Private University's various unsuccessful Title V proposals, Mary announced:

> I am determined that if and when the [Title V] opportunity comes up again, we will
> apply. I will go to my university. I'll go to the leadership and seek out the opportunity to
> secure someone to really help us professionally. Since we don't have the time and
> resources to go to the conferences—to go and learn how to do it ourselves, I definitely
> would want to do that. If the university told me no or if I couldn't find the resources to
> pay for that individual to help us with that…I'd have to think about it long and hard
> before I would jump into it again.

Clearly, Mary is convinced that these consultants' expertise justifies their price, so much so that she even questions pursuing these grants again without hiring such a firm. Even more, she hits on a key point—her college might not be able to hire such experts.

Underscoring Mary and others' point, not all HSIs can (or are willing to) invest in such expertise. For instance, only half of the HSIs in this study have contracted or currently employ specialized grant consultants, despite participants' widespread understanding about the benefit—

or even necessity—of hiring these skilled writers. As shown in Table 18, hiring such specialists is a mixed practice among HPUAs in this study, while rather predictably, almost all HPSAs rely on such specialists. Separately, while Non-Applicants contract external grant writers on rare occasions, the participants at these institutions explained that their respective campus typically forgoes this expense, opting to develop proposals in-house. However, Yvette at Northeast Urban College pointed to how this disposition may shift, particularly as these institutions contemplate pursing a Title V grant. Specifically, Yvette said:

> So, if need be…for example, if there's a huge Department of Education grant that we
> need, we would definitely outsource that. They are experts in that specific field of
> Department of Education [grants] that would help us get the [Title V] grant.

In short, Non-Applicants' current limited reliance on specialized consultants perhaps misrepresents these institutions' financial means and says little about how they may choose to budget institutional dollars in the future.

Table 18

General Use of External Grant Writing Consultants by Category

	HPSAs [a]	HPUAs	Non-Applicants
Yes	6	3	0
No	1	2	5
Total	7	5	5

Note. Data from participant interviews.

[a] Per interview data, Northeast Liberal Art College periodically contracts consultants; thus, I counted it as a "Yes" response. However, it does not rely on external grant writers for Title V since it has developed in-house expertise on this specific grant application over time.

In sum, across the 29 interviews, participants reiterated the importance of investing in expertise, namely in contracting specialized grant writers. Indeed, participants, even those who

commented on their outrageous price, widely praised these consultants And yet, with varied financial resources, the HSIs in the study demonstrate HSIs' unequal access to such expertise.

The Ability to Apply for Grants

In terms of financial resources, participants also discussed how said resources impact an institution's ability to apply for any given grant. More specifically, I heard concerns about indirect cost rates from multiple institutional agents. Specifically, slightly over a quarter of participants explicitly mentioned indirect costs, pointing out that although grants functioned as a much-needed revenue stream, an awardee must invest part of its own capital to implement grant-funded projects. For clarity, The Office of the Chief Financial Officer defines *indirect costs* as "expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs" (2020, para. 1). As such, indirect costs include expenses related to facilities, utilities, and maintenance, among other costs. Meanwhile, "an *indirect cost rate* represents the ratio between the total indirect costs and benefiting direct costs, after excluding and or reclassifying unallowable costs, and extraordinary or distorting expenditures (i.e., capital expenditures and major contracts and subgrants)" (Office of the Chief Financial Officer, 2020, para. 2, italics added for emphasis). Simply put, an indirect cost rate is "a device for determining fairly and expeditiously the proportion of general (non-direct) expenses that each project will bear" (National Institutes of Health Office of Acquisition Management and Policy, 2017, para. 4). A grant's indirect cost rate matters because an applicant must be able to afford to administer the project, assuming it receives the award. Considering Title V, which allows no indirect costs (Regulations of the Offices of the ED, 1999), this means that an HSI must have the necessary financial resources to cover all the indirect costs associated with its proposed project.

HPSAs and Non-Applicants, in particular, addressed the role of indirect costs. For example, Jacky, a long-time employee at Northeast City College (a Non-Applicant), talked at length about how indirect cost rates affect the dollar amount an awardee actually receives, offering several examples to illustrate her point. She, for example, explained how her college only pockets around $8,000 out of a $100,000 grant awarded by the ED. Tricia, who works at West Waterside Community College (an HPSA), also extensively discussed how indirect cost rates affect an institution's bottom line. Given challenges posed by grants with low to no indirect costs, she felt that the ED should reconsider including indirect costs in Title V, advising:

> I would ask them to allow indirect costs on the program…because every single cost that's written into a grant always has additional costs associated with it, like a staff cost, right? You've got HR. You've got payroll. You have custodial services. You have office space. You have utilities, right? You have all of these costs…I understand why they don't allow indirect [costs] because they want everything to go to the program, but I think it makes it very difficult in certain fiscal situations for colleges because if they don't allow it, it has to come out of the college's pocket

In brief, Tricia's comments here show how grants with low or no indirect cost rates, like Title V, assume awardees have the financial resources necessary to administer the grant. However, what does this mean for HSIs without the funding needed to cover such costs?

In practice, some HSIs have the money to cover these costs; others do not. Capturing this source of inequity, Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College (an HPSA) offered this scenario:

> NSF-STEM, for example… for a long time, it cost the institution money to have it. They've changed now to allow indirect recoveries, but it cost the institution thousands of dollars every year just to have this program—just have it, not to support it…Our

institution says, "Well, that's fine. It gives hundreds of thousands of dollars in

scholarship support to students, so that's a really good return on investment." But I've

heard from colleagues that their institution wouldn't let them apply for it unless they

came up with that extra money that it was going to cost [their institution]. They're like,

"No, we're not having a program that cost us money."

Through this example, Benjamin illustrates the irony of grants; while they are a source of

revenue, they are also a significant expense for an institution—one which not all HSIs can or, in

the case of his example, are willing to assume.

Institutional Mission

In addition to emphasizing institutions' systemic characteristics and financial resources,

participants also differentiated HSIs by their institutional mission. In particular, multiple

administrators at HPUAs in this study treated institutional mission as a defining characteristic of

an HSI's competitiveness for grant funding. Specifically, they framed their institution's teaching-

focused mission as detrimental to their ability to seek extramural funding, generally, and Title V

grants, specifically. For instance, Carmen's following portrayal of Northeast Private College's

grant preparation process illustrates this perspective:

This is a process because people don't know grants necessarily. And you'll set up a

meeting. You'll give them a copy of the RFP. You start talking and, many times, they

haven't read the RFP because they haven't had time. We're a teaching institution. We're

not a research institution. So, faculty have to wear lots of hats. They're very committed to

teaching. They have classes to do. They've got committee work; they're busy, as is our

staff. I mean, everybody is. There's never enough staff, and everybody is overburdened.

Put differently, Carmen clarifies that Northeast Private College is *not a* research institution but a teaching-intensive college. With such a mission, Carmen indicates that the faculty's expertise and focus do not center on grant acquisition. Along the same lines, Manuel at Midwest Private Aspiring University divulged:

> We don't have the expertise that other organizations have. And, the other thing is that our faculty, since historically we have not been focusing on grant writing, our faculty skills have not been developed for that purpose either. Our faculty are more focused on teaching, not grant writing or doing research, or anything else—very, very focused on teaching. And that has been a concern of mine because I think that our faculty need to develop and do their own applied research, so we can continue to evolve.

Manuel's colleague, Kelly, also alluded to this point. For instance, she expressed apprehension about Midwest Private Aspiring University's odds of obtaining a Title V award during the latest cycle for this very reason. Specifically, considering the "brains in the room," she worried that their proposal did not "reflect the kind of high-level thinking that Title V is expecting," bluntly concluding, "we don't have the internal capacity to make the best decision to pivot to evolve."

Notably, this notion of evolution, which Manuel and Kelly surface through their responses here, was a thread throughout various interviews. For example, White Glow explained that Southwest Private University has actively worked to cultivate a grant-seeking culture over the years. Specifically, recognizing the increasing need to procure external funding, she noted:

> We had to develop a culture of grant writing among the faculty. We had always been a primarily teaching institution. As we say in [Southwest State] terms, it's a GATI—a General Academic Teaching Institution, but we're broadening to include sponsored research now.

While less forthright than Kelly, White Glow implies that her university had to overcome—or at least move beyond—its engrained teaching-focused mission to bolster grant acquisition.

In brief, administrators at HPUA HSIs typically presented their respective institution's teaching mission as a disadvantage in seeking extramural funding, including Title V grants. However, the seven HPSAs included in this study are all teaching-focused institutions; even more, four of these seven institutions are Hispanic-Serving community colleges. Albeit only a sample of all highly successful Title V awardees, the success of these seven HSIs contradicts the assumption shared by some participants that a teaching-focused mission inherently disadvantages an HSI in this competition. However, as shown throughout the rest of this chapter, HPSAs often do have other key resources (e.g., preparedness, deep institutional knowledge, and/or visionary leadership), which render them more competitive in this fight for funds than other applicants.

Recapping Institutional Capacity

Altogether, participants suggested that there is a keen relationship between an HSI's institutional capacity (i.e., systemic characteristics, financial resources, and institutional mission) and its grant-seeking competitiveness. In short, HPUAs often conflated such competitiveness with an HSI's systemic characteristic, with some suggesting that public HSIs, including Hispanic-Serving community colleges, have the upper hand, and others stressing 4-year institutions' competitive advantage. Despite HPUAs' widely held understanding about the competitive advantage of specific systemic characteristics and institutional missions, other participants complicated these assumptions. Namely, institutional agents at HPSA and Non-Applicant institutions generally did not equate competitiveness for Title V grants with large, infrastructurally complex, public 4-years. Instead, they often emphasized the importance of an HSI investing its financial resources in particular activities (i.e., expanding its infrastructure and

hiring expertise). Furthermore, they generally positioned HSIs with well-staffed grants offices able to afford to specialized grant consultants as the strongest competitors. However, participants' varied experiences and views across the three groups demonstrate how HSIs have distinct institutional capacities (i.e., varied systemic characteristics, financial resources, and institutional missions), which render them unable to equally compete for Title V grants. Capturing the thrust of this inequity was Kelly, who basically singlehandedly manages Midwest Private Aspiring University's grant efforts. Reflecting on her campus's proposal development process, she posed: "But how does little Kelly and "her little ragtag team" compete and put together a proposal that's just as competitive with all of the analytics…because that's what I lack. Like, I don't have a back office." In this extended quote, Molly at West Waterside Community College reiterates the source of inequity at the core of Kelly's comments:

> [Title V is] probably not totally equitable. It's probably actually not serving the lowest income of students. It's probably not serving the most educationally, economically disadvantaged. There are probably groups that are not accessing funding. I mean, it's a hard grant, right? There's absolutely nothing easy about putting together a quality Title V project. And, if you don't have the resources, you're not going to do it…If you don't have a grant writer who's going to help you…If you don't have an IR department that already has the data in place. So, all of the things that the Title V Program set out….to do back in the 90s…developing the infrastructure, many of [us] used those funds to develop our offices…[and our] business management systems so we could do compliance. But there's still a lot of schools that need that kind of support…because if you don't have access to data, you're pretty much out the door; you won't get it. So now, all of us who used the capacity-building grants back in the 90s to develop systems, now, we've moved

on to more unique programming like Guided Pathways or project-based learning, while

there are still institutions that don't have the capacity to even apply for the grant. So, it's

not equitable…as we expand and have more HSI institutions, it's probably even less.

In short, Molly's observations here highlight HSIs' unequal financial resources and

infrastructure—their unequal institutional capacity—to seek Title V grants and specifies how

over time, these differences could come to bear on the equity of the program. Appropriately, she

also alludes to HSIs' varied abilities to prepare for this undertaking. Linked to institutional

capacity, another key theme centered on HSIs' institutional actions related to grant seeking.

Institutional Action

While an HSI's institutional capacity reflects largely fixed characteristics (i.e., an

institution's systemic characteristics, financial resources, and mission), participants also

emphasized the impact of an HSI's institutional action on grant acquisition. In particular,

considering Title V's application cycle and the presumed increasing competition for these grants,

participants either expressly held or insinuated that HSIs must act in specific ways to secure this

funding. Briefly put, participants positioned three main institutional actions as core to effective

Title V *grantisanship*[61] and to an institution's overall competitiveness in this program. These

actions involve an institution's campus connections, preparedness for grant seeking, and campus

environment. More specifically, participants suggested that well-connected HSIs with

collaborative campus environments that preemptively and strategically prepare materials are

highly competitive for Title V funding. In this section, I describe their varied insights on such

institutional actions, particularly how they connect competitiveness in grant seeking to an HSI's

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[61] Haas (2020) offered the term, "grantisanship," as non-gendered version of the word, "grantsmanship" traditionally used in the field of research development and administration. Appropriately, grantisanship connotes that effective grant strategy is an art or artistry.

(a) *campus connections*, (b) *advanced preparation*, and (c) *campus environment*. I also detail any relevant differences among groups (i.e., HPUAs, HPSAs, and Non-Applicants).

Campus Connections

In terms of institutional action, participants across the three groups all supported the salience of relationships in grant acquisition. Specifically, they suggested that a campus's connections affect which funding opportunities the institution pursues and, in many cases, which grants it obtains. For instance, mindful of HSIs' increasing numbers and trends in Title V's federal funding levels, Tricia talked about various strategies West Waterside Community College employs to continue garnering the exceptional success it has in this competition. Among tactics, Tricia insisted that "partnerships are like pieces of the puzzle," asserting that "probably one of the greatest advantages that any organization can have in resource development is an extensive, committed partnership network," including relationships with other colleges and universities, trade associations, the K–12 system, and the business sector. Actively cultivating these professional connections, she maintained, is essential because "if you have those partners in place, then when you go for a grant, you can get the letters of support, and you can write in the leveraged activities that you need to be competitive." Tricia was not alone in this view. Across the interviews, participants often explicitly held or implied that campus connections are indispensable to an HSI's competitiveness for Title V grants, particularly an institution's relationships with fellow HSIs and the broader HSI network. To follow, I present participants' insights regarding two main campus connections: (a) *peer connections* and (b) *broader network connections.*

Peer Connections

To begin, multiple institutional agents in this study revealed that relationships with other HSIs, especially ones nearby, could affect an institution's ability to competitively pursue and ultimately win Title V grants. In particular, nearly everyone at an HPSA institution alluded to this point, , highlighting the benefit of such relationships through their experiences with cooperative arrangement development grants (I revisit how HPSAs leverage cooperative grants in my discussion of the next theme, "Institutional Knowledge."). Beyond partnering on grants with said peers, a couple of participants also explicitly talked about how peers can help an HSI prepare more competitive proposals. For example, when directly asked about his thoughts on the equity of Title V, Garrett at West City College (an HPSA) contended that the program is "fair enough," noting that:

> You always have [the] opportunity to read successful grant applications. You can certainly call up another school that has one. I share. When we went after our first one, I called the college down the street…They shared, and I always share if somebody calls me…Everybody's in it. I want to help everybody.

Similarly, to ensure Southwest Private University (an HPUA) proposes a slightly distinctive project, White Glow shared that she regularly contacts peer HSIs to see what kinds of projects they intend to pitch that year. Specifically, she said, "We do try to check with our peers and find out, 'Well, what are you asking for with your Title V?' That [way] there's diversity across the asks if you will." In other words, according to Garrett and White Glow, a major benefit of connecting with peer HSIs is resource sharing, and in this way, these intentionally cultivated campus connections empower an HSI to competitively pursue Title V funding.

Other participants' comments, however, seemed rather incongruent with Garrett's and White Glow's experience with supportive, resource-sharing peers. For example, Manuel at Midwest Private Aspiring University maintained:

> Once again, I think that the Title V and other grants like this, there's also this competition that is built among the HSIs well, so instead of helping each other, we start competing against one another for the same grants, and unfortunately, those that are less capable, again, we lose out.

Hence, from Manuel's perspective, the competitive design of this program—and presumably many HSIs' dire need for this money—transforms peers into adversaries, which reasonably disincentivizes HSIs from helping one another. Ultimately, it is unclear if all HSIs have access to supportive peers or if all HSIs can actively develop supportive campus connections.

Broader Network Connections

In addition to connecting with peer HSIs, a small set of participants ($n = 5$) explicitly underscored how involvement within the broader HSI network is crucial to receiving HSI-related federal funding and, specifically, for competitiveness for Title V grants. For instance, White Glow at Southwest Private University commented:

> We work closely with HACU—the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. They've been very good about, essentially, advocating for HSIs on Capitol Hill, making sure that appropriation stays level or even grows a little bit. And so, for example, in this last round of the stimulus funds that came out—the CARES Act…HSIs got a special supplement…I credit HACU with the hard work to continue to have funding that's steady and somewhat increasing over time.

A few others (e.g., Manuel, Kevin, Linda, and Benjamin) similarly brought up HACU, acknowledging its lobbying efforts on behalf of HSIs. However, Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College offered a distinct perspective on HACU's deeply influential reach, sharing:

> I know that there are some rumors—some whispers—that it's become a little bit political with some of the advocacy organizations, such as HACU and others. That some institutions that have benefited from Title V funding, but then didn't officially join HACU…you're seen as somewhat of a freeloader. That HACU does a lot of work to advocate for Title V funding and all of that, and then the members institutions of HACU, of course, fund [that work]. And so, if you're a routine…Title V recipient, but you're not contributing to the organizations that's lobby[ing] for [HSIs], you're seen as a bit of a freeloader. And some of these people end up on grant review panels and so forth, so it's not unreasonable that [not being a member of HACU] might, sort of, subconsciously count against you. [Considering this,] we joined HACU…[have] always stayed members. So, there's a little bit of that politics that goes on around Title V. You're expected to, sort of, do your part if you're a regular recipient. And I think, in general, that's a healthy kind of politics. It's a community building and solidarity kind of politics.

In brief, Benjamin's comments demonstrate the powerful role of the broader HSI network on this program and foregrounds the potential repercussions of not aligning with these groups, especially as an HSI garners success in this competition. Moreover, considering institutional action, Benjamin also acknowledges that some institutions choose not to associate with HACU or to engage in this "healthy kind of politics." Yet, as with peer relationships, it is questionable if all HSIs see the value of connections or can actually fully engage with the broader HSI network.

Altogether, institutional agents, especially at HPSA and HPUA HSIs, underscored the value of connecting with fellow HSIs and the broader HSI network to an institution's competitiveness in this Title V Program. However, considering HSIs' ongoing growth, it remains to be seen whether all HSIs can build and sustain supportive relationships with their peers or similarly access the broader HSI network and its many benefits. In the end, only time will tell if such campus connections will represent another source of inequity within this competition.

Advanced Preparation

As these 29 institutional agents described their respective campus's approach to seeking grants, particularly its proposal preparation process, they demonstrated that an HSI's competitiveness in grant acquisition partly depends on extensive planning and preparation. Said differently, they made clear that to effectively—and quickly—produce high-quality Title V grant proposals, HSIs needed to prepare well in advance of the proposal deadline. At the same time, however, their comments, specifically those from HPUAs and HPSAs, about Title V's application cycle show that all HSIs are not equally prepared for this work. Pointedly, while participants at HPSA HSIs often described planning far in advance—or strategically preparing—for this competition, their HPUA counterparts described feeling pressed to even make the deadline—or scrambling to prepare. Below, I elaborate on these two group's different levels of preparation for the Title V competition, ranging from (a) *strategically prepared* to (b) *scrambling to prepare*.

Strategically Prepared

Among HPSAs, institutional agents often alluded to their campus's concerted efforts and extensive preparation in putting together their Title V application materials. Even more, many shared that their HSI's intense and advanced preparation was pivotal to their institution's

strategy for success in this competition. For example, while admitting that Title V's quick cycle makes it difficult to prepare, Dominic described Northeast Liberal Arts College's process as:

> About five or so months in advance, we start thinking about the college's strategic goals, start talking to some stakeholders about what major priorities are, and think[ing] about the priorities for the upcoming application…We start thinking about those goals and how they might fit the Title V Program…And then, as soon as the announcement is made, we look to see how any absolute or competitive priorities match some of the institutional priorities, and we bring those into alignment.

In this way, Dominic demonstrates how HPSAs—or "perennial winners" (Carmen)—invest a considerable amount of time in strategically preparing these proposals. Moreover, Dominic clarified that this was a strategic and preemptive action, adding:

> I think it's fair to say that Title V has gotten more competitive over the years…There are far more applications now than there used to be, but the professionalism…of the reviews has also expanded, and the kind of objective critique, the ability for the reviewers to evaluate evaluation plans and some of the nuances has really gotten higher. And, we've had to keep in step. And so, I can't imagine the 2001 application that got awarded would get awarded today. And so, certainly the amount of effort we put in, the amount of planning we've put in, has expanded over the years because of that competitiveness.

In response to both the increasing demand for this federal funding and the increasing difficulty of the review process, his institution strategically invests more time and effort into preparing their materials. Benjamin echoed his colleague's observation, saying:

> The first maybe three grants were a single faculty member, maybe two, just writing a grant and submitting it, and we were mostly successful. So, the increased competition has

definitely been felt, and we don't get every grant we submit anymore. As more

institutions are becoming eligible and…recognizing how powerful the money is, we have

felt that, and what it's meant is that the planning starts much earlier. The Office of

Institutional Research is much more involved in the preparation of the needs assessment.

We have to do a real, thorough preparation for the grant submission. I mean, in the early

days of Title V, it really was not hard to get the money. If you were a decent writer and

had a good idea, that was all it took, but now, you really need a lot of research to justify

[your proposal].

Basically, Dominic and Benjamin indicate that competitiveness for this funding largely hinges

on an HSI's strategic and methodical preparation.

Participants at other perennially winning institutions also addressed the necessity of

advanced preparation. For instance, when asked about West Waterside Community College's

chances of winning another Title V grant, Tricia responded:

We're hopeful, but it's not like you can ever say, "I'm absolutely positive we're going to

get this!" When the grants are reviewed, they're reviewed not only on their own merit,

but as they compare to other applications…So, if you have, let's just call it, a bad batch.

If you have maybe a lot of applications that were prepared in a hurry; they're not well

written; they don't have strong literature reviews or research behind them, then you could

maybe not even have that high of quality in an application and you could be awarded.

And in other competitions, you might have another group that has researched everything

well; they've been doing planning. Like in our case with Guided Pathways, we've been

planning for that for like three years.

Perceptively, Tricia recognizes that her college's competitiveness for these grants depends on the quality of the submission pool. Hence, mindful of HSIs' growing numbers and, thus, presumably the increased competition for this funding, the college "ups its game" by planning extensively.

As part of this planning, Tricia also spoke about the need to critically evaluate funding opportunities, saying:

> The preparedness that we have to go after grants [with] has increased greatly. It's a lot of pre-planning, and the planning is comprehensive…look[ing] at a variety of grants that would collectively meet the need…I don't know if this is different from colleges that [are] just start[ing] out [in terms of grant seeking], but we do evaluate opportunities for ROI—return on investment…I've had someone come to me [and say], "Oh, this money is great, and we really need it." Okay, well, the application is massive, and if you get awarded, you get $5,000. You can invest the same amount of time on another grant, and if you get awarded, you get $250,000, and maybe, there's an equal chance of getting either. So, of course, we're going to go for the bigger grant…So, I think preparedness increases over time, and yes, [the increasing competition among HSIs] definitely impacts what we go after and what we can propose.

In these remarks, Tricia highlights how the time and effort invested into preparing for any given opportunity comes at the expense of pursuing some alternative; in effect, she addresses the principle of opportunity costs. Furthermore, her comments here evidence another way HPSAs strategically prepare: they vet funding opportunities. After weighing the time and effort of each prospect, they go after "the bigger grant[s]," such as Title V, assuming they have "an equal chance of getting" said funding. Her colleague, Raul expanded on this idea, noting:

An important aspect of [grant seeking] is making sure that you vet grants before you pursue them. We weren't always good at that. In the past…I found that there were a number of grants that had been written, and nobody knew why we wrote them, who pursued them…I think that one of the things we've been better at now is vetting the grants before we even pursue them…We've even developed a Grants Committee to vet those grants, to make sure that anything we pursue is strategic.

Considering institutional action, Raul and Tricia highlight how part of advanced preparation is vetting potential grants, including their likely ROI. In short, judiciously vetting funding opportunities and then only pursuing the most viable and lucrative options is a key skill and action integral to competitiveness and success in grant seeking. Collectively, Dominic, Benjamin, Tricia, and Raul help illustrate HPSAs' overall strategic preparation[62] for Title V.

Scrambling to Prepare

My conversations with institutional agents at HPUA HSIs, however, demonstrated how such strategically advanced preparation is not readily feasibly to all HSIs for various reasons, chief among them being Title V's application cycle. Specifically, a segment of participants ($n = 11$) expressed concern about Title V's cycle, with multiple institutional agents directly contending or strongly implying that Title V's cycle curtailed some HSIs' ability to both enter and succeed in this competition. Unsurprisingly, HPUAs particularly underscored this issue. For

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[62] As a notable exception, Gary, a faculty member at Southwest City University, painted a less seamless picture of his campus's proposal development process. Specifically, while reiterating the importance of "trying to get people to work on [developing proposals] early," Gary admitted his own experiences with this were often quite frenzied, saying: "Generally, a grant announcement goes out and the application deadline is 2 months, maybe 3 months, in the future. And so, you've got this frenetic meeting of the minds, working, writing, developing, and designing." In this way, Gary's portrayal of Southwest City University's process more closely resembles that of many HPUAs. While at first this HPSA's less calculated or more ad hoc process may seem odd, it bears noting that although Gary's university has garnered a significant amount of Title V funds, its success record falls short compared to other perennial winners in this study, such as Southeast College, West Waterside Community College, West State University, and West City College.

example, mulling over Northeast Private College's chronic challenges with this program, Carmen, who has more than two decades of experience in research development and administration, said:

> One of the most hampering things for us is the lack of a realistic deadline from the time they announce the program to when you have to submit. That has been a huge challenge in the past. They used to give you…like 3 months in between. And now, I saw that [the ED] had said that they wouldn't do less than 45 days. But this last announcement…it came out at the end of December, and it was due exactly 30 days after in January.

Given her private, 4-year HSI's institutional capacity and grant-seeking structure, Carmen sees Title V's timeframe as unrealistic. Her college is unable to prepare strong, compelling materials under this time constraint, effectively rendering her institution (and presumably others like hers) uncompetitive for these grants.

Relatedly, when describing Midwest Community College's Title V grant preparation process, Carl acutely observed:

> There's, I imagine, larger [institutions] out there that have grant proposals in their files ready to go…We just don't have the resources or people and all that. We're not necessarily developing ideas, concept proposals, sticking them in a file, and when a grant's released, we got most of it done ready to go…We, probably like many institutions, are scrambling to put it together from when the proposal is released to when it's due.

Accordingly, citing his college's limited resources staff, Carl touches on the notion of institutional capacity discussed earlier in this chapter. Carl also points out that his community college does not have a system or an internal process in the place, enabling it to swiftly and

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strategically prepare competitive proposals; it does not have "files ready to go." Rather, facing

this cycle's limited timeframe, Carl explains that colleges such as his "are scrambling" to meet

the deadline. And, Kelly, who manages all of Midwest Private Aspiring University's grant-

related work, helps illustrate Carl's point. For example, Kelly compared her institution's

proposal development process to other HSIs, sharing:

> It's really interesting because I talked to a couple peers in the space who just got awarded
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> their Title Vs last year and they were like, "Kelly it was like 6 months of prep,
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> prep[aring] this and that. And they're like, "Where are you in your process?" And I'm
>
> like, "Ummm (awkward silence)."

Explaining this uncomfortable silence following her colleague's question, Kelly admitted that

with the deadline just a few days away, her college decided to radically shift direction, upending

most of the work she had already done drafting the proposal. Partially because of this

unanticipated change, she had yet to finalize the college's Title V grant proposal, offhandedly

saying: "I told everybody—again—that you just…gotta leave me alone for like a couple of days

so I can bust this Title V out." In short, Carl and Kelly help evidence how some HPUAs struggle

to strategically prepare in advance of this cycle, making its quick turnaround time all the more

unmanageable for their campuses.

Mary, a senior administrator at Southwest Private University, aired another major

challenge that Title V's cycle poses for HSIs' preparation efforts. Recalling instances when the

proposal deadline was in the summer or "off-term," Mary explained that she was basically

responsible for preparing her university's application materials without faculty support.

Specifically, she said:

The downside to that is that if you're a private institution that does not pay faculty to

work in the summertime, they're not available, and unless you're willing to pay them to

be on to help write the grant, you're kind of on your own.

Beyond further evidencing the importance of financial resources to grant seeking already

discussed, Mary illustrates how her university scrambles to prepare strong proposals during the

summer, as this is a time when her institution is especially understaffed. Accordingly, Mary

suggests that HSIs that employ faculty on 9-month contracts may be ill-prepared for this

competition if it occurs during the summer or whenever they are off contract.

Taken together, Carmen, Carl, Kelly, and Mary reflect what almost everyone from a

HPUA institution shared. That is, these campuses often scramble to prepare—rather than

strategically prepare—Title V grant proposals for assorted reasons, including not having "files

ready to go" (Carl) and understaffing. These participants also stressed how Title V's unrealistic

cycle further hinders them from strategically developing these proposals. Yet, HPUAs were not

alone in this concern.

Although visibly not disadvantaged by this cycle, a few administrators speaking from the

perspective of an HPSA ($n = 3$) cited challenges with Title V's cycle. Moreover, they expressly

recognized that this process marginalizes certain HSIs from preparing competitive materials and

felt that the ED should reconsider this aspect of the program. For example, when asked what

changes, he would recommend to improve Title V, Kevin at West State University, offered:

What I would ask them to change, *and this is fundamentally really just about leveling the*

playing field…is letting campuses have more than 40 plus days to apply for this funding.

Campuses that don't have the infrastructure that we are so fortunate to have, but have the

needs that are great, sometimes that window can be a little [too tight], and *they do it as a*

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deterrent. Sometimes, [the ED] will start the competition a week before Thanksgiving or over Christmas break…The needs are great across the country, most notably in those areas that have high Latino/Hispanic populations. And so, *giving us more of a window to vie for this funding would be really important.* (Italics added for emphasis).

Kevin's recommendation here powerfully illustrates how Title V's current cycle may effectively impede campuses without the infrastructure, and presumably the internal processes in place, from successfully competing for this federal funding. Even more, he asserts the ED intentionally uses abbreviated timelines to deter eligible institutions from applying.

Similar to Kevin, Raul at West Waterside Community College also called attention to the Title V's problematic cycle, acknowledging how it hinders some HSIs' from carefully planning and strategically preparing for this competition. Specifically, Raul expressed concern about the unpredictability of Title V's application cycle, stating:

The cycle is not always clear, and I think some institutions miss out on applying for grants because they're not prepared and ready to go. Whereas, for example, if I compare [Title V] to TRIO…everybody knows the TRIO cycle; it happens every 4 years. It's on the same timeline, and everybody can prepare well in advance, and there's far more competition for those grants than there is, for example, with Title V.

Informed by more than decade of professional experience seeking (and repeatedly securing) Title V grants, Raul explained Title V's inconsistent cycle may exclude some HSIs from participating. Tellingly, however, Kevin and Raul were the only participants representing HPSAs who pointed to how this specific issue may disadvantage some HSIs in accessing this much needed funding.

Collectively, mindful of the intense amount of work involved in interpreting the ED's

approximately 90-page instruction guide[63] and actually preparing this application's roughly 55-

page packet of materials, this set of participants felt that Title V's cycle may thwart, or altogether

prevent, some HSIs from strategically putting together rigorous proposals. Delineating Title V

Part A's grant cycle since 2000, Table 19 supports participants' comments (e.g., those made by

Carmen, Kevin, and Raul) on the inconsistency and fast turnaround time of this cycle.

Specifically, Table 19 shows that over the last 20 years, the ED has only provided HSIs, on

average, a 40-day notice to prepare and submit these applications.

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[63] The ED's instruction guide for the 2017 DHSI grant application alone is more than 90 pages (OPE, 2017).

Table 19

Title V Part A Application Cycle, 2000–2020

Year	Application Release Date	Application Deadline	Intergovernmental Review Deadline	Turnaround (days)
2000	Tuesday, January 25	Friday, March 10	Wednesday, May 10	45
2001	Wednesday, January 24	Monday, March 12	Friday, May 11	47
2002	Wednesday, February 6	Friday, March 22	Sunday, April 21	44
2003	Wednesday, January 29	Monday, March 3	Wednesday, April 30	33
2004	Friday, January 16	Wednesday, March 3	Monday, May 3	47
2005	Thursday, February 3	Monday, March 21	Thursday, May 19	46
2006	Tuesday, January 24	Friday, March 10	Monday, March 27	45
2007	Wednesday, July 11	Friday, August 10		30
2008				
2009	Friday, May 15	Monday, June 15	Thursday, August 13	31
2010	Thursday, May 13	Monday, June 14	Wednesday, August 11	32
2011				
2012	Tuesday, February 14	Thursday, March 15	Saturday, April 14	30
2013				
2014	Wednesday, April 9	Friday, May 9	Tuesday, July 8	30
2015	Friday, March 20	Sunday, April 19	Monday, July 20	30
2016				
2017	Thursday, February 23	Monday, April 24	Friday, June 23	60
2018				
2019	Wednesday, May 15	Monday, July 15	Thursday, September 12	61
2020	Tuesday, January 28	Monday, February 24	Friday, April 24	28

Note. Empty cells denote years when the HSI Division did not accept applications for new Title V Part A grant awards. Data are from the *Federal Registrar's* notice inviting applications for new awards, 2000–2020.

Collaborative Campus Environments

Beyond advanced preparation, another institutional action that participants described as an essential part of successfully seeking grants is internal collaboration. Specifically, they suggested that competitiveness in grant seeking partially depends on institutions actively cultivating collaborative campus environments in which organizational units (e.g., departments and programs) and institutional agents (e.g., administrators, faculty, and staff) do not compete

against each other, but instead work together. Below, I expand on participants' varied views on or experience with (a) *internal competition* and (b) "*little grant think tanks.*"

Internal Competition

Across interviews, participants generally acknowledged that an internally competitive campus environment undercuts an institution's ability to prepare strong proposals and, in turn, competitively pursue extramural funding. Relatedly, multiple participants touched on how HSIs must organize, or prepare, for success in grant acquisition by minimizing internal competition and actively fostering a collaborative campus environment. However, while institutional agents at both HPSA and HPUA HSIs recounted stories of campus in-fighting related to grant activity, these groups often framed these stories a bit differently. HPSAs generally portrayed such internal competitiveness as a distant problem, whereas their HPUA peers often insinuated that internal competition and/or limited collaboration was an ongoing issue on their campus.

Considering grant seeking, HPSAs described such internal competitiveness as a somewhat distant obstacle, which the institution purposely addressed and overcame. For example, reflecting on West State University's Title V proposal development process, Kevin demonstrated one way HPSAs act to effectively mitigate internal competition, sharing:

> At that time, and even now, the campus didn't want folks stepping on one another, so if there was a Title V out, we don't want eight people from the campus applying for that, because the competition is really fierce, and we don't want to step on one another. So, it becomes a real what I would call shared governance process [where]…you have multiple people at the table…Once you've collected all of their brainstorming, there comes a time when folks have to take a backseat…Writing a Title V grant, or any federal grant, is a

real delicate process, and you can't have too many cooks in the kitchen once you've

really developed the ideas.

In short, Kevin highlights how his university leverages the benefits of cross-campus

collaboration, while also denoting that internal competition undermines an institution's ability to

seek Title V funding. As a result, West State University intentionally invites an array of

institutional agents to engage in the idea generation phase of the proposal development process

but then relies on one lead person, along with a grant writer, to finalize its application materials.

Much in the same way, Garrett called attention to West City College's deliberate efforts

to promote collaboration, particularly tied to grant-related work. For instance, reflecting on the

college's evolution over his 20 years working there, Garrett said:

Typically, it was my pot of money…It's not your money; it's the college's money. If you

have a grant and I have a grant, and we can identify shared outcomes. We should be

working together…And so, we have regular meetings where everyone with grant funding

comes together with a big whiteboard and a logic model. I have…a meeting [later today],

and that group, for example, brings folks with money together to centralize and

consolidate, so that we're not bumping into each other, competing for funds, duplicating

efforts and resources, and things like that.

Although Garrett's comments here center more on collaboration among institutional agents,

particularly post-award, he still helps show West City College's intentional efforts to curtail

internal competition and promote collaboration.

Taken together, Kevin and Garrett's comments help illustrate part of HPSAs' grant-

seeking competitiveness, highlighting, in particular, concerted attempts—or actions—to foster a

collaborative campus environment. At the same time, however, their insights here do not mean

that HPSAs never experience internal competition. For example, when asked if others at his college shared his favorable view of Title V, Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College admitted that the general campus community was largely unfamiliar with these grants because he and others in his department "weren't necessarily broadcasting" them. He further explained:

> In the early days [of applying for Title V grants], there were a lot of faculty members who really didn't see the value of letting a lot of people know that this was available, because they thought everybody would want their turn with the grant, and…we wanted to keep it in [our] department as long as we could.

In effect, recognizing that Title V grants are institutional awards, not discipline-specific funding, Benjamin worried about others on his campus learning about this opportunity. Thus, to hoard this resource, he proposes an alternative way to mitigate internal competition: keep other potential players in the dark. While his perspective on this was somewhat of an outlier, several participants (e.g., Rebecca, Jeremiah, Carl, Liliana, and Alex) similarly acknowledged that, overall, their campus had limited knowledge of Title V.

Meanwhile, compared to HPSAs overall, institutional agents at HPUA HSIs insinuated that internal competition and/or limited collaboration was an ongoing campus issue. For example, Kelly at Midwest Private Aspiring University explained that she carefully considers how each funding opportunity and proposal fits within "the entire ecosystem of the institution." However, she felt that others on her campus were more myopic in their thinking, focused on the needs of their respective units rather than on the college as whole. As a result, Kelly explained that:

> Getting buy-in [for a Title V grant proposal] is really hard because [other units on campus are] probably like…"Oh, Title V money! Well, we want this and this"…It's all self-serving to them, [but]…I have to actually treat all the children equally.

Using the word "children" to denote the various departments and units on campus, Kelly suggests that, given her role, she has the tricky task of trying to appease the distinct (and often competing) demands of multiple campus constituencies while simultaneously considering the institution's overarching needs. In this way, Kelly frames her campus's current environment or culture as not fully collaborative.

Like Kelly, Carmen and Jill at Northeast Private College also described how tough it is to manage institutional agents' competing wants and expectations. For example, reflecting on the college's approach to developing Title V grant proposals, Carmen said:

> It's really challenging, because you are going to get a lot of different ideas from a lot of different people because they're looking at it from their point of view, what their needs are, and their students' needs. And, we have five different schools, so we have five different deans, and you'll get very different [suggestions]…But [Title V is] an institutional grant; you have to keep that in mind too. It's not a pet project grant.

Carmen's former colleague, Jill echoed her assessment, but stressed that this process "could be super competitive." Specifically, Jill stated:

> People wanted a chance to get their ideas in there…What I found was my associates were all male, and they were super competitive about it. They really wanted to get their $3 million grant, so they would kind of hold their cards close to their chest…I'm a super inclusive, collaborative leader. I'd go out with the whole team, and we'd brainstorm until we came up with the best idea, whereas they would be a little more closed about it.

Although Jill characterizes herself as "a super inclusive, collaborative leader," she is quick to point out that others on her campus, specifically her male-identified colleagues, are "super competitive." In this way, Jill and Carmen help show how Northeast Private College continues to grapple with internal competition. Altogether, through these responses, Kelly, Carmen, and Jill evidence how HPUAs' proposal preparation process, in particular, can be somewhat fraught, marred by internal competition and campus politics. Moreover, these HSIs' copious failed attempts at securing Title V funding suggest that such internal competitiveness may, indeed, jeopardize HSIs' success in this program.

"Little Grant Think Tanks"

As they detailed their institution's proposal development process, most participants revealed that collaborative, cross-functional campus teams or "little grant think tanks" (Jill) play a key role in an HSI's grant-seeking competitiveness. In particular, HPSAs and HPUAs seemed to deeply value these workgroups, largely relying on them—and their collaborative thinking and work—to compete for grant funding. Intriguingly, despite the notable difference between HPUAs and HPSAs in terms of their levels of preparation, the institutional agents at these 12 HSIs described their institution's general proposal development process quite similarly. Specifically, nearly everyone talked about using collaborative teams, which collectively brainstormed project ideas and helped develop Title V grant proposals. For example, posing the rhetorical question: "So, how does a grant get done?" Garret, who works at West City College—a long-time beneficiary of Title V—provided a thorough account of his college's process. Although at first stating, "anybody with an idea can come forward," Garrett backtracked slightly, clarifying that when his college pursues a Title V grant, it invites all "the usual suspects" to a round of meetings. Specifically, campus leaders, deans, student service managers, faculty, and

"sometimes classified staff but not often" (Garrett) meet multiple times to jointly brainstorm ideas. Elaborating on the focus of these ad-hoc workgroups, Garett explained:

> We kind of look to build on what we've already done. We do a gap analysis to see where we need support or where there's interest…A proposal can look good on paper, but if there aren't bodies to do the work, then you're in big trouble…Somebody's got to run it, and somebody's got to be the activity director, etc. So, we try to be careful with that and get those things in place as we go through, assuming that we're going to be successful. And, I have to say…most of the time, we have been successful.

In short, West City College leverages these "little grant think tanks" (Jill) to competitively pursue Title V funding.

As aforementioned, HPUAs shared almost analogous stories. For example, speaking from her perspective as a former administrator at Northeast Private College, Jill noted that since this private, 4-year HSI is "very aggressive in grant seeking," it maintains an ongoing "file of ideas" in preparation for forthcoming grant competitions. Furthermore, when a funding opportunity (e.g., Title V grant) aligned with one of these ideas, Jill explained that she and her staff would:

> Mobilize…We'd identify which school and meet with that dean and identify the faculty. And we'd put a little grant—like a think tank—group together just for the development time…We['d] get together, and we['d] brainstorm approaches to the grant, what needed funding, and how we could tie that in. That was a big group; that was usually like 10–12 people, and then, a couple of people would be identified to actually map it out, draft it, bring it back to the group, discuss it some more, and then, actually do the writing.

Notably, Jill's insights here complicate the assumption that all HPUAs do not—or cannot—prepare in advance for funding opportunities, as several participants suggested. And yet, it is

telling that even while assembling and relying on "little grant think tanks" much in the same way that West City College and other HPSAs in this study do, Northeast Private College (as well as other HPUAs) have consistently been unsuccessful in this program. Perhaps, HPUAs' unchecked or unresolved internally competitive campus environments, discussed earlier, counteract the benefit of these cross-functional workgroups, rendering such HSIs uncompetitive for this funding. Nevertheless, there is reason to suspect that not all HSIs do or can effectively employ such collaborative teams and harness their full benefit.

Recapping Institutional Action

Beyond an HSI's somewhat set institutional capacity (i.e., systemic characteristics, financial resources, and institutional mission), HPUAs and HPSAs, in particular, stressed the role of three specific actions on an HSI's competitiveness for grant funding. Among such institutional actions, they emphasized the need to cultivate strong, lasting connections with fellow HSIs and others within the broader HSI network, particularly HACU. Simply put, the overall consensus among the institutional agents in this study was that competitiveness in this arena depends, to some degree, on the extent of an HSI's campus connections. Additionally, participants explained that advanced preparation is integral to effective Title V grantisanship. And yet, given Title V's inconsistent application cycle and tight turnaround window, a set of participants felt that some HSIs, such as those without "files ready to go" (Carl), cannot realistically prepare strong materials, rendering them unable to equally compete for these grants. Finally, participants rather unanimously upheld the value of collaborative campus environments to grant seeking. However, the experiences institutional agents at HPSA and HPUA HSIs shared, particularly pertaining to the proposal development process, suggest that these two groups do not, or more likely cannot, actively foster such critical campus collaboration.

Basically, participants' experiences and observations collectively reveal that it is not only who an institution intrinsically is (their institutional capacity), but also what they do (institutional action) that jointly affect their competitiveness and, thus, success in this program. Yet, participants also demonstrated through their responses that not all HSIs do, or better said can, equally employ the three specific institutional actions described in this chapter, at times because of their distinct institutional capacities. For instance, per participants, an HSI's grant-related structure affects its ability to strategically prepare for this competition. Without a formal grants office, Carl at Midwest Community College, for example, cannot realistically "have files ready to go," nurture rich campus connections, and both organize and manage cross-functional campus workgroups, at least not to the same extent as HSIs with more developed infrastructures, money, etc. Plainly, this difference points to another source of inequity of the Title V Program. Yet, as shown by Northeast Private College even seemingly prepared and, more or less, collaborative HSIs repeatedly fail at obtaining these grants. Institutional agents at HPSA HSIs in this study, however, help clarify why this might be, explaining that HSIs must know how to strategically play or position themselves for success in this specific competition—a skill learned over time.

Institutional Knowledge

Reflecting on their campus's success, or lack thereof, in the Title V Program, participants representing both HPSAs and HPUAs underscored the value of *institutional knowledge* in this specific program. More precisely, beyond an HSI's institutional capacity and actions, they suggested that the depth of an HSI's knowledge of Title V—its application process, review and selection process, and legal stipulations—contributes to its competitiveness for this funding. Moreover, they suggested that HPSAs have a competitive advantage in this program because of their impressive institutional knowledge of Title V compared to other HSIs.

In this section, I describe participants' three overarching insights about such institutional knowledge, which I refer to as (a) *The Application Process*, (b) *The Review and Selection Process,* and (c) *Strategic Title V Grantisanship*. Moreover, I document institutional agents' at HPSA and HPUA HSIs distinct perspectives. Through their varied accounts, they help illustrate HSIs' distinct levels of knowledge in this program and, thus, competitiveness for this federal funding. In this way, they bring to light yet another source of inequity of Title V.

The Application Process

As mentioned in the discussion of the previous theme, Institutional Action, many institutional agents at HPUA HSIs expressed concern with Title V's application cycle, faulting it for its inconsistency and abbreviated timeline. A couple of participants at HPSA HSIs (i.e., Kevin and Raul) even acknowledged how Title V's cycle might disadvantage some HSIs from entering and excelling in this competition. Beyond commentary specifically on Title V's cycle, participants also discussed the application process more broadly. Yet, HPUAs and HPSAs generally differed in their descriptions of this process overall. Whereas participants at HPUA institutions often voiced their difficulty understanding this process, including the RFP and application instructions, their HPSA peers illustrated their deep comprehension of this program, including the intricacies of the application. To follow, I present participants' varied experiences and understandings of the application process, describing first HPSAs' and then HPUAs' perspective, which I refer to as *"Learned the Dos and Don'ts"* (Garrett) and (b) *"It's Just Crazy Town"* (Kelly), respectively.

"Learned the Dos and Don'ts"

The institutional agents at HPSA HSIs in this study typically described Title V's application as transparent and straightforward, even contending that the ED "spell[s] it out very

clearly" (Kevin). Furthermore, while their HPUA peers expressed frustration with this application, they highlighted their rich institutional knowledge of this program, noting how they have "learned the dos and don'ts" (Garrett) of this competition. As Raul at West Waterside Community College neatly put it:

> We have a very good track record. So, I hate to say, but we know the game, like we know what the Department is looking for, you know? And so, we're much more sophisticated at writing these grants and developing proposals that are very competitive.

This notion of "know[ing] the game," which Raul calls out, is precisely what most participants among HPSAs emphasized throughout their interviews. Indeed, through their responses, they conveyed how HPSAs wield their immense institutional knowledge of this program, particularly its application process, to competitively seek these grants.

Garrett, for example, likewise acknowledged West City College's significant—and continually deepening—institutional knowledge of Title V. Specifically, while reflecting on the equity of the program, Garrett said:

> It's fair enough. I think the rules are laid out pretty clearly. There's something obtuse and dysfunctional about the whole process. *I've learned the dos and don'ts of grants. I've learned with really a lot of help from our external writing partners what you say, what you don't say, what they want to hear, and what they don't want to hear.* With any grant writing process, you really have to understand the directions…It's just like anything else; you have to understand what they want. If you don't do X, you're going to be dinged for that, right? So, it starts out with understanding the RFP. Some institutions can figure that out internally, you know, you got a lot of smart people reading…So, it's understanding the RFP. It's understanding what's going on nationally. If you don't know what Guided

Pathways are, you're in trouble. If you don't know what equity-mindedness is, you're in trouble. If you don't know what a logic model is, you're in trouble…Fair, unfair—yeah, I think fair enough. (Italics added for emphasis)

In effect, while asserting that Title V is "fair enough," Garrett also elevates how success in this competition requires knowledge of certain concepts like Guided Pathways and logic models, as well as an understanding of "what you say" and "what you don't say." Furthermore, he attributes much of the college's success in this program to its firm grasp of Title V's explicit directions, national higher education initiatives, and the unspoken norms of writing and framing these proposals—knowledge gained over time with the help of expert consultants.

Garrett's acute observation about "learning the dos and don'ts" was a thread across my conversations with institutional agents at HPSA HSIs, particularly as they discussed Title V's application process. For instance, Tricia at West Waterside Community College commented:

I'll go out there and say the Department of Ed likes to see certain things in Title V applications. Some of it is in what we call the RFA—the requests for applications—and its application guidelines, but some things you learn by being a reviewer or by connecting with Department of Ed staff and basically writing a large number of them over the years.

In this way, Tricia, like Garrett, makes clear that the ED wants "to see certain things in Title V applications," some of which are plainly laid out in the guidelines and others which an HSI must learn through experience (specifically by serving as a proposal reviewer and writing more of these proposals). Ultimately, she stressed that knowing "how to write [these proposals] can make all the difference in the world."

In line with Garrett's and Tricia's point about learning through experience, Dominic compared Northeast Liberal Arts College's current process to its approach in the early 2000s,

saying: "We've gotten much better at applying for Title V too because we understand the program, and the needs, and that type of thing." Accordingly, Dominic implies that his college learned how to competitively pursue this funding over time, as it came to understand this program more fully. Almost identically, Pilar at Southeast College shared, "I think we['ve gotten] a little bit smarter and a little bit more sophisticated in how we approach and how we write because of having experience," including even the experience of unsuccessfully applying for these grants. Indeed, Pilar considered failure in this competition to be a useful educational experience, saying, "I think that makes us stronger…The next competition, we would have more knowledge" and can "use [reviewers'] comments to write a better grant." Simply put, Pilar demonstrates how Southeast College and HPSAs, more broadly, strategically leverage their extensive institutional knowledge, accrued over the years, to continue winning these grants.

"It's Just Crazy Town"

In stark contrast to HPSAs, my conversations with institutional agents at HPUA HSIs suggested that these institutions have a more limited understanding of Title V and its application process. In fact, despite all of these HSIs decade (or more) of experience applying for these grants, they still mostly described Title V's application process as burdensome, cumbersome, and woefully unclear, verging on "just crazy" (Kelly). Illustratively, when discussing Title V's application, Kelly at Midwest Private Aspiring University grumbled:

> It is not easy to interpret the RFP [Request for Proposals], and I say that as somebody
> who has successfully secured federal funding, and I know everybody's got their different
> language and vocab. But reading, to me…an RFP from a federal body is all about the art
> of reading between the lines. I mean, that's also like being bilingual…It's like the
> language of government…_It's really hard for me to read between the lines with the RFP_

with Title V…Interpreting that document, it's crazy...The RFP needs to be in plain

language—like number one…[because now,] it's just, crazy town. (Italics for emphasis)

As such, Kelly disagrees with Kevin and other HPSAs' view that the ED "spell[s] it out very

clearly." On the contrary, even as someone who has "successfully secured federal funding,"

Kelly considers this application to be illogically difficult.

Reflecting on Midwest Community College's various unsuccessful Title V proposals,

Carl echoed Kelly's concern about the difficulty of interpreting this RFP. Specifically, when

asked how the ED could meaningfully improve the Title V Program, Carl proposed:

> I guess make the language sort of clearer, simpler in terms of providing more specifics of
>
> what kind of projects [or] programs [they want] because it's sort of very open-ended and
>
> nebulous…We're kind of left to kind of create everything from [the] very little
>
> information on what they're looking for.

In other words, based on his 10-plus years of experience with this program, Carl feels that the

ED provides HSIs ambiguous direction, making it "nebulous" to him and presumably others

what a competitive Title V proposal could or should look.

Even a Non-Applicant in this study lent support for this stance. Specifically, when asked

what could help West Mountainside Community College pursue Title V grants, Alex requested

"examples of projects that have been funded and successful for students at other colleges,

specifically…colleges that are similar to us in size demographics, resources, that kind of thing."

Such "evidence-based practices," Alex believes would encourage and better enable his college to

seek these grants. Notably, in making this ask, Alex implies that he and others on his campus are

unsure of how to competitively approach this application without such support.

Taken together, Kelly Carl, and Alex's observations and recommendations demonstrate that some HSIs do not fully understand how to strategically pursue this funding. Consequently, without the same deep institutional knowledge of Title V and its application process, including its exact and subtext requirements, HPUAs, such as Carl and Kelly's colleges, cannot equally compete for these grants. While many HPUAs attest to this reality, a few participants representing HPSAs (e.g., Garrett, Molly, and Raul) also commented on how some HSIs are uncompetitive for this funding given their limited institutional knowledge of the program. Raul was perhaps the most overt. Specifically, after explaining that West Waterside Community College "knows the game," he added:

> While the number of [HSIs] is increasing, when you have novice applicants, it's hard for them to break into the game because if they don't hire a consultant that knows how to write those grants well, and they don't have somebody on staff that is knowledgeable of the Title V grants process, it's difficult for them to get in.

In fact, Raul seemed notably troubled by this issue throughout the interview, and as part of his concluding remarks, he stated:

> I think that the Department of Education and other agencies should listen to grantees more, and really rethink these competitions, and set them up in a more fair way for novice applicants to land new grants. I really do. Because, again, we see a lot of the same institutions keep getting the same, you know, those grants over and over again because of the experience that they bring to the table, whereas novice applicants just don't have that same advantage as continuing institutions or previous awardees who have already had a lot of experience running these grants.

In short, Raul makes clear that an HSI's competitiveness and, ultimately, success in securing this funding largely rests on its institutional knowledge of this program—a resource that many of the institutional agents at HPUA HSIs with whom I spoke suggested their campuses lack.

The Review and Selection Process

Many participants (representing 3 Non-Applicants, 5 HPSAs, and 6 HPUAs) pointed out various challenges and unknowns with the review and selection process for grant funding. In particular, HPUAs and HPSAs talked at length about Title V's review and selection process. However, considering these two group's distinct institutional knowledge of and experience with Title V, they generally held divergent understandings of this process. Specifically, although several institutional agents speaking from the perspective of an HPSA openly admitted that this review process could be somewhat unpredictable, they ultimately chalked it up to the nature of all competitions. Sometimes you win,; sometimes you do not. In contrast, a set of participants at HPUA institutions was deeply critical of Title V's review and selection process, suggesting that success in this competition unfairly requires an HSI to have particular kinds of knowledge and experience. Below, I share participants' insights regarding Title V's review and selection process, which I refer to as (a) *Unpredictable Process*, (b) *Punitive Process,* and (c) *The Funding of Surefire Wins*

Unpredictable Process

Across the 29 interviews, most participants characterized the review and selection process for grants, broadly, as unpredictable and subjective. Furthermore, despite Title V's formulaic scoring criteria, participants at both HPSA and HPUA institutions felt similarly about this process, describing it as unobjective teetering on dysfunctional. For instance, reflecting on Pacific Northwest Community College's experience applying for Title V grants, Megan said:

I mean, it's a completely different set of readers next time. I mean, the first grant had

three different readers, and it was a range between 90–100. One reader scored a 90. One

gave us a 99, and one gave us a 93. So, it's subjective.

Indeed, multiple participants reiterated Megan's point about the subjectivity of this process,

concluding that volunteer proposal reviewers with immense discretion basically determine an

applicant's fate. For instance, although West Waterside Community College has won numerous

Title V awards, Tricia still admitted:

Reviewers. I think it's always a challenge for funding agencies to get reviewers that will

apply the criteria for evaluating the applications consistently and accurately...I always

say, that's my lottery ticket because I could get a surprise and get it, or I could get a

surprise and not, and I have had both types of surprises.

Garrett at West City College similarly touched on the inconsistency among reviewers, which

Tricia mentioned. Considering Title V, in particular, he conceded: "You know, it comes down to

the readers…could they do a better job of training and norming their readers? Maybe."

In short, representing HPSA institutions—HSIs which have benefited extraordinarily

from Title V's existing review and selection process—Megan, Tricia, and Garrett all recognized

that proposal reviewers are not infallible. Instead, as Tricia surmised, they are "just human too,

and they read a lot of them in a short amount of time." However, while Megan, Tricia, and

Garrett's community colleges have experienced "both types of surprises," HPUAs have yet to

experience a welcomed surprised (i.e., winning a Title V grant).

Punitive Process

Although several institutional agents among HPSAs and Non-Applicants recognized the

unpredictability of grant competitions, a small segment of their HPUA peers portrayed Title V's

review and selection process as not just unpredictable but as punitive. More aptly, they felt that this process deliberately weeds out HSIs without the institutional capacity and institutional knowledge to address all the ins and outs of this application. Carl at Midwest Community College was especially vocal about this issue. Frustrated by Title V's "whole decision-making process," he begrudged its bureaucratic pickiness. Moreover, he felt that the current approach disadvantages HSIs such as his, which cannot afford a grants office. Forthcoming about his irritation with the review and selection process, Carl grumbled:

> One reader took off a point because we didn't list the meeting schedule of [a student group], as if though that made any difference. And that point, essentially that point, cost us the grant. So, I know they're trying; they have to have some process. I know…they think this is the fair way to approach it, but I question that sometimes.

Ultimately, he wished that the ED would reconsider their pedantic—or punitive—approach to reviewing these proposals, insisting: "They ought to be considering that because *it's kind of insulting really*, when you think about it" (italics added for emphasis). In effect, Carl means that the ED should realize that by deducting points for "petty minor kinds of things," they disqualify HSIs like his that, despite limited capacity, devote a considerable amount of "time and resources into creating…a creative proposal" (Carl).

Relatedly, beyond just Title V, a few institutional agents, specifically those who work in research development and administration, commented on how minor technicalities and inane formatting requirements frequently cost colleges and universities funding opportunities. For instance, Sarah, an experienced grant administrator at Southwest State University (a Non-Applicant), discussed how she and her staff meticulously comb over minute details because "to have someone work so hard and have a brilliant idea and then have it be rejected because the

margins were not the right size or whatever is terrifying." Notably, "figuring out what they want, what font do they need, [and] how they want the budget," Sarah explained is exceedingly time-intensive, consuming the time she wished she could spend identifying prospects and learning more about funding opportunities like Title V.

The Funding of Surefire Wins

While some HPUAs stressed the picky and punitive nature of Title V's review and selection process, two participants from this group (i.e., Manuel and Polar Bear) put forward another way institutional knowledge and experience affect an HSI's competitiveness in this program. Specifically, they expressed concern about how funding agencies, including the ED, reward institutions with knowledge and experience in grant implementation to the detriment of those with minimal expertise, experience, and success in this arena.

Manuel, a high-level leader at Midwest Private Aspiring University, reiterated this concern throughout his interview. For instance, when asked which institutions were ideally poised to get Title V grants, he replied:

> I think that the ones that have more experience in this area, meaning that they have done it before and that they [have] show[n] some success. I think those are the ones that end up getting them. And those of us that, well...let me put it to you this way, sometimes, we expect students to know about money management. But if they never had any money, how can you expect them to know about money management?

In other words, reflecting on his decades of experience as a higher education professional, Manuel firmly believes that funders—including the ED—invest in institutions that "[have] show[n] some success." Also, through his rhetorical question, Manuel attempts to illustrate how institutions, like his, are ill-prepared for this competition given their minimal knowledge and

experience with, for example, devising a $3 million project budget or managing such a sum of money should it receive this award.

Manuel also talked at length about how differences among HSIs regarding their institutional knowledge and experience profoundly matter in a capitalist society. Citing his initial training as an engineer, he offered this extended metaphor to help convey how these differences translate to grant seeking:

We can look at it the way that the United States and how foundations look at it. They're probably looking at the best use of their dollars. So, if you had…$1 to give, who would you give it to—to one that is going to make it grow into $4–$5 or the one that is only…going to waste 50% of it and only use $0.50 out of it? It's about productivity. So, which institution is going to be more productive in the use of your grants? I'd venture to say that probably the one that's going to be more productive is the one that already knows what to do…with that money…[to] make it multiply…It's all about the capitalist society that we are…If you had a machine that is very productive, that can generate 1,000 parts per day, and you had another machine that could only produce 100 parts a day, where would you spend your money? On the one that produces 1,000 parts or the one that produces only 100 parts?…So, part of the reason why the grantors give the money, in my opinion, to universities that know what to do with it is because we're a capitalist society.

Accordingly, to Manuel, the logic of capitalism drives grant allocation in the United States, meaning that universities,[64] specifically those that know how to use these grants productively— or at least know how to convince others that they do—amass this money. Succinctly, winners keep winning, and concerned by this tendency, Manuel posed:

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[64] As an aside, throughout our conversation, Manuel never mentioned Hispanic-Serving community colleges—either as potential applicants or beneficiaries of Title V funding.

Let's talk about HSIs. So, right now, the majority of the money goes to those who have

done it, that are successful, that can…show that they can do it. How about if you were to

turn the whole thing upside down and give the money to those who have not done it? So,

invest in the areas that really…need the help.

In short, perhaps unsurprisingly given his institution's unsuccessful record in this program, he

sees more value in the ED investing in HSIs like Midwest Private Aspiring University, which

lack the institutional knowledge of and experience with seeking and securing such funding.

Notably, although no one else I spoke with directly addressed capitalism's effect on grant

acquisition in this way, his colleague, Polar Bear, similarly maintained that funding agencies

favor institutions who know how to prove that they serve students. Specifically, he asserted:

When we think about quality and the way we measure students, we still measure

graduation rates in a very antiquated way, as if we're dealing with students that are [the

same]…We don't take into account stop-in and stop-outs, and that's why I think we

penalize an institution like us, who[se] average student [is] 31, [who] can't take the time

off of work…[who] might not come back next semester [because] they can't afford

it…So, I think the way we're rewarding [institutions] is we think about prestige. We want

to give [grants] to those who have demonstrated their ability to have their students [be]

successful. But again, it's not a model that fair or equitable.

Ultimately, as a Latinx-identified administrator at a college that primarily serves post-traditional

students, he believes that Title V's review and selection process rewards traditional prestige

metrics rather than his institution's intimate knowledge of and enduring commitment to its

students—the vast majority of whom identify as Latinx.

Tellingly, these administrators were not entirely alone in their views. A few others working at HPSA and Non-Applicant institutions supported the idea that success begets further success in grant acquisition. For instance, Sarah at Southwest State University observed:

It can be frustrating to try and break in—to get started—because it takes many submissions of proposals or resubmissions before you might actually get a grant, but once you can actually do one, then it seems like you're more competitive for further funding.

Similarly, Tricia at West Waterside Community College stated:

Having a lot of prestigious grants also helps you get more. So, it's kind of like, it's hard to get started, but as soon as you start getting some, it's easier to get others because, in the new applications, you talk about what you're already doing and with what resources. A lot of the grants also ask for grant management expertise, and to be able to say, we [do X, Y, and C is beneficial].

Together, Sarah and Tricia suggest that winners are set up to continue winning. In this way, Tricia implies that HPSAs fully understand this application process, including how to cogently and persuasively communicate their ability to carry out their proposed projects. Presumably then, HPUAs, without such success, lack this important institutional know-how.

Collectively, these institutional agents highlighted the powerful role institutional knowledge plays in an HSI's competitiveness for Title V funding. At the same time, however, HPUAs and HPSAs' generally divergent descriptions and experiences with the review and selection process suggest that HSIs have varied levels of institutional knowledge. Furthermore, participants, such as Manuel, Polar Bear, Sarah, and Tricia, elevate how funding agencies, including the ED, reward organizations with particular kinds of experience, namely a history of

successful grant implementation and management—a skillset not equally shared among all HSIs. In this way, these institutional agents reveal yet another source of inequity of this competition.

Strategic Title V Grantisanship

In addition to the application and review and selection process, HPSAs further demonstrated how their deep understanding of Title V enables their continued success in this program. More specifically, unlike the institutional agents at the other HSIs in this study, HPSAs' accounts revealed how these HSIs leveraged their deep institutional knowledge of this program to strategically maximize their efforts and, in turn, amass Title V funding. Simply put, HPSAs illustrated how they have learned to advantageously game the system. By comparison, HPUAs' remarks suggested that they lacked such valuable knowledge. Next, I document how HPSAs employ strategic Title V grantisanship, sharing how they (a) *Maximize Competitive Priorities* and (b) *Maximize All Options* in ways that HPUAs do not or, perhaps, cannot.

Maximize Competitive Priorities

Beyond having "learned the dos and don'ts" of this application process, HPSAs often expressed a sense of ease knowing how to strategically align their proposals with that year's RFP and its specified *absolute priorities* and *competitive preference priorities*.[65] As touched on when discussing HSIs' varied levels of preparedness for grant seeking earlier in this chapter, HPSAs' descriptions of their Title V proposal development process evidenced how they understand how to strategically frame their proposals to ensure high scores. For instance, Gary, a tenured faculty

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[65] *Absolute priorities* describe items that an applicant must address to receive an award. *Competitive preference priorities* refer to particular areas of interest set by the ED for that year's application cycle for which an applicant may earn additional points. Specifically, applicants may earn five additional points, depending on how well they have met a competitive preference priority (Direct Grant Programs, 1995). As they are typically two competitive preference priorities, applicants may respond to one or both priorities, for a total of up to 10 additional points (Direct Grant Programs, 1995). For example, during the 2020 Title V DHSI grant competition, the two competitive preference priorities included: (a) "Fostering Flexible and Affordable Paths to Obtaining Knowledge and Skills;" and (b) "Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students to Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens" (Notice inviting applications for new awards: DHSI, 2020).

member at Southwest City University, shared: "I look at what additional competitive points you get extra points for and those kinds of things and to make sure, if at all possible, we kind of meet or exceed those challenges."

In line with Gary, other participants (e.g., Garrett, Raul, and Dominic) likewise employed at HPSA institutions shared how their campuses also strategized in this way to secure Title V funding. For example, when describing Northeast Liberal Arts College' approach to developing Title V proposals, Dominic said:

> As soon as the announcement is made, we look to see how any absolute or competitive priorities match some of the institutional priorities, and we bring those into alignment. So, if there's a competitive priority, for example, the recent couple of cycles have had a competitive priority, if I'm not mistaken, for financial literacy. And this is something that the college does, but it wasn't explicitly in our strategic plan, so we thought about how to incorporate that into our plan. And so, once the announcement is made, we bring kind of college goals into alignment with the announcement's goals.

That is, although financial literacy was not explicitly part of the institution's codified strategic plan, Dominic and others on his campus strategically reconfigured the college's proposal so that it "bring[s] kind of college goals into alignment with the announcement's goals." Ultimately, given these HSIs' immense record of success in this competition, the implication is that these long-time Title V beneficiaries have learned how necessary such alignment is in order to win these awards. More so, these HSIs know how to effectively communicate through their application materials the keen relationship between their proposed project and that year's specified competitive preference priorities.

In contrast, my conversations with institutional agents at HPUA HSIs showed that not all HSIs know how to prepare such strategic proposals, with only a few participants within this group, such as Carl, Carmen, and Mary, even mentioning Title V's specific priorities. That said, Jill at Northeast Private College acknowledged how integral fully understanding funders' priorities is to grant acquisition, saying:

> You just can't look at an RFP and say, "Oh, I have a great idea for this, and I'll put my team together; we'll write it." You have to really kind of put yourself in the place of the decision-makers and try to figure out, you know, what those priorities are and what's in between the lines in the RFP.

Clearly, Jill recognizes the importance of aligning proposals with funders' priorities. And yet, as alluded to throughout this chapter, she, along with other institutional agents at HPUA HSIs, suggested that their campuses struggle to write compelling proposals for assorted reasons (e.g., limited financial resources, campus connections, and preparation).

Among such reasons, participants cited limited institutional knowledge of core parts of Title V, thereby supporting HPSAs' contention that expertise on specific topics is critical to an HSI's competitiveness for these grants. For instance, Mary, a senior administrator at Southwest Private University, spoke at length about how she and others on campus had limited knowledge of program evaluation—a core component of Title V applications. Without deep knowledge of the types of evaluation practices that the ED values (and valorizes through reviewer scores), Mary explained that her university's Title V proposals were uncompetitive. Discussing reviewers' feedback on their proposals, Mary shared:

> We get strong marks for good writing...I'm not a great logic model person, but I think it was decent. And again, the scores reflect that. The one downturn is in that evaluation

piece. Again, if we were a large enough institution, perhaps that we had the money or we

had an individual with, if we were fortunate enough to have an individual in that

Sponsored Programs Office that was a masterful evaluation designer, that might be the

magic dust, right? But that's the piece that we find ourselves oftentimes falling

short…and it's not just a little bit; I mean, we missed the mark completely. So, you know,

how the grants are scored, even if you get to the perfect score, oftentimes, it's the

differential between the extras…Ironically, we've always made the extras…but it's the

piece in the development of the grant itself that we're struggling so. And I will blame that

solely on lack of experience, lack of knowledge, lack of success in terms of knowing how

to turn the key on one.

Thus, like HPSAs, Southwest Private University maximizes on this application's competitive

preference priorities—something no other participant within this group indicated. Again, only a

couple of participants working at HPUA institutions even offhandedly mentioned these priorities.

Nevertheless, even while successfully earning these additional points, Mary explains that her

small, private 4-year university's "lack of experience, lack of knowledge, [and] lack of success"

ultimately undermines its ability to competitively pursue this funding.

Maximize All Options

Reflective of HPSAs' rich institutional knowledge of this program, participants at these

HSIs discussed how their institutions strategically coordinate their grant-seeking efforts to

increase their odds of successfully securing Title V funding while still strictly adhering to federal

regulations. Specifically, these institutional agents frequently talked about *maximizing all options*

by aggressively pursuing both individual development and cooperative development grants. For

example, Kevin at West State University shared:

We will sometimes go after both—an individual and a cooperative together—because then even though there's a limited amount of funding, at least we're looking at a different track for it. And we've been pretty successful in our cooperative grants too. We haven't gotten them all, but it's not because we haven't gotten in there and tried.

Despite not winning every grant it has pursued over the years, Kevin's insight here is telling, illuminating how HPSAs keenly understand how to strategically navigate this program to reap the greatest benefit.

Recognizing that these grants are "not a guarantee," especially given Title V's increasingly demanding review process, Benjamin similarly noted that Northeast Liberal Arts College alternates between individual and cooperative grants. Specifically, when asked about his thoughts regarding his institution's chances of winning more Title V grants, he responded:

I think we're usually pretty optimistic, but we are much more aware that it's not a guarantee. And we generally try to stagger…the support a little bit, so that if we don't get our first try with [an] institutional [individual development grant], we definitely have the cooperative that keeps us going. So, we've never been completely without Title V support, and we make sure that we're always applying for it so that if we miss, you know. And, we also have [other federal grants]…we try to make sure that we're tapping all different kinds of sources of support so that we're not dependent on any one. But yeah, I mean, we all know, we know it's getting harder and harder.

Since these grants are becoming "harder and harder" to obtain, Northeast Liberal Arts College intentionally staggers between sources of support, attempting to capture this desperately needed revenue. Benjamin's insights here are ultimately noteworthy, helping demonstrate how HSIs,

such as his, effectively leverage their deep institutional knowledge of this program to pool or hoard as much of this public resource as possible.

Recapping Institutional Knowledge

In addition to an HSI's institutional capacity and actions, participants highlighted how the depth of an HSI's institutional knowledge of this program contributes to its competitiveness (and thus success) in the Title V grant competition. Specifically, "the big kids on the block" (Garrett)—or HPSAs—attributed a great deal of their Title V competitiveness to their in-depth institutional knowledge of this program, including its application process, review and selection processes, and legal stipulations. In contrast, HPUAs' accounts revealed their comparatively more limited understanding of these areas, thereby providing support for the critical role such knowledge plays in an HSI's competitiveness for these awards.

In sum, while HPSAs and HPUAs both spoke extensively about the Title V application process, their descriptions diverged markedly. Whereas HPUAs often voiced their struggle to understand the application, frustratedly describing it as "just crazy town" (Kelly), HPSAs' comments evidenced how they had "learned the dos and don'ts" (Garrett) of preparing these proposals. Additionally, likely because of these HSIs' different experiences with and knowledge of the program, these two groups generally held distinct views surrounding Title V's review and selection process. Having benefited remarkably from the existing review process, HPSAs were generally "quite happy with the rules and regs" (Garrett), while admitting it could be unpredictable. By comparison, a subset of HPUAs questioned the review and selection process, with some finding the deduction of points for "petty minor kinds of things" "kind of insulting" (Carl). Meanwhile, two administrators, specifically Manuel and Polar Bear, stressed that the ED rewards HSIs with particular kinds of knowledge and experience (e.g., grant management),

which they explain not all HSIs have or can readily acquire. Finally, HPSAs revealed two key ways they leverage their deep institutional knowledge of Title V to continue garnering success in this competition; they maximize the application's competitive priorities and all the options available to them. Importantly, the institutional agents at HPUA HSIs who I spoke with did not similarly suggest using such strategic grantisanship techniques.

Ultimately, my conversations with HSPAs and HPUAs, in particular, indicated that there are vastly distinct levels of knowledge among HSIs in terms of this program, meaning that HSIs are not on the same footing when applying for these grants. Specifically, HPSAs leverage their institutional knowledge of Title V to produce high-quality proposals (ones that, for example, align with the RFP's competitive preference priorities) and succeed in this competition. On the other side, many HPUAs ostensibly lack such knowledge, rendering them unable to successfully compete for this funding. While institutional agents made clear that institutional knowledge of Title V contributes to an HSI's competitiveness in this arena, the institution's senior leadership also plays an influential role on their success in this competition.

Institutional Leadership

Through their varied experiences and priorities within the broad grant landscape, the participants across all three groups of HSIs highlighted the profoundly influential role of *institutional leadership* on an HSI's grant-seeking efforts. More specifically, in addition to institutional capacity, actions, and knowledge, they suggested that an HSI's competitiveness for and success in securing Title V funding largely depends on the campus's leadership for various reasons. Among such reasons, they indicated that campus leadership affects an HSI's competitiveness in grant acquisition by shaping the institution's (a) *resource allocation* and (b) *grant-seeking priorities*. In this section, I describe participants' two main insights about

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institutional leadership, documenting any relevant differences among HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants.

Resource Allocation

Related to their insights on financial resources, participants across all three groups noted that institutional leaders either prime or undercut an HSI's success in grant seeking through resource allocation. Specifically, participants indicated that campus leaders largely control an institution's budget, deciding, for example, whether to allocate funds to support proposal development; therefore, they significantly affect an HSI's ability to competitively pursue extramural funding. While participants collectively agreed on institutional leadership's impact on grant activity, HPSAs' accounts often—although not always—evidenced how their leaders supported these efforts. Below, I document a few such cases, showing how HSPAs tend to allocate resources toward the campus's grant-seeking efforts, particularly ones related to Title V.

Employed at West City College for the last 20 years, Garrett discussed how shifts in senior leadership have affected—both positively and negatively—the college's grant-related efforts. Specifically, Garrett shared:

> For a very long time, the senior administration, specifically the president, wasn't really
> receptive to [the college's Title V-related work]. He wasn't opposed, but it was kind of in
> a holding pattern. And then, in 2011, we got a president with vision, who really liked
> what we were doing in our center and with our programs…And so, the president saw us
> as like, you know, "Damn, a lot of good stuff going on here." So, he opened the door; he
> gave us a budget, and he gave us a space. We now have an expanded space…And now,
> the faculty, now the administration, sees us as kind of an R&D space where things can be

figured out…And so, the door is open. It doesn't mean the pocketbook is open, but

people are much more receptive to our work.

In this way, Garrett highlights the instrumental role of "a president with vision" or institutional

leadership, more broadly, on an HSI's grant activity. He also illustrates the benefit of leadership

recognizing Title V grants as value-added and, in turn, allocating resources (i.e., money and

space) to support grant-related work. Presumably, this includes opening its "pocketbook"

(Garrett) to hire expert writers to help the college secure this money.

Similarly, describing the radical transformation of West Waterside Community College's

grants office over the years, Raul further highlights the impact of institutional leadership on a

campus's grant activity. Specifically, Raul shared:

We have been so successful at landing grants that we've carried over like $40 million in

grants...The district chancellor finally said, "You know what, we need some organization

around these grants, and we need to provide more support, not only to our college but to

the other colleges, so that they could become just as successful as we've been in writing

those grants and securing and managing grants."…And that's because, again, we're

expanding, and we're relying more on grants to move, you know, very specific

initiatives, and we need more support.

Through this insight, Raul elevates the deep strategic thinking of his campus's leadership.

Mindful of this community college district's limited and likely declining public funding, senior

leadership provided Westside Community College more support, effectively capitalizing on the

campus's burgeoning success in grant acquisition.

Meanwhile, Gary at Southwest City University shared that, with shifts in leadership, his

university steadily expanded its grant-related infrastructure, specifically saying:

Southwest City University is a kind of a comprehensive 4-year with a number of master's degrees…Its focus has always been primarily a teaching institution, but the last couple of presidents have really tried to increase and ramp up the research side of the institution, so the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has kind of grown in response.

Beyond illustrating yet again how HPSAs, at least those in this study, seemingly have the financial resources to infrastructurally expand, Gary acknowledges how leadership, specifically the president, often drive this expansion. More specifically, interested in increasing the university's grant portfolio, the president strategically allocated resources to this area. Again, most HPSAs talked about such infrastructural expansion.

While Garrett, Raul, and Gary help demonstrate how campus leaders can facilitate an HSI's grant efforts, participants indicated that not all leaders support this work. Indeed, some leaders do not allocate the resources necessary for an institution to competitively pursue extramural funding. For instance, when describing competitive Title V applicants, Kevin at West State University alluded to this point, saying:

I was sort of a maverick, saying we're going after this. I was championing [Title V] back in the day, which is important. But the challenge is, you have to have institutional support, and those institutions that support mavericks are the ones that are the most successful.

Basically, Kevin asserts that an HSI's competitiveness within this arena depends on supportive leadership. More specifically, he suggests that HSIs with unsupportive leaders who underfund or deprioritize grant-seeking efforts are less competitive for Title V funding than those whose leaders support "mavericks," presumably by providing them resources like money, time, and expert grant writers. In this way, Kevin importantly questions whether all HSIs experience the

benefit of having such supportive institutional leadership, bringing forward another source of inequity within this competition.

Grant-Seeking Priorities

In addition to resource allocation, participants across HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants all pointed out how campus leaders further influence an HSI's competitiveness for Title V funding by prioritizing, incentivizing, and rewarding certain opportunities and work. Although participants across the three groups spoke to this point, HPUAs and Non-Applicants' accounts particularly demonstrated how an institution's leadership might undermine a campus's grant-seeking efforts. To follow, I share participants' three main insights on institutional leadership's role in grant seeking, which I describe as (a) *"It All Depends on the Head Administration"* (Alisha) and (b) *"We've Really Never Been that Institutional [Grant] Go-getter Type School"* (Yvette), and (c) *The Passing Up of "Exclusionary" Grants*

"It All Depends on the Head Administration"

In describing their institution's grant-seeking priorities and how their campus decides on the focus of their grant proposals, participants across the three groups all stressed the impact of college leadership on institutions' overall grant activity. Collectively, they suggested that the extent of a college or university's success in grant acquisition "all depends on the head administration" (Alisha). By extension, some participants implied that their institution's limited success in these efforts reflects their leadership's, at times, misguided direction.

Reflecting on her experience working in research development and administration, Alisha at Northeast Urban College perhaps acknowledged most directly the tremendous power campus leaders wield on grant acquisition. Specifically, Alisha stated:

I think it really all depends on the administration of the college. If they feel that a grant

will help bring something to the college, they will go after it. If they don't feel that way,

they won't, so everything, *it all depends on the head administration*…We see that where

we are right now because a lot of people don't believe in, um, like the person in charge,

he didn't believe in research and didn't think research is important, so the faculty don't

go after research—not all of them anyway. (Italics added for emphasis)

In effect, Alisha firmly believes that a college or university's senior leadership directs the

campus's grant-seeking agenda and priorities. In the case of Northeast Urban College, its head

administration's de-prioritization of research, according to Alisha, discourages faculty from

actively pursuing grants to fund their research. Alisha's colleague, Yvette, felt similarly about

the college's present leadership, further commenting on the "shocking" difference she has seen at

the college over the years following transitions in only a few key senior leadership roles.

Ultimately, she stressed how the college's current senior leadership impacts her office, saying:

When you have people in positions that are sort of, you know, I'm here to do my job and

not really look for, not have a vision or goals for an institution, or have research in that

vision or goal, then, you know, I feel like our hands are tied. There's just so much we can

do, and that's how I've been feeling for a very long time. Like what else can we do? I

don't know how else to promote research anymore. So yes, leadership has everything to

do with it. We can only do so much…The people on top have to do something.

In other words, as someone who works in the college's grants office, Yvette is a bit exasperated

with senior leadership's underemphasis of research development, explaining that her office "can

only do so much" to promote grant activity across the campus. In short, Alisha and Yvette both

indicated that the "people on top['s]" actions, or in this case, inaction, stunt the growth of the

college's grant portfolio. While Alisha and Yvette were especially explicit about how leaders affect an institution's grant-seeking competitiveness, many participants across the three groups supported this notion.

Like Alisha and Yvette, Carmen was also clear that senior leadership set institutions' grant priorities and even direct grant proposals at times. Specifically, when asked what institutional needs, if any, have pushed the college to pursue Title V funds, Carmen responded:

> This is like a chicken or egg thing...Do you think of something because the funding is available, and this is what we want? Or, is it that, gosh, "We really need this, so let's go after that funding?" It's kind of a little bit of both…[Like] a lot of HSIs...we have a lot of needs that we could address...what we focus on depends on a lot of things...Some years when we've applied, it has been more direction from the top...where the administration sees a real need…and that's what you go in for, or it could come from the faculty and from the dean, saying, "Look, this is what we need." And then, the administration agreeing, "Yes, lets do that."

In effect, Carmen explains that "it could go either way," meaning that the core idea reflected in the college's Title V grant proposal could come from either faculty and lower-level administrators or from senior leadership. However, her phrasing is deliberate; she indicates that upper administration still ultimately decides, saying "lets do that" or not.

Beyond recognizing leadership's sway on to outright control over an institution's grant activity, some participants openly registered their disagreement with or subtlety critiqued their campus leaders' approach to and prioritization of grant seeking. For example, Alex explained that he wished West Mountainside Community College would approach grant seeking, saying:

We need to figure out if [a grant, including Title V] aligns with where we are as an institution and where we want to be as an institution. And so, I think that a lot of opportunities might seem great, and we have definitely pursued grants that I have not agreed with because the college's senior leadership has decided that's what we need to do. But if it doesn't align with where we are and the work that we're already doing, then it will just add to what we have to do, and it will make our lives much more difficult.

And so, while stressing (as did multiple participants) that campus leaders should go after opportunities that directly align with the college's vision and strategic plan, he admits that the college does not consistently do this. Instead, senior leadership occasionally pursues grants that risk being subtractive rather than beneficial to the institution.

Reflected through Yvette, Alisha, Alex, and Carmen's comments, Non-Applicants and HPUAs, respectively, were mindful of how institutional leadership can and does influence—for both good and bad—their respective college's grant-related activities. As alluded to earlier when addressing leaders' role in resource allocation, HPSAs also recognized this point. For example, contemplating her nearly 30 years of experience in research development at West Waterside Community College, Diana commented:

It's really about who are the administrators...at each college and what they want to pursue, you know, what the chancellor wants to pursue. Sometimes, we're just told that they want to have this funding no matter what, and I don't even know that they really understand the program or what the funding's for, so there's different perspectives and views on going after funding. And just from the grant department perspective, we would definitely try to send out funding opportunities that we felt were a good fit for each

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college and would have good outcomes for student success, and capacity building, and

stuff like that. But some people just say, "Get that money."

Thus, in line with the overwhelming consensus among participants, Diana acknowledges that an

HSI's senior leadership ultimately defines the institution's grant-seeking agenda, sometimes

pushing programs they do not "really understand." Considering the importance of fully

understanding a funder's priorities—a point which many participants raised—Diana's insight

here is notable. She highlights how an HSI's leadership can potentially derail the institution's

success in grant acquisition by seeking funding opportunities that might not align with

institutional goals or that the institution may be ill-prepared to competitively pursue given its

limited understanding of the program. While participants collectively agreed that an institution's

grant activity depends on senior leaders, it stands to reason that all HSIs are not similarly led,

potentially contributing to the varying levels of success among HSIs in securing Title V funding.

"We've Really Never Been that Institutional [Grant] Go-getter Type School"

Across interviews, participants evidenced that leadership's priorities and incentive

structures partly shape what opportunities the institution actually pursues. Moreover, differences

among HSIs in terms of these priorities and incentives mean that HSIs also have varied grant-

seeking orientations. Specifically, while some HSIs heavily prioritize research-based grants,

others focus on institutional grants, such as Title V, or on a combination of distinct types of

funding. In particular, in discussing who primarily seeks grants at their institution (i.e., faculty,

administrators, or staff) and their campus's main external funding sources, multiple institutional

agents at Non-Applicants institutions (e.g., Yvette, Alisha, Jacky, and Sarah) revealed that their

respective college or university underemphasizes institutional awards. Briefly put, a set of Non-

Applicants are not the "institutional [grant] go-getter type of school" (Yvette), making them largely uninterested opportunities such as Title V.

Representing some Non-Applicants' understanding of grant seeking was Jacky at Northeast City College. Reflecting on the crux of her work in research administration over the last 30 years, Jacky summarized her core responsibility as "help[ing] faculty grow their research career." Furthermore, as she described her typical workday, Jacky suggested that Northeast City College predominantly—if not exclusively—frames grant seeking as a faculty function: grants expand faculty members' research activity and productivity. Given this perspective on grant seeking, her office does not proactively search or apply for institutional grants, such as Title V, despite Jacky and campus leadership's awareness of the college's HSI designation. Furthermore, addressing HSI-related grants and Title V, in particular, Jacky indicated that she did not anticipate the college applying for this funding, explaining that she was unaware of any Latinx-identified faculty member familiar with or interested in pursuing this opportunity.

Notably, Jacky's depiction of Northeast City College resonated with both Yvette and Alisha' s portrayal of Northeast Urban College's overall orientation to grant seeking. Like Jacky, Yvette and Alisha explained that their office identifies, shares, and processes mostly only research-based awards for faculty. For instance, when asked to provide an overview of her office's main responsibilities, Alisha answered:

> *We help professors seek funding for their research*. We help them build their budgets. We help them with their proposals...We submit their proposal. Sometimes, we help them put their proposals together, and when the proposal comes in and it's awarded, then we maintain it; we do it from the cradle to the grave. (Italics added for emphasis)

Like Jacky, Alisha frames her office's purpose as supporting faculty in getting research-based

funding. Speaking to this very tendency, Yvette keenly observed, "I feel that we've really never

been that institutional type go-getter type school for some reason or another. That's just that has

not been the case." Instead, Northeast Urban College focuses on capturing research-related grant

dollars, although as noted earlier, Yvette and Alisha also both felt that the college's senior

leadership under-prioritized these efforts too. Ultimately, Jacky, Yvette, and Alisha point out

how an institution's grant-seeking priorities—ones largely shaped by the institution's

leadership—come to bear down on its competitiveness for distinct types of funding (i.e.,

research- vs. institutional-based awards) and demonstrate that not all HSIs are similarly

interested in seeking institutional grants, such as Title V.

The Passing Up of "Exclusionary" Grants

Like Jacky, Yvette, and Alisha, Sarah at Southwest State University suggested that the

university prioritizes grants intended to support faculty research. In fact, this university has an

army of people dedicated to this priority, employing well over 100 full-time employees across

multiple units and offices toward this precise end. Beyond a limited focus on institutional grants,

Sarah offered additional insight into how leaders intercede in grant seeking, indicating that, in

terms of institutional awards, her university's senior leadership believes in pursuing *inclusive*

grants. Specifically, Sarah noted that her university values inclusivity, saying: "Southwest State

University's design aspirations involve being inclusive and being defined by who we include,

rather than who we exclude, so there's definitely that focus of wanting to be diverse and being

able to serve these minority populations." And yet, college leaders are hesitant to pursue Title V

grants—ones intended to serve Latinx students—partly because they question whether this

university, comprised of multiple demographically diverse branch campuses, as a whole, is an

HSI. Furthermore, Sarah explained that senior leadership's current policy is to combine all branch campus data to create one holistic institutional narrative. Since the university's sizable Latinx student body disproportionately enrolls in only a couple of the university's branch campuses, this policy obscures these students' presence across the university. Given this policy and college leaders' notion of inclusivity, Southwest State University prioritizes grants that serve everyone, not ones they view as benefiting a particular student demographic, such as Title V.

In the end, the case of Southwest State University evidences how an HSI's grant-seeking priorities, rather than its institutional capacity, might explain why an HSI opts out of this opportunity. Furthermore, this case illustrates how HSIs vary in terms of their institutional leadership and, more so, how these differences come to matter in the context of grant acquisition. Whereas some leaders prime their HSIs to competitively pursue Title V grants, some do not.

Recapping Institutional Leadership

Altogether, this study's 29 participants called attention to how institutional leadership plays a pivotal part in shaping an HSI's grant activities in a few primary ways. In brief, they discussed how institutional leaders influence a campus's success in securing external funding by (a) controlling or significantly influencing resource allocation and (b) prioritizing or incentivizing certain types of funding opportunities over others. Thus, while an HSI's institutional capacity, actions, and knowledge impact its competitiveness for Title V grants, participants astutely pointed out that an HSI's senior leadership also strongly influences which opportunities an HSI pursues. That is, in largely setting an institution's grant-seeking priorities, campus leaders affect the extent to which an HSI engages—or not—in this competition. More aptly, as illustrated by Northeast City College, Northeast Urban College, and Southwest State

University, an established, well-staffed grant office matters little if leadership's priorities dictate or make it so that these offices do not pursue institutional grants such as Title V.

Summary of The Findings

Reflecting on their experience, or lack thereof, with the Title V Program, the 29 institutional agents across the 17 HSIs in this study positioned four key organizational conditions as instrumental to an HSI's competitiveness in the Title V Program. These conditions include an HSI's (a) *institutional capacity* (i.e., systematic characteristics, financial resource, and mission), (b) *institutional actions* (i.e., campus connections, advanced preparation, and campus environment), (c) *institutional knowledge*, and (d) *institutional leadership* (i.e., leaders sway over resource allocation and the institution's grant-seeking priorities). As expected, an HSI's resource endowments play a significant role in its ability to competitively seek Title V grants. Notably, however, these 29 institutional agents suggested that these resources extend beyond the campus's grant-related infrastructure or financial resources. Other resources, which they described as instrumental to Title V competitiveness, include an HSI's (a) connections with peer HSIs and the broader network; (b) overall preparedness for grant seeking; (c) campus environment, particularly the extent to which it is collaborative rather than competitive; (d) depth of knowledge about Title V; and (e) senior leadership.

These resources, in particular, are worth emphasizing because they often elude quantitative measure. While IPEDS collects extensive data on postsecondary institutions' systemic characteristics (i.e., institutional control, type, and size) and finances, it cannot readily capture, for example, a college or university's campus connections, preparedness for grant-seeking, institutional knowledge, or grant-seeking priorities. And yet, the institutional agents in this study make sense of their competitiveness for these grants considering such resources. This

understanding, in turn, informs how institutional agents at these campuses act. In other words, while the descriptive statistics provided in Chapter 3 on HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants show few discernable differences among these groups, the participants in the study illustrate, quite convincingly, the stark differences among these HSIs, which arguably shape these institutions' competitiveness for Title V funding. With this in mind, I now turn to my discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As laid out in Chapter 1, Congress enacted Title V—a program that competitively awards multi-year, capacity-building grants to HSIs—with the express purpose of remedying these institutions' historical neglect. However, with demographic shifts, the number of HSIs has significantly outpaced congressional appropriations to Title V (Santiago et al., 2020), spurring demands for further federal investment in this program. Amid criticisms that Congress underfunds Title V and that states underinvest in HSIs, this study complicates framing the problem of Title V as only an issue of scarcity. Specifically, the purpose of this critical qualitative study is to provide a more nuanced understanding of Title V, highlighting, in particular, how this competitive grant program perpetuates inequity among HSIs. With this aim, I specifically asked:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants?

    a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

To answer these questions, I spoke with 29 institutional agents at 17 HSIs across the United States. Based on their responses and reflections, I identified four significant insights in terms of Title V competitiveness. As described in Chapter 4, participants positioned an institution's capacity, actions, knowledge, and leadership as instrumental to grant acquisition. In doing so, however, they point to equity-related issues inherent in Title V—a competitive program informed by neoliberal and meritocratic logics. In other words, despite growing attention to how this pot of money is shrinking compared to the pool of potential beneficiaries, my findings complicate the scarcity rhetoric surrounding Title V by revealing how this

competition intentionally and unintentionally breeds inequity among HSIs, especially amid

HSIs' increasing diversification.

Bearing in mind this study's purpose, I contemplated the connection between the four

main insights I identified and my conceptual lens. I concluded that an HSI's competitiveness for

Title V funding could be understood via the logic of meritocracy, social equity theory, and

aspects of relational inequality theory (RIT). More importantly, these connections shed light on

sources of inequity of this policy. Accordingly, I first interpret the findings given this study's

theoretical grounding. Then, I provide recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Interpretation of Findings

Rather than attending to each of the four findings individually, I organized this section

into three main parts. First, I discuss how participants associated HSIs with specific

characteristics with the ability to competitively seek Title V grants and consider what this means

for the equity of the program. Second, I address some of the ways that HPSAs, HPUAs, and

Non-Applicants both uphold and upend Title V's meritocratic assumptions. Bringing all these

findings together, I end this section by troubling the prevailing understanding of Title V as

merely a scarce resource, explaining how this policy both actively and passively engenders

inequity given HSIs' unequal organizational conditions. To note, considering the purpose of this

study, throughout this chapter, I interpret the findings considering implications for equity—both

presently and moving forward given HSIs' growth and evolving profile.

The Competitive Applicant: Questions for the Equity of Title V

As explained in Chapter 3, a core assumption of RIT revolves around categorization:

people (and organizations) instinctively maximize group differences, holding distinct

understandings and expectations of each socially constructed group (Tomaskovic-Devey &

Avent-Holt, 2019). In line with this assumption, participants sorted HSIs, prescribing specific meanings and expectations to distinct groups (e.g., Hispanic-Serving community colleges and Hispanic-Serving research institutions). As detailed in Chapter 4, participants viewed institutions with certain characteristics or qualities as competitive grant-seekers. Specifically, HPUAs often described HSIs with particular systemic characteristics and institutional missions as advantageously positioned to seek Title V funds. For instance, some institutional agents, namely those at private HSIs, suspected that the ED favored public HSIs in the review and selection of awardees. Other participants fixated more on institutional size, invariably equating bigger with better. And yet, others concentrated on institutions' financial assets, categorically viewing "rich" HSIs as stronger Title V applicants than their comparably more resource-limited peers. Lastly, HPUAs generally identified teaching-forward HSIs as less competitive for Title V funding than their research-focused peers.

Importantly, despite their convictions about the competitive advantage held by HSIs with specific characteristics, HPSAs and HPUAs were undeterred in their pursuit of this funding, Yet, given their understanding of an HSI's competitiveness for Title V grants, many participants, particularly those at HPSA and HPUA HSIs, openly debated or more inadvertently called into question the equity of this federal program. At the same time, I also noticed that HPSAs' and Non-Applicants' experiences and insights complicated the image of the "competitive Title V applicant." Specifically, their accounts trouble the assumption that HSIs with specific systemic characteristics and institutional missions are categorically more or less competitive Title V applicants. Even more, HPSUAs, HPSAs, and Non-Applicants' divergent understandings of competitiveness raise important considerations for the equity of Title V, which I address in the following sections: (a)*"Competitive" Systemic Characteristics and Considerations for Equity*

and (b) *"Competitive" Institutional Missions and Considerations for Equity*, and (c) *The Inequity of the Stratified and Hierarchical System of U.S. Higher Education.*

"Competitive" Systemic Characteristics and Considerations for Equity

As outlined in Chapter 4, participants frequently mentioned HSIs' systemic characteristics (i.e., institutional control, type, and size), viewing these characteristics as defining features of an HSI's competitiveness within the grant landscape. However, my analysis suggested that unilaterally conflating these characteristics with such competitiveness is misguided. To follow, I first discuss how HPSAs and Non-Applicants upend the assumption about the advantage held by 4-year institutions. Then, I address the relationship between institutional size and an HSI's competitiveness for Title V funding, especially considering the equity of this "meritocratic" program.

Questioning the 4-Year Advantage. HPUAs, in particular, tended to consign grant-getting competitiveness to 4-year institutions, seeing such HSIs as larger, more infrastructurally complex, and better financially resourced and, thus, better outfitted to seek grants than smaller HSIs with less developed structures in place. Several participants, for instance, commented on how such institutions typically have the necessary financial means to contract expensive grant-writing experts. And overall, HPSAs and Non-Applicants adamantly agreed with HPUAs: access to skilled grant writers is paramount to win these awards. However, they did not as readily or rigidly connect systemic characteristics, including institutional type, with an HSI's competitiveness in this arena. Instead, these HSIs, especially HPSAs, often attributed success in this competition to HSIs' actions (e.g., campus connections, advanced preparation, and collaborative campus environments); institutional knowledge; and leadership.

At first, perennial winners' limited attention to the potential impact of systemic characteristics on an HSI's grant activity might seem odd, perhaps leading some to surmise that these HSIs are less attuned to or concerned by the profound differences among institutional types within the architecture of U.S. higher education. However, upon closer consideration, this group's underemphasis of systemic characteristics, particularly institutional type, in relation to grant acquisition is reasonable. Four of the seven HPSAs in this study are Hispanic-Serving community colleges. Thus, these participants understandably do not equate competitiveness in this arena with 4-year HSIs; they repeatedly win these grants, undoubtedly beating out scores of 4-year HSIs in the process.

Additionally, among the seven HPSAs in this study, only West State University and Southeast College have well-staffed grants offices; the remaining five institutions are infrastructurally less complex in this regard. For example, Pacific Northwest Community College has an informal system, relying on a mix of administrators, faculty, and staff to identify and pursue funding opportunities. Both West City College and West Waterside Community College have only one staff member focused on grant acquisition. For instance, West Waterside Community College relies on Tricia, who, among other duties, is responsible for the college's grants efforts. But even with this limited infrastructure, West Waterside Community College has pooled about $40 million in sponsored programs and research. While recognizing differences between 2- and 4-year institutions, Raul credited the college's impressive portfolio to its keen grantisanship skills and institutional knowledge of Title V—expertise it intentionally developed to compensate for the inadequate state support it receives. Altogether, given their experience, HPSAs generally placed less weight on institutional type, size, and grant-related infrastructure, highlighting instead how specific actions, knowledge, and leadership enable HSIs to win these

federal grants. In brief, perennial winners suggested that collectively these conditions give them an edge in this competition, empowering them to amass millions in Title V funding.

These Hispanic-Serving community colleges' success record subverts the assumption that competitiveness for Title V grants neatly conforms to sectorial lines. Although many 4-year HSIs are likely fierce contenders for this money given their generally more expansive infrastructure and greater financial resources, this does not inherently rule out community colleges. As shown by the HPSAs in this study, some Hispanic-Serving community colleges, namely those with deep institutional knowledge of Title V, repeatedly win these awards. Accordingly, the HPSAs in this study suggest that institutional type may be an imperfect indicator of an HSI's ability to secure this federal funding. Also, elevating the invaluable role of institutional knowledge and skilled writers in this process, HPSAs further suggest that staff size alone does not fully reflect the competitiveness of an HSI's grant-related infrastructure. In this way, they point out that more components than traditionally considered speak to the competitiveness of a Title V applicant.

Several of the Non-Applicants in this study, specifically Northeast Urban College, Northeast City College, and Southwest State University, likewise trouble the assumption that 4-year HSIs are intrinsically more likely to succeed in this competition. More precisely, while participants implied that structural limitations hinder HSIs' grant-seeking efforts and may explain why eligible HSIs do not participate in this program, this set of Non-Applicants challenges this view. These three 4-year, public institutions have established grants offices. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 4, Southwest State University employs upwards of 100 full-time staff members for grant-related work. Nevertheless, these three institutions have yet to enter this arena—a choice that Sarah, Jacky, Alisha, and Yvette each attributed to campus leadership. Specifically, these participants revealed how an institution's grant-seeking priorities—which

senior leaders primarily set—inform which opportunities an HSI pursues. Moreover, they suggest that institutions mainly focused on external funding for research may opt out of this opportunity altogether since Title V is a capacity-building, institutional award.

For clarity, my point is not that all large, 4-year HSIs are less inclined to apply for institutional grants. Quite the contrary, many 4-year colleges and universities, such as West State University, significantly invest in pursuing institutional grants. For example, in a recent press release, the University of California, Santa Cruz,[66] an Hispanic-Serving research institution and member of the Association of American Universities,[67] reported garnering over $11 million in federal grants for student success and equity initiatives (UC Newsroom, 2019). Similarly, Florida International University's Office of Research and Economic Development (n.d.) indicated that in 2020 the university submitted 1,212 proposals and obtained 1,016 awards, collectively worth just shy of $197 million—a sizable portion of which funded institutional efforts, not research activities. For instance, the university received a $1.3 million Student Support Services[68] grant to support tutoring, financial aid advice, and professional and academic mentoring (Jaramillo, 2020). In short, my point is that HSIs that heavily prioritize sponsored research in place of institutional awards may be less likely to participate in the Title V Program. As such, assuming that Non-Applicants embody this field's out-groups seems inappropriate or at least misrepresents this group as a whole. According to RIT, in-groups use their privileged position within the field to push other groups out—to exclude them from accessing resources or opportunities (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019). However, in this case, neither HPSAs nor other

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[66] As point of clarity, institutions identified by name are not in this study.
[67] The Association of American Universities is an exclusive group of 65 leading private and public research universities in the United States and Canada.
[68] The Student Support Services Program is 1 of 8 TRIO programs the ED runs. This specific grant competition aims to increase recipients' college retention and graduation rates (Student Support Services Program, 2020).

groups of HSIs pushed institutions such as Northeast Urban College, Northeast City College, and Southwest State University out of this exchange. Instead, these 4-year institutions simply decided not to enter this competition for varied reasons.

This finding also beckons a larger conversation about the problems with this policy, especially when considering issues of equity. As discussed in the following sections, Title V undoubtedly has various sources of inequity. However, my conversations with institutional agents at Northeast Urban College, Northeast City College, and Southwest State University also suggest that campus leaders constrain HSIs' opportunities too. For instance, by prioritizing research grants at the expense of institutional ones, leaders may inadvertently prevent their campuses from accessing and benefiting from this federal support. By implicating HSI leaders in this way, this set of Non-Applicants complicates attributing fault or blame exclusively to this policy.

At the same time, however, it bears reiterating that Congress established a competition to meritocratically allocate a finite resource to these institutions, many of which have been long underserved. That is, despite explicitly recognizing HSI's chronic underfunding, Congress did not automatically provide HSIs a preset dollar amount; instead, they choose to have HSIs vie against one another for a limited and increasingly scarce pool of money. As I stress later in this chapter, such an arrangement invariably leads to inequity among HSIs given their disparate organizational conditions.

Questioning the Advantage of Institutional Size. In this process of sorting HSIs based on their competitiveness for grant funding, participants also highlighted institutional size, describing larger HSIs as more competitive for Title V grants than their smaller peers. Indeed, there are reasons to suspect that an HSI's size may be advantageous in grant acquisition. For one,

the HPUAs in this study are considerably small campuses. Specifically, while Midwest Multi-

Campus Community College and Northeast Private College enroll around 10,000 students, the

remaining three HPUAs enroll fewer than 4,500 students. In contrast, except for Pacific

Northwest Community College, which enrolls about 2,000 undergraduates, the remaining

HPSAs in this study are mid- to large-sized institutions. Their enrollments range from

approximately 11,000 to over 50,000 students. Though only a sample of all Title V applicants,

the difference between these two groups of HSIs in terms of size provides preliminary support

for participants' conflation of bigger with better, suggesting that larger institutions may, indeed,

have greater capacity to seek Title V grants. In other words, the differences between HPUAs and

HPSAs' size, on average, in this study affirm participants' notion about the positive relationship

between an HSI's institutional size and its competitiveness for Title V funding. Accordingly,

participants may be correct in believing that the ED attempts "to get the most bang for [its]

buck" (Carmen), allocating these grants in a utilitarian manner.[69]

Existing research further substantiates participants' assumptions about the effect of

institutional size on grant acquisition. For example, using logistic regression models, Aguilar-

Smith and Yun (2019) analyzed HSIs' application and receipt of Title V grants from 2009–2017,

finding that large HSIs with large Latinx enrollment shares had slightly better odds of applying

for and winning a Title V grant. On the one hand, their finding may be a welcomed sign for the

equity of Title V, with reviewers favoring big HSIs that heavily enroll Latinx-identified

students—places where this money may hopefully benefit more Latinx students. On the other

hand, Aguilar-Smith and Yun's work also confirms several participants' concerns about their

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[69] Generally associated with philosophers Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Henry Sidgwick, the *principle of utility* essentially maintains that individuals should do whatever yields the greatest overall results—the most well-being—among possible courses of action.

institutions' relatively small size, suggesting that small HSIs, even those overwhelmingly educating Latinx students (e.g., Midwest Private Aspiring University), have slightly poorer odds of obtaining this federal funding.

Altogether, this study's findings and existing empirical evidence (see, e.g., Aguilar-Smith & Yun, 2019) bring forward an equity-relevant issue. Certain constituencies, for example, would argue that should HSIs like Midwest Private Aspiring University not receive their "fair share" of Title V dollars, then this program is functioning inequitably. However, others would likely applaud the ED for apportioning these grants to large HSIs, particularly ones that enroll a sizeable share of Latinx-identified students, seeing such an approach as the most equitable way of allocating these public dollars. Irrespective of one's position on the matter, should the patterns that Aguilar-Smith and Yun (2019) identified hold or become more pronounced over time, this means that small HSIs—institutions likely to be especially resource-limited—may benefit less and less from this program. Ultimately, in light of their work and the findings of this study, it is worth closely examining the impact of institutional size on an HSI's competitiveness for this funding and seriously considering how privileging larger institutions might harm smaller HSIs and the communities they serve.

"Competitive" Institutional Missions and Considerations for Equity

Among HSIs' many differences, these colleges and universities have varied institutional missions, with some more focused on research and others more so on teaching (Núñez et al., 2016). As shared in Chapter 4, participants recognized this difference, often distinguishing HSIs by their institutional missions and holding different assumptions about teaching-focused HSIs and Hispanic-Serving research universities. Specifically, many HPUAs expected HSIs with teaching-forward missions—as a categorical group—to be less competitive applicants than their

research-focused peers. Even Raul supported this understanding, contending that West Waterside Community College—an HPSA—acts and looks like a private research institution although it is a public, 2-year college.

A breadth of scholarship supports such an understanding—that research-focused institutions are more active in grant seeking and, arguably, more strategically oriented, prepared, and equipped for this work than teaching-focused institutions. For example, in their study on faculty productivity, Townsend and Rosser (2007) explained that research universities, in particular, heavily push faculty members to not only publish but to bring in external grant funding to subsidize their salaries and programmatic needs. Meanwhile, surveying 196 randomly selected administrators at roughly 400 Journalism and Mass Communication programs, Beard (2004) found that institutional classification statistically predicted the extent of a program's grant activity. More specifically, Beard (2004) found that programs at doctoral-awarding institutions (i.e., research universities) were far more likely to participate in sponsored research or grant seeking than both master's- and bachelor-awarding institutions (i.e., more teaching-focused institutions). Relatedly, in their content analysis of faculty vitae from 18 institutions, Morton and Beard (2005) found that grant activity significantly differed by institutions' Carnegie Classification, indicating that the more research-focused the institution, the higher its mean number of external grants and external grant dollars.

Given their founding and guiding institutional missions, community colleges and 4-year regional comprehensive institutions heavily prioritize teaching. For instance, studies show that community college faculty, whether permanent/tenure-stream or contingent, typically teach upwards of five courses per semester and devote most of their time to instruction and course preparation (Cohen et al., 2014; Murray, 2010; Townsend & Rosser, 2007; Townsend &

Twombly, 2007). Furthermore, based on the NCES's now discontinued National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, faculty at comprehensive, 4-year publics and privates spent, on average, 65% and 68% of their time on teaching and only 15% and 11% of their time on research-related activities, respectively (NCES, 2009). And at public 2-years, teaching constituted 78% of faculty members' work profile, whereas research-related duties represented a mere 3.7% (NCES, 2009).

In contrast to community colleges and 4-year regional/comprehensive institutions, research-focused institutions strongly expect, incentivize, and reward research productivity, and grants typically enable such productivity. Illustratively, NCES (2009) indicated that approximately half of all faculty at public and private research institutions committed less than 4 hours a week to teaching-related duties, devoting instead about a third of their time to research and scholarly pursuits. To note, such pursuits include seeking external funding (Hemmings & Kay, 2010). Taken together, this research reflects how an institution's guiding mission shapes its priorities and, in turn, its employees' work profiles. Even more, this literature lends preliminary support for the position that Hispanic-Serving research institutions might be better primed for or more competitive in grant acquisition than their peers with teaching-forward missions.

And yet, a growing body of literature and many of the HPSAs in this study again trouble this assumption. In terms of the literature, recent studies show that community college faculty engage in scholarly learning or applied, action-based research (see, e.g., Baker et al., 2017; Martinez, 2019; Palmer, 2015; Terosky & Gonzales, 2016). Similarly, studies increasingly document how 4-year regional comprehensive institutions—places traditionally focused on teaching—have pushed for greater research productivity in response to their growing competition for students and increasing pursuit of prestige (see, e.g., Gonzales, 2012; O'Meara, 2007). Since grants serve as a conduit for increased research productivity (see, e.g.,

Benavente et al., 2012; Chudnovsky et al., 2008; Dundar & Darrell, 1998; Gulbrandsen & Smeby, 2005; Kelchtermans & Veugelers, 2011), this emerging body of scholarship attests not only to the notion of mission creep or drift but points to how an institution's mission might, over time, convey less about its grant activity. Indeed, the HPSA community colleges and master's-awarding college in this study illustrate this point. These HPSAs primarily focus on teaching; yet, they have still competitively sought and successfully pooled an impressive sum of Title V dollars.

All this said, Title V is an institutional award, not a research grant. Thus, while the literature provides ample evidence of how an institution's prioritization of research productivity often goes hand-in-hand with grant seeking, these studies almost exclusively refer to research grants and/or industry funding. Furthermore, while numerous reports document the differences in revenue streams by institutional control and level (see, e.g., Hinrichs, 2017; NCES, 2019d), they seldom, if ever, explicitly present the data considering institutional mission. Also, even IPEDS, which collects extensive data on U.S. postsecondary institutions, only provides the total sum each institution receives in capital grants and gifts, non-operating grants, and operating grants, which makes it difficult to parse out how much money each institution specifically obtains from research, industry, and institutional grants. Given the limitations of current data sources, it is unclear if or to what extent an institution's mission explains its competitiveness for external funding generally or for institutional grants like Title V more specifically.

Nevertheless, should HPUAs' concerns prove true and Hispanic-Serving research institutions hold—or come to have—an advantage in this competition, then this has serious equity implications given the current policy. As a reminder, Title V maintains that all HSIs,

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regardless of their systemic characteristics or mission, are equally eligible for this funding.[70]

Hence, HSIs' ongoing diversification (Santiago et al., 2020), particularly the projected increase

in the number of Hispanic-Serving research institutions, may engender inequity in the

competition and, thus, in the distribution of this federal funding.

The Inequity of the Stratified and Hierarchical System of U.S. Higher Education

Despite HPUAs and HPSAs,' at times, divergent notions on the impact of systemic

characteristics and institutional mission on an HSI's competitiveness for grant funding, it is

essential to recognize that the U.S. system of higher education stratifies and unequally resources

institutions by these qualities. As explained in Chapter 3, extensive literature documents unequal

patterns of public investment and private giving among institutional types, with institutions

positioned at the top of the hierarchy (i.e., research universities) benefiting from greater public

support than those positioned at the bottom (i.e., 2-year colleges) (NCES, 2019d). To help

contextualize this disparity, The Center for American Progress reported that annually 2-year

colleges "receive roughly two-fifths of the revenue that four-year institutions receive—$52

billion compared with $130 billion" (Yuen, 2020, para. 12).[71]

Importantly, institutions' total revenue affects the extent to which they can invest in

students, staffing, amenities, and services, among other areas. Their historical and present

financial resources also shape their internal structures, thereby affecting, for example, the

extensiveness of their grant-related infrastructure. Subsequently, considering the unequal funding

patterns between institutional types, 4-year publics, especially research universities, are generally

larger and infrastructurally more complex than 2-year colleges and private 4-years with limited

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[70] As a point of clarity, all HSI are equally eligible for this funding so long as the institution is not currently a Title V or Title III Part A awardee (Hegji, 2017).

[71] To note, since this figure excludes federal research funding and auxiliary services, Yuen anticipates that this gap is actually much wider.

endowments. More precisely, while institutions in the former group typically have fairly well-staffed and established grants offices, the latter likely rely on an informal system, one employee, or an understaffed office to handle grant-related work. And the HSIs in this study reflect this tendency. For example, comparatively more well-funded HSIs, such as Southwest State University and West State University, have fully staffed grants offices. In contrast, significantly underfunded HSIs, such as West Mountainside Community College, Midwest Private Aspiring University, and Midwest Community College, operate without fully functioning grants offices.

Although most of the HPSAs in this study do not have expansive grant-seeking structures, their success record does not mean that HSIs with established, well-staffed grants offices are less competitive for Title V funding. Actually, this is highly unlikely. As detailed by each of the 29 participants and supported by the literature (see, e.g., Mason & Learned, 2006), such offices build relationships with sponsors, actively identify and evaluate funding opportunities, and assist, albeit to varying degrees, with proposal development and submission. Therefore, well-staffed, well-resourced grants offices surely aid an HSI in winning grants; they have greater internal capacity to apply for grants and reapply in the advent of failure.

In the end, this study complicates the image of the competitive Title V applicant, with many of the HPSAs in this study demonstrating that competitiveness in this arena cannot be reduced to an HSI's institutional type, size, and mission. And yet, given that the U.S. system of higher education's stratifies and unequally resources institutions by these precise characteristics, I worry that these perennial winners may represent institutions that have overcome incredible odds—outsmarting the system with their deep institutional knowledge of Title V. Furthermore, these HSIs' exceptional success may be a product of the times since it was only recently that research-intensive universities (e.g., Florida International University and the University of

California, Santa Barbara) started becoming HSIs and eligible for this federal funding (Marin, 2019; Martinez & Garcia, 2020).

As explained in Chapter 3, although I do not see structures as inherently deterministic, much evidence supports that they profoundly define what is possible for people and organizations. Hence, in treating all HSIs the same, this policy overlooks that some HSIs, like Southwest State University, have an army of people working in research development and sponsored projects. In contrast, contending with a history of underinvestment (which can be understood as a structural barrier), other HSIs have no formal grants offices in place or severely understaffed ones. This structural difference among HSIs deserves attention, especially considering the slated growth of Hispanic-Serving research universities. Altogether, as Núñez (2017b) argues, discounting the diversity among HSIs is sure to adversely affect these institutions. By extension, in treating HSIs as a monolith, Title V risks underserving part of the population it originally set out to support.

Title V's Meritocratic Design: Upholding and Upending this Inequitable Logic

Participants' explicit notions about the equity of this program, their understanding of competitiveness, and their recommendations for improving Title V both support and subvert meritocracy. Accordingly, I discuss how participants (a) *uphold Title V's meritocratic and inequitable logic*. Then, I talk through how they challenged meritocracy's assumptions, explicitly discussing how they (b) *upend meritocracy's agentic premise*.

Upholding Title V's Meritocratic and Inequitable Logic

As explained in Chapter 3, meritocracy refers to arrangements that "equitably" award opportunities and resources to people (and organizations) based on their talent and effort rather than their social status and wealth (Alvarado, 2010; Liu, 2011; McNamee & Miller, 2009).

Taken at face value, meritocratic arrangements present as equitable, as they suggest greater access to the rewards traditionally reserved for the social elite. Bearing this in mind, I first discuss how a set of participants (a) *uphold meritocratic* views. Then, I explain how (b) *over-crediting institutional action* embraces meritocracy's core assumptions.

Upholding Meritocratic Views. First, as described in Chapter 4, participants held varying views on the equity of Title V. As a reminder, some described the policy as equitable. Others described it as either somewhat or entirely inequitable. Still, others were indecisive, neither portraying Title V as fair or unfair. Considering these varied perspectives, institutions' specific contexts and experiences seem to inform participants' understanding of this program's equity, with each group (i.e., HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants) and especially participants at the same institution mainly expressing similar views. For instance, most HPSAs either waffled, seemingly uneasy about labeling Title V either way or described the program itself as clear and transparent and, thus, fair in that way.

Benefitting enormously from this money, the fact that most institutional agents at HSPA HSIs do not perceive Title V as outright inequitable is understandable. The logic of meritocracy emphasizes individual agency, leading successful actors (i.e., HPSAs) to feel deserving of their rewards (i.e., Title V grants) (Baez, 2006; Hochschild, 1995; Liu, 2011). At Pacific Northwest Community College, Jeremiah is a prime illustration of this tendency, with his claims-making statement: "I don't know if it's fair or not. I would say our institution receiving it, I'd consider that fair." Thus, to Jeremiah and likely other institutional agents at HPSA institutions, Title V is equitable because they see their respective campuses as deserving of this funding. In line with RIT's notion of claims-making, these HSIs presumably view themselves as more deserving of this opportunity than other actors.

Additionally, even participants at HSPA institutions who shared some concerns about the equity of the program, such as Dominic, Benjamin, Gary, Linda, and Raul, did not imply that their respective campus's repeated success in this competition may be inequitable. Simply put, they did not view their institutions pooling this money at the expense of other HSIs as suggestive of any inequity. Instead, Dominic and Benjamin, for example, worried about relatively more well-resourced universities (e.g., the University of California, Irvine; the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the University of Illinois at Chicago) entering this competition and displacing institutions such as theirs. For instance, Benjamin shared:

> There's some institutions who have found themselves barely meeting the cutoff. And then, of course, they immediately try to capitalize on that, but they're otherwise fairly white institutions, majority-serving institutions with large endowments and upper-middle-class student body mixed in…*This seems to me fairly inappropriate*. Because if you compare [such institutions'] annual budget per student compared to, say, Northeast Liberal Arts College or most of the [Hispanic-Serving] community colleges…or any of these big, *true* Hispanic-Serving Institutions…it's just no comparison…Whatever program they want to build with Title V, they can easily afford to build that program themselves…They might even think that *they're becoming Hispanic-Serving* by doing that…[but] what they're really doing is taking limited funds away from institutions that don't have that money otherwise. (Italics added for emphasis)

In this way, Benjamin upholds HPUAs' image of the competitive Title V applicant. Moreover, he substantiates a persistent fear among some leaders of Hispanic-serving community colleges and admission-inclusive, 4-year HSIs about their prospect of obtaining Title V grants as more research universities *become* HSIs and enter this competition (Cortez, 2015). My point is not to

make light of their very real concerns; however, it is telling that these participants do not seem to readily question the merits of their success in this program. Indeed, Molly at West Waterside Community College was one of the only participants at an HPSA college that openly questioned how fair it is that her institution keeps winning these awards, saying she even "felt guilty" about it. In the end, while admitting that Title V is "probably not totally equitable," Molly concluded, "Do I like to win? Yes. I do." I highlight these participants' views, not because they directly affect the equitable allocation of this funding, but because they reveal how winners protect their success, believing that they genuinely earned it. Again, the logic meritocracy unfolds such that successful actors see their rewards as rightfully earned and deserved; their success is a testament to their effort and merit.

Meritocracy also functions such that unsuccessful actors (i.e., HPUAs) feel deserving of their failure (Hochschild, 1995; Liu, 2011). Indeed, a couple of participants at HPUA institutions suggested that their campus deserved its limited success in this program. For example, reflecting on her university's failed Title V proposals, Mary at Southwest Private University blamed herself, citing her "lack of experience [and] lack of knowledge" particularly with evaluation practices. Furthermore, when her colleague, White Glow, shared her views on the equity of the Title V Program, she said: "I think the competition has been well done, and the fact that we don't get the money means they're probably making the right calls." Although she also commented on the underdevelopment of their proposals' evaluation pieces later in the interview, her comment reflects this logic's pervasiveness. Despite her university's concerted efforts to support Latinx students, she asserts that her campus not receiving this money suggests that the ED is "making the right calls."

Collectively, HPSAs' overall views on this program's equity and Mary and White Glow's comments are noteworthy. If these parties (i.e., HPSAs and HPUAs) believe they deserve to win and lose, respectively, the status quo may persevere more or less undisturbed, whether this program is equitable or not in practice. Put differently, if HSIs, particularly ones who actively participate in this program, feel they deserve their outcomes (i.e., their successes and failures), it seems unlikely that institutional agents at these institutions would advocate for change. In the absence of such demands, policy actors may assume the program runs smoothly—effectively, efficiently, and equitably.

As a final point, I highlight these participants' views because their beliefs about who deserves this money suggest how the ED could or should equitably allocate this resource. As touched on in Chapter 4, most participants felt that community colleges and resource-limited HSIs were especially deserving candidates. However, as already discussed, many participants, particularly those at HPUA institutions, described large, well-resourced 4-year HSIs as the most competitive applicants. Ultimately, if the institutions most well-positioned for success in this program substantially differ from those that might benefit most from this federal support, this raises questions about the equity of Title V.

Over-Crediting Institutional Action. At times, HPSAs and Non-Applicants supported HPUAs' general understanding of competitive Title V applicants being large infrastructural complex institutions. However, these groups often described HSIs as competitive for extramural funding based on their actions, institutional knowledge, and supportive leadership. More specifically, reflecting on their experiences, HPSAs foregrounded institutions' agency within the grant landscape, noting how pivotal expanding campus connections, proactively preparing proposals, and cultivating collaborative campus environments are for success in this arena. Such

a perspective is understandable. As aforementioned, many of the HPSAs continually win these awards despite their limited grant-related infrastructure.

Nevertheless, in underscoring institutional action, knowledge, and leadership, these HSIs uphold meritocracy, particularly its belief in individual agency and responsibility. Specifically, they suggest that these awards largely reflect HSIs' concerted efforts, expertise, and talent in writing compelling, research-informed proposals. For instance, as noted in Chapter 4, when asked which institutions are most likely to win these grants, Rebeca at Pacific Northwest Community College responded:

> Whoever has the best grant writers…so if you've got people who can write good grants, you can get them. If you don't, even if you have the capacity and the capability of doing really good work, you're not going to get them.

In line with other HPSAs' explanations, HSIs with deep institutional knowledge and supportive leadership are typically the ones that know how to write "good grants."

Collectively then, this set of HPSAs places significant weight on their agency within this process. However, in its truest form, *agency* refers to people's and organizations' ability to act independently—to freely make choices (Barker, 2002). Consequently, given the various constraints circumscribing both actors' opportunities and available options, I caution against uncritically assuming that people and organizations—entirely or even primarily—determine their success in any given activity, including the competition for Title V funding. In their conceptualization of higher education as a field, Taylor and Cantwell (2019) elaborate on this point, writing:

> The ability to choose is real, and actors can (and do) behave strategically. But choices are not unlimited and usually reflect [a] selection from a menu rather than free play on a

blank screen. There are material constraints to available choices because resources in the

field are limited. There is also cultural basis for bounded choice; the taken-for-granted

rules of the field mean that some behavior is deemed unacceptable. (p. 43)

As reflected in the findings, HSIs have choices, but not boundless ones. Relatedly, as explained

in Chapter 3, over-crediting agency overlooks how structural forces bear down on organizations,

constraining the ways they *can* act. Discussed immediately next, the HPUAs in this study help

illustrate this precise point.

Upending Meritocracy's Agentic Premise

As outlined in Chapter 3 and touched on immediately above, meritocracy assumes

individuals and organizations hold substantial power—or agency—over their lives and

outcomes. However, highlighting various structural barriers, financial limitations, and their

campuses' constrained connections, participants at HPUA institutions, in particular,

demonstrated the bounded circle of agency—how individuals' and, thus, organizations' "agency

exists within tight constraints but is free within those constraints" (Burke, 2005, para. 6).

Furthermore, even many of the suggestions offered by HPSAs for how to improve Title V

suggest that they too recognize that HSIs do not have unbridled, limitless agency. To follow, I

discuss three principal constraints, which collectively upend meritocracy's hyper-focus on

agency. Specifically, drawing on this study's findings, I address how HSIs are (a) *constrained*

structurally and (b) *constrained financially*. Lastly, I discuss their (c) *constrained campus*

connections.

Constrained Structurally. This study's findings surface how several structures curtail

some HSIs' access to and competitiveness in the Title V Program. Put differently, participants

illustrated how certain structures—choice-limiting, patterned arrangements (Barker, 2002)—

constrain their institutions' ability to competitively seek Title V funding. As described in Chapter 4, HPUAs often zeroed in on Title V's truncated cycle and convoluted RFP, contending that this structure hinders them from preparing rigorous proposals and, thus, their competitiveness for these awards. Meanwhile, others commented on how funding agencies, including the ED, "put [their] money on surefire win[s]" (Mary)—colleges and universities with proven records of productive and effective grant implementation. Manuel and Polar Bear, administrators at Midwest Private Aspiring University, were among such participants. Notably, they further explained that this approach to allocating resources is a byproduct of the capitalist and neoliberal logics ungirding U.S. society and higher education's investment in prestige. Below, I expand on these two structural constraints, tackling first participants' comments about the application process and then their perspectives on resource allocation within the context of U.S. higher education.

To begin, the concerns several HPUAs shared about Title V's grant cycle and overall application process are understandable, especially when considering the consensus among participants about the necessity of proactively preparing for this competition. Participants suggested that an HSI's overall preparedness for this exchange translates into its proposal's quality and, in turn, its outcome in this competition (i.e., its success or failure). Importantly though, the extent to which an HSI can strategically prepare depends on numerous factors, including the extensiveness and state of its grant-related infrastructure. As mentioned previously, except for Midwest Multi-Campus Community College, the remaining HPUAs in this study have limited infrastructure for this work. Although most HPSAs in this study share such infrastructural limitations, participants at these HSIs spoke about their institutions' strategic preparation—made possible because of their supportive leadership, collaborative campus

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environment, vast campus connections, and deep institutional knowledge of Title V. Operating

with a distinct, and arguably less advantageous, set of organizational conditions, these HPUAs

justifiably see this application cycle and the RFP as a structural impediment—one barring their

access to this money.

In contrast, while recognizing that these applications are time-consuming and demanding,

perennial winners in this study never described Title V's RFP as downright confusing or this

application as excessively burdensome. In this way, they imply that their campuses fully

understand the instructions and the implicit and explicit expectations of this exchange. In other

words, they suggest that their HSIs know how to strategically prepare and masterfully engage in

this competition—a skill expected of long-time incumbents. Fittingly, the advantage of

incumbency in this competition connects well to participants' comments about funding agencies

investing in surefire wins.

Reflecting on the allocation of Title V awards over the years, Carmen at Northeast

Private College used the term "perennial winners" to describe HSIs that continually win these

awards. Connectedly, in line with a breadth of scholarship, several participants astutely

suggested that success begets success or that winners keep winning. For instance, returning to

Taylor and Cantwell (2019) referenced earlier, they explain that incumbents are more likely to

win future competitions because they have more resources than their opponents and benefit most

from existing field conditions. Elaborating on the latter point, Taylor and Cantwell (2019)

explain that governing systems enforce laws, such as the ED in the case of this specific field

competition, and professional organizations (e.g., HACU) impose particular practices.

Collectively, these entities enforce the field's explicit and implicit rules or norms, and such "rule

enforcement typically benefits powerful incumbents even when conducted impartially because

the rules themselves tend to favor incumbents. [Thus,] fairness is enough to perpetuate inequality and is often enough to negate the effects of strategic action" (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 46).

Empirical research further corroborates the advantage of incumbency. For example, keenly relevant to this study, Wetherholdt (2013) examined factors affecting federal research and development (R&D) funding at state comprehensive universities. Based on his sample of 216 such public, 4-years, Wetherholdt found that an institution's previous success in securing federal R&D funding predicted its future success—more so than any other selected variable. Accordingly, incumbency or prior success may serve as a powerful resource, providing HSPAs an edge in this competition. Furthermore, having "learned the dos and don'ts" (Garrett) of the Title V competition, HPSAs benefit, in some ways, from the existing rules of engagement.

Despite perennial winners' very existence, it is unclear whether past success in the Title V competition predicts future success in this program. Other mechanisms may be at play. For instance, institutional agents at HPSAs repeatedly attributed their respective campus's success in winning Title V grants to their deep institutional knowledge of this program. Despite these knowledge gaps, it is telling that participants across the three groups suggested that the system of U.S. higher education rewards the already successful. In this way, success becomes self-perpetuating to the benefit of incumbents, regardless of other applicants' greatest efforts. Ultimately, if the ED privileges past winners intentionally or inadvertently, this points to a source of inequity within this meritocratic program. Meritocracy assumes equal opportunity, so if prior success comes to shape future success, then HPUAs and HPSAs play on increasingly unequal terms.

Constrained Financially. In addition to such structural constraints, my findings point to how an HSI's overall fiscal condition affects their choices and actions and, thus, their ability to

competitively seek extramural funding. For one, the institutional agents in this study called attention to the value of having leaders who financially invest in their institution's grant-seeking efforts, suggesting that HSIs without such fiscal support were at a disadvantage in this arena. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, participants across the three groups frequently mentioned the critical role financial resources play in getting grants, detailing the value of investing in infrastructural expansion and expertise. For instance, per participants, most of the HPSAs in this study intentionally built out their grants offices, reasoning that such an investment would enable them to seek extramural funding more strategically and successfully.

Notably, research supports this reasoning. Wetherholt (2013) found that both the level of institutional funding allocated to R&D activities and the number of staff members within an institution's office of sponsored programs significantly predicted an institution's success in securing federal R&D funding. Similarly, through a qualitative case study examining how three institutions' sponsored programs offices adapted to state budget cuts, Niles (2020) found that strategic spending on R&D activities was key to increasing an institution's acquisition of extramural funding.

Highlighting another major financial investment, most participants spoke about the need to hire specialized consultants to win Title V grants. Given these findings, I discuss how an HSI's financial realities affect the extent to which its senior leaders can be supportive of the institution's grant efforts. Afterward, I address the use of expert consultants, highlighting, in particular, the inequity of this practice given HSIs' varied financial circumstances.

As noted in Chapter 4, several participants at HPSA institutions voiced how they benefited from supportive leadership, explaining that their campus leaders allocated money to grant-related efforts. In contrast, many of their peers at HPUAs foregrounded their institution's

limited financial assets, which effectively curtailed the support their leaders could provide to such efforts. Pointedly, HPUAs demonstrated how an HSI's financial resources affect if and how senior administration *can* financially support the campus's grant activities. In effect, while HSI leaders may support or encourage the idea of grant seeking in principle, their ability to materially support or put money towards these efforts depends on their institution's budgetary realities. For example, while recognizing how vital grant acquisition is for Midwest Private Aspiring University, Manuel explained that their one-person grants office is all the institution can currently afford. In short, the case of Midwest Private Aspiring University is a prime example of an HSI with "total[ly] visionary" (Kelly) leadership that simply lacks the financial capital to be supportive in the same ways as campus leaders at more well-resourced HSIs. And yet, as the institutional agents at these 17 HSIs reiterated, the extent of such support has steep consequences for an HSI's competitiveness for external funding, particularly Title V grants. For example, as I take up below, campus leaders' ability to pay for specialized consultants is especially consequential, likely significantly impacting institutions' success in obtaining this funding.

As detailed in Chapter 4, participants frequently brought up the defining role expert grant-writing consultants play in grant acquisition, with many participants basically equating the ability to win a Title V grant with such consultants. While it is unclear to what extent such firms (e.g., Ramona Munsell & Associates, Grove Street Consulting, Kay Floyd Consulting, or Race to The Top Consultants) actually explain or contribute to success in this competition, it is telling that most HPSAs in this study currently contract or previously employed such firms. Indeed, their competitiveness and, in turn, exceptional success in the Title V Program may be a byproduct of their financial investment in these consultants. A cursory review of several such consultants' websites substantiates participants' understanding of such firms' value in grant

acquisition. For example, Ramona Munsell & Associates (n.d.) boasts an impressive track record, reporting that they have assisted clients in 34 states and Puerto Rico collectively secure 304 Title III/V grants since 2002 and 17 Title V grants since 2015. Meanwhile, on their website, Grove Street Consulting (n.d.) indicates a 75% success rate with their Title V proposals, further stating that this rate far exceeds the industry average of a mere 10%–15%. As proof of their expertise in this arena, they also maintain:

> In 2019 we developed and wrote two Title V grant proposals for community colleges in California and Texas; both were funded, totaling $5.6 million. Our team has worked pre- and post-award on several Title Vs and HSI-STEMs, giving us experience and insight we turn into a competitive advantage for your school. (Grove Street Consulting, n.d., para. 5)

Accordingly, these firms translate their experience supporting an assortment of HSIs into a competitive advantage, aiding only HSIs willing and able to pay for their services in obtaining this federal funding.

Such firms' services are not free. Instead, as Joan from Midwest Private University aptly put it, these firms represent "the for-profit side of a not-for-profit world," and their expertise comes at a high premium. In this way, these firms function as unofficial gatekeepers, enabling HSIs with the means to pay for their services in garnering success and sidelining those unable to afford them. As explained in Chapter 4, HSIs must cover this expense out of their own pockets, as it is unlawful to use Title V funds towards such consulting services (Education Department General Administrative Regulations, 2014). However, beyond this restriction, this policy is altogether silent on whether HSIs can or cannot (or should or should not) employ such consultants. Yet, in expressly stipulating that HSIs cannot pay for such firms with Title V money, policymakers recognize that these institutions rely on these services. So, what does this

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mean for the undoubtedly many institutions unable to afford the benefit of such experts? Without such skilled grant writers, can most HSIs prepare and submit high-quality, winning proposals?

Given the mounting evidence of HSIs' varied financial conditions (Núñez et al., 2016), Title V's silence on this issue likely perpetuates inequity, potentially allowing already powerful, better-resourced HSIs to amass even more resources. To use RIT's language, this situation may enable HSIs with greater financial means to pool or hoard Title V money to the detriment of their more resource-limited peers. Furthermore, should more well-resourced HSIs, as a categorical group, benefit from this exchange at the expense of their more resource-limited peers, then this arrangement could be understood as exploitative. As explained in Chapter 2, according to RIT, exploitation refers to powerful actors benefiting at the expense of less powerful actors (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019). Ultimately, since Congress enacted Title V to remedy the underfunding of HSIs, it is critical that they more closely consider the current—and increasing—variation among these colleges and universities, particularly in terms of their existing financial assets and potential revenue streams.

Constrained Campus Connections. Participants' comments about campus connections reveal another potential constraint affecting HSIs' competitiveness for Title V grants. Specifically, there is reason to suspect that not all HSIs can readily cultivate such relationships for a couple of reasons. For one, although HSIs now span 27 states and Puerto Rico, these institutions remain regionally concentrated (*Excelencia*, 2020c), reflecting the historical migration patterns among Latinx communities. Subsequently, an HSI's geographic location affects the extent to which there are other HSIs nearby or "down the street" (Garrett). For instance, HSIs on the West Coast, like West City College, are surrounded by other HSIs with whom they can connect and, in turn, potentially resource share and collaborate. Although

geographic proximity is not a prerequisite for building such connections, it stands to reason that HSIs in certain regions, namely areas with long-standing Latinx communities, may have greater access to other HSIs and potentially more opportunities to collaborate. In contrast, HSIs in more remote areas or places with few neighboring HSIs may be at a disadvantage, likely needing to make more intentional efforts to connect with peer HSIs. Relatedly, like all relationships, connections between campuses take time to cultivate. Thus, institutions with longer legacies as HSIs, such as many of the ones in the West Coast and the Southwest, have simply had more time to foster such connections than more newly minted HSIs.

Additionally, some connections are not free. For instance, several participants mentioned HACU, praising the organization for its advocacy work on behalf of HSIs. Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College further stated that not joining this association and financially supporting it through membership[72] was politically unwise. And yet, as rehashed multiple times already, HSIs have varied financial resources, meaning some may not be able to fully engage in this "healthy kind of politics" (Benjamin). Taken together, I strongly suspect that HSIs do not all share comparable campus connections either with peer HSIs or the broader HSI network.

Moreover, given the benefit of such campus connections, which participants repeatedly highlighted, this imbalance calls this program's equity into question. This is especially true considering that these connections not only enable resource sharing and political goodwill, but they also seem to enable HSIs to garner success in this competition in another notable way. As described in Chapter 4, several HPSAs in this study capitalized on cooperative arrangement grants to pool more Title V funding. However, their ability to do so hinges on them having some form of working relationship with other colleges and universities. Although cooperative grants

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[72] As of 2020, annual institutional membership rates for HACU range from $2,550–$11,940 depending on the institution's total student enrollment (HACU, 2021).

may technically fund projects between an HSI and non-HSI, a review of recent awardees and participants' comments suggest that such grants are generally between or among HSIs.

Despite the advantage that HSIs with extensive campus connections hold in this competition, as noted multiple times, Title V invites all HSIs to vie for this federal funding. This policy does not consider an institution's incumbency in this competition, financial resources,[73] or partnership networks. But participants strongly suggested that these various conditions shape HSIs' competitiveness for Title V funds, thereby giving me pause about this program's equity both currently and moving forward.

The Inequity of Title V's Meritocratic Logic

As presented in Chapter 3, I understand Title V as a meritocratic competition given the design of this program as an open invitation to all HSIs. Again, meritocracy assumes the equality of opportunity and that the most talented and skilled win, not simply the wealthy or social elite. However, as many critics have argued (see, e.g., Golden, 2006; Killgore, 2009; Liu, 2011) and many of the participants in this study suggested, the rich and otherwise elite frequently have access to resources and opportunities that empower them to be the most talented and skilled actors in any given exchange. For instance, Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College alluded to this idea when saying:

> It's fair the way that they run the competition. It's a very transparent program…it doesn't smack as much of backroom dealing as other federal programs…You generally know where you stand and what the criteria are…the unfair aspect is that it doesn't seem to take into account anything about the institution's finances because there are institutions who

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[73] As an exception, the policy does consider an applicant's financial resources in the case of tiebreakers.

are truly needy…and they're on the same footing for applying for these grants as

institutions that are fairly resource rich.

In effect, Benjamin captures the thrust of the issue with meritocracy in the context of the

stratified and hierarchical system of U.S. higher education. On the one hand, such competitions

may be understood as fair, assuming reviewers score applications impartially. On the other hand,

even if the ED conducts the review and selection process impartially, both the evaluation criteria

and the structure of this exchange tend to favor particular HSIs, namely incumbents and better-

resourced institutions that can access consultants specialized in preparing these proposals.

Pointedly, the line between merit and money is a blurry one, as wealthier organizations can

leverage their financial resource to overcome conditions that may weaken their competitiveness

in this arena, such as limited campus connections or institutional knowledge of Title V.

Even though several of the HPSAs in this study demonstrate that infrastructurally limited

colleges, at least in terms of their grant-seeking structures, can succeed in this competition, they

also affirm many critics' concerns about meritocracy. As addressed earlier, able to afford

infrastructural expansion efforts and expensive consultants, most of these campuses have the

means to be "the most talented" and "skilled" Title V applicants. In this way, this so-called fair

competition may, in practice, reward more well-resourced HSIs and, in the process, effectively

jeopardize the equity of this program.

Adding another layer of complexity, Title V is enmeshed within the larger grant

landscape and HSIs are part of the broader field of higher education—an environment

beleaguered by declining public investment. In such environments, colleges and universities

must capture additional revenue streams, including philanthropic gifts, increased tuition and fees,

and sponsored research projects and programs, to stay solvent. Indeed, participants were

sensitive to this reality. For example, Yvette at Northeast Urban College commented on the pressing need to obtain external funding, noting that colleges and universities "are probably going to need grants to stay afloat or for some of the programs to survive." Amid this context, a federal program that relies on a competition to meritocratically allocate increasingly scarce funds to institutions with varied organizational conditions, including distinct financial resources, seems especially problematic. Furthermore, HSIs' growing numbers and evolving profile make this situation all the more troubling, as HSIs may increasingly compete on evermore unequal terms. In doing so, this current arrangement is likely to distribute these grants in an increasingly inequitable way, favoring HSIs with specific organizational conditions able to present themselves as the ones with the greatest merit.

In short, competitions are rarely equitable in practice. For success in such exchanges to truly reflect an institution's merit, all actors must be fundamentally equal. The vastly unequal distribution of resources across the hierarchical system of U.S. higher education, therefore, violates the premise of equality—a core assumption of meritocracy. Put differently, this enduring stratification of resources makes competitions such as Title V unmeritocratic. Worse yet, public policies that rely on competitive arrangements—what Mettler (2011) refers to as submerged state policies—function in such a way that they perpetuate, rather than ameliorate, inequity among the very institutions these policies set out to support.

In the end, as anemic federal support results in even greater competition for these scarce grants, there is reason to suspect that the sources of inequity identified in this study will become more pronounced. As a result, the distribution of Title V funding will also become increasingly unequal, favoring HSIs with greater institutional capacities able to act in specific ways. Such capacity, which often reflects an institution's financial state, I expect will likely come to define

an HSI's competitiveness for this funding more than an its institutional knowledge of this program. For one, HSIs with more money can simply access such knowledge by contracting expensive consultants with expertise on these types of grants—firms like Ramona Munsell & Associates and Grove Street Consulting. Also, HSIs can, of course, gain institutional knowledge over time. But HSIs cannot easily bolster their institutional capacity, especially their financial resources, and this is particularly true the more resource limited the institution given the compounding nature of college and university endowments.[74] Accordingly, with varied organizational conditions, HSIs vie for Title V funding on unequal terms—ones that will become increasingly less equal considering HSIs' evolving profile. Altogether then, participants' understanding of HSIs' competitiveness for Title V grants leads me to argue that without any federal intervention, the result is likely to be more the same: greater competition among HSIs and increasing stratification in terms of access to this funding. In line with my theorizing, this study's findings suggest that this meritocratic competition will likely "provide [an] occasion for already successful institutions to accumulate even more resources (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 84) to the detriment of HSIs that may stand to benefit more from this federal support. In doing so, the Title V Program will breed greater inequity among HSIs.

In sum, these grants may very well be scarce. But reducing the problem with Title V to the amount of money Congress invests in this program each year versus the number of HSIs overlooks deeper issues with this policy. As the findings bear out, this supposedly meritocratic

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[74] The principle of compounding interest applies to endowments. To offer a simplified example, if an HSI had a $100,000 endowment fund invested in an account with interest rate of 10%, the institution would have $110,000 the at end of the year, assuming it did not spend any of the initial capital. The following year, that $110,000 would compound another 10%, resulting in $121,000 and so forth. In contrast, an HSI starting with, for example, an $10,000 endowment fund invested in the same portfolio would only have $12,000 by years end, again assuming it did not spend against this investment. In short, given the compounding effect, institutions with more money stand to gain more overtime.

competition imbues inequity in varied forms among HSIs—a reality likely to only worsen as this group further diversifies.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Future Research</h2>

This study expands the HSI literature and the limited research on Title V by showcasing the perspective of a diverse set of HSIs on what competitiveness means specifically in the context of seeking Title V grants. More specifically, the findings present participants' understanding of what organizational conditions prime an HSI to competitively seek extramural funding, particularly Title V grants. As they shared their insights with me, participants also offered specific recommendations to improve the Title V Program. Considering their suggestions, the findings, and, in particular, CQI's emancipatory agenda, I provide recommendations for policy, practice, and areas of future research.

Recommendations for Policy

In terms of policy, this study's findings offer concrete ways to forge Title V into a more equitable program. Specifically, considering CQI's goal of affecting "social policy by getting critiques heard and acted on by policymakers" (Denzin, 2017, p. 9), I propose four main recommendations for policy actors. These include: (a) *redesign the Title V Program*, (b) *assess the selection and training of proposal reviewers*, (c) *provide educational programming*, and (d) *increase appropriations to Title V*.

Redesign the Title V Program

Reflecting on their experiences pursuing highly competitive federal grants and, where applicable, their experiences seeking Title V grants, participants proposed multiple ways to improve this federal program. Specifically, they suggested several options for how policymakers, namely the ED, could redesign this competition. Mulling over their array of suggestions in light

of the study's findings and concerns for equity, I offer the following four recommendations: (a) *solidify and extend the application cycle*, (b) *subdivide the competition*, (c) *reconfigure the eligibility criteria*, and (d) *evaluate the use of specialized consultants.*

Solidify and Extend the Application Cycle. As presented in Chapter 4 and discussed earlier in this chapter, multiple institutional agents, particularly administrators at HPUA institutions, voiced concern about the inconsistency of Title V's application cycle from year to year and about the overall compressed turnaround window for these proposals. To enable HSIs to plan and prepare for this competition more strategically, the ED should set and commit to a consistent timeline for this grant cycle. For instance, the Student Support Services Program— another grant program run by the ED—operates on a 5-year cycle, reliably accepting new applications every fifth December (Student Support Services Program, 2019). Also, for the sake of equity, the ED should extend the turnaround window for these applications to allow HSIs, especially ones with limited institutional capacity, more time to put together their materials. In particular, prolonging this timeline is of acute importance should the ED not correct the irregularity of this grant cycle.

Subdivide the Competition. Multiple participants at both HPSA and HPUA institutions recommended that the ED establish separate competitions, subdividing HSIs into distinct groups of applicants by their institutional size, experience in grant seeking, or financial resources, among options. For instance, Kelly at Midwest Private Aspiring University felt that the ED should split HSIs into distinct groupings, proposing that "maybe [there should be] the Midwest Private Aspiring University category, the big boy category. Maybe you divide it up. Maybe you look at the map. And then, you've got regional competitions." And Carmen at Northeast Private

College offered another way to restructure this program, calling for a two-tiered approach—a tier for larger HSIs with larger endowments and one for their smaller, more resource-limited peers.

As a preliminary step, policymakers should regularly assess the heterogeneity among HSIs, especially among Title V applicants. In particular, considering the findings of this study, federal officials ought to examine HSIs' respective institutional capacities, using variables like Carnegie Classification, total revenue per FTE student, student-to-faculty ratio, student-to-staff ratio, and total endowment assets as potential indicators. With a more nuanced descriptive profile of these colleges and universities, federal officials may then devise ways to subdivide HSIs into distinct brackets. Núñez et al.'s (2016) typology of institutional diversity among HSIs may also serve as a convenient tool in this process, as it presents one "way to disaggregate distinctive types of HSIs" (p. 76). Directly addressing the usefulness of this typology towards this end, Núñez et al. (2016) write:

> This typology is positioned to help various stakeholders, including federal administrators of Title V funding which targets HSIs (Higher Education Act of 1965, 2013; Santiago, 2006), figure out how to distribute funding and support across the broad range of HSIs. For example, if they want to address a representative group of all HSIs, this typology offers guidance as to which sorts of HSIs to select across different categories. (p. 76–77)

In short, Núñez et al.'s typology is a prime starting place for such a reorganization of this competition. However, because HSIs are enrollment-dependent, an institution's HSI designation may fluctuate between years, meaning federal officials need to rerun this typology regularly or conduct other such analyses periodically to assess whether the categories or brackets they establish hold over time or need adjusting (Núñez et al., 2016). Such periodic assessment is further necessary given the projected growth and ongoing institutional diversification of HSIs.

Reconfigure the Eligibility Criteria. Several participants strongly encouraged policymakers to revisit the eligibility criteria for this funding, specifically requesting that they enact more stringent thresholds in terms of HSI's financial resources. For example, Benjamin at Northeast Liberal Arts College urged:

> There should be even thresholds where if [you're] above a certain amount [in terms] of your annual budget per student, you shouldn't be eligible or [if the] size of your endowment per student [is above a certain threshold], you shouldn't be eligible…And I think that other institutions, regular Title V institutions, a lot of them would agree because every other federal program—NIH, NSF, whatever—we're already at a huge disadvantage compared to those other institutions because part of the application for an NIH grant is to describe your institutional capacity to do the work. Well, if you're a wealthy institution, you have more capacity to do the work, so you're at a huge advantage. So, underfunded institutions have a hard enough time competing in all of the other programs…And so, we should have some recompense in this program, so that the money goes to where it can actually do some good, to where it belongs, to where it was intended to go.

Consistent with Benjamin's suggestion, Núñez (2017b) calls on researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to "[take] into account the differential access to institutional resources that HSIs have compared with other institutions, and even compared with one another, as signaled by the entrance of AAU institutions into the HSI pool" (p. 284). In short, with the increasing diversity among HSIs and shifts in this group's makeup since Congress enacted Title V nearly 25 years ago (Santiago et al., 2020), the time is ripe to revisit the eligibility criteria for this funding.

Evaluate the Use of Specialized Consultants. Finding that many HSIs rely on

consulting firms to assist them in preparing their Title V proposals, I strongly urge policy actors,

including ED officials, to thoroughly look into the use of these specialists, especially given

numerous participants' comments about the cost-prohibitive rates of such services. As previously

discussed, although such consultants almost certainly provide HSIs an advantage in this grant

competition, they are only accessible to institutions able and willing to pay for their services out-

of-pocket. Problematically, this situation fundamentally violates one of meritocracy's core

assumptions as competitiveness (and ultimately success) in this program might not represent an

institution's own merit but whatever merit they can afford to buy.

Mindful of how this current arrangement indisputably disadvantages HSIs unable to pay

for the privilege of these services, action must be taken. Outright prohibiting HSIs' use of such

consultants is arguably politically unviable and pragmatically unfeasible; the ED or any other

federal agency is likely unable to regulate, monitor, or enforce such a mandate systemically.

However, as an alternative, policymakers could legally require applicants to disclose whether

they employed external consultants to seek these grants. With such data, the ED could reward

HSIs that develop these materials in-house (without consulting such firms) in the form of

"bonus" points akin to how they currently award additional points to applicants who respond to

the RPF's competitive preference priorities. In sum, since this practice (i.e., paying for

competitiveness) undermines Title V's original intent (i.e., to fund acutely under-resourced

institutions), it is crucial that policy actors evaluate the use of such consultants in the context of

this program (and grant competitions more broadly) to forge a more equitable arrangement.

Assess and Demystify the Selection and Training of Proposal Reviewers

The findings from this study, specifically participants' description of the review and selection process for these grants as unpredictable and punitive, point to the need to assess and demystify proposal reviewers' selection and training process. Specific recommendations include (a) *ensure the slate of reviewers reflects the HSI population*, (b) *assess the variation in reviewer scores*, and (c) *widely communicate how reviewers are trained and decisions are reached*.

Ensure the Slate of Reviewers Reflects the HSI Population. Upon examining the composition of proposal reviewers, the ED can determine if particular HSIs have never or rarely had someone from their campus serve in this role. In light of the reported benefits of serving as a proposal reviewer (Porter, 2011b), ED officials could send targeted invitations, asking members of HPUA institutions and Non-Applicants, for example, to serve as a Title V proposal reviewer. Such experience may provide these HSIs with valuable, behind-the-scenes knowledge, which they can later leverage when their campuses apply for Title V funding in subsequent cycles.

Assess the Variation in Reviewer Scores. Repeatedly hearing participants characterize the review and selection process for extramural funding, including Title V grants, as unpredictable and even punitive, it is necessary to analyze the variation in reviewer scores. By assessing the distribution of scores, ED officials can determine if proposal reviewers need additional training to ensure more consistency and reliability in their scoring of applications. If indeed, scores exceed an expected range, ED officials should host what is commonly referred to as a norming session. Such sessions provide application reviewers an opportunity to calibrate how the group assigns scores following a preset rubric. Fortunately, there are copious resources that ED officials may reference as they design such a training (see, e.g., Schoepp et al., 2018;

University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa Assessment and Curriculum Support Center, 2017; Washington State University Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness, 2020).

Widely Communicate How Reviewers are Trained and Decisions are Reached. In response to multiple participants describing the review and section process for these grants as obtuse and teetering on "dysfunctional" (Garrett), more clarity around this entire process is necessary. To address this issue, the ED needs to widely communicate its efforts to ensure the review and selection process for these grants is as systematic and consistent as possible. For instance, providing detailed information on the training proposal reviewers receive on the HSI Division's website can help demystify this process. ED officials could also publish a flowchart depicting step-by-step the process they follow to reach their final decisions.

Provide Educational Programming

As reflected in the findings, a confluence of organizational conditions (e.g., institutional capacity, actions, knowledge, and leadership) contributes to an HSI's overall competitiveness for Title V funding. Many of these conditions are not ones that policy actors or educational advocates can unilaterally address. Indeed, some of them are beyond the immediate reach of policy solutions or fully addressable with further research. For instance, the depth of an HSI's institutional knowledge of this program is largely a function of its experience actively pursuing this funding over time. Similarly, an HSI's senior leadership—their allocation of resources and grant-seeking priorities—is beyond policy actors' preview. Still, to forge a more equitable program, the ED should support HSIs in other ways. Among options, the study's findings highlight the need to provide more support to HSIs beyond directing them to OPE's standard set of resources for all applicants and grantees (see, e.g., OPE, 2016). Instead, to enable HSIs to compete for this funding on a slightly more equal footing, the ED, particularly the HSI Division,

should not only offer informational sessions on the technical and logistical components of this application but broader educational programming. Specifically, considering participants' suggestions and existing empirical research on barriers to grant acquisition (see, e.g., Boyer & Cockriel, 1998;[75] Walden & Bryan, 2010), the ED should host a series of free educational workshops or webinars on various subjects, such as grant-writing strategies, budget development, evaluation approaches, and logic models, among other topics.

Separately, Sarah's comments about Southwest State University's reluctance to pursue funding (i.e., Title V grants) that may be perceived as exclusionary points to the need for further educational programming on Title V. As noted in Chapter 2, based on their content analysis of awarded DHSI grant abstracts from 2009–2016 ($n = 220$), Vargas and Villa-Palomino (2018) found that most proposals (85%) described projects designed to serve all students, not specifically Latinx students. Although existing research does not support the characterization of Title V as exclusionary funding, Sarah's comments indicate that this may be the perception among some potential applicants. Accordingly, the ED, particularly the HSI Division, may want to more explicitly specify Title V's aims and scope, highlighting, for example, the range of allowable activities under the law.

In short, with vastly different expertise in core areas of grant seeking and disparate understandings of Title V, HSIs compete for these funds on unequal terms. Therefore, such informational presentations and educational programming can support HSI faculty members, administrators, and staff in their decision-making around applying for these grants. Such

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[75] Based on surveying 370 faculty members within Colleges of Education at AAU Research I institutions, Boyer and Cockriel (1998) identified three main barriers to grant writing and acquisition: (a) lack of training in seeking and writing grants, (b) limited knowledge of budget development, and (c) insufficient knowledge of funding sources.

programming may also assist these institutional agents in preparing stronger proposals and, thus, assuage some of the inequity of this meritocratic competition.

Increase Appropriations to Title V

As detailed throughout my dissertation, this study's overarching purpose was to provide a nuanced understanding of potential inequities embedded within or exacerbated by this competition. The aim was not to examine the scarcity of this funding and join the chorus of demands for more money. And yet, increased funding to this program is paramount, even though some of the inequities surfaced in the findings would persist even with increased appropriations. Without substantive legislative changes, the perpetuation of inequity is largely unavoidable, as Title V functions as a competition among HSIs with increasingly varied organizational conditions. Though an imperfect solution, increasing appropriations to Title V may at least assuage the intensity of this competition by enabling the ED to award more grants each year.

Several participants recognized this reality and called for increased funding for Title V. For instance, White Glow at Southwest Private University offered:

> I would ask that Congress appropriate a greater number of dollars. As you probably know, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, on average, get about 60 cents for every dollar that non-HSIs get from the feds. And so, for reasons of equity and balance, I think Congress needs to put more funding into that competition. Now, the Department of Ed also has some discretion; they could shape their budget differently to support that program, and they've tried to within their budget constraints, but they could do some more…so just more funding. 93 awards a year is great, but there's 523 of us, and so, wouldn't it be great if there could be 150 awards every year? We'd increase that ratio of success.

Ultimately, as suggested by White Glow, if funding to Title V does not increase in step with the growth of these institutions, then even if the distribution of this funding among HSIs is equitable, the program still falls short of its purpose.

Recommendations for Practice

HSI leaders do not need a research study to tell them how imperative grant acquisition is in an era of decreasing public investment, and grants office staff likewise do not need a study explaining to them how unpredictable or even unfair these competitions can be. Many of these institutional agents grapple with the precarity of their institutions every day. Instead, hopefully, this study reminds HSI leaders and grant office personnel of their agency within the grant landscape. Although an institution's particular context certainly constrains the extent to which it can competitively seek Title V funding, this study and existing literature point to concrete actions an HSIs may take to garner success in this arena, including investing in R&D activities (Wetherholt, 2013), adjusting employee workloads to provide more time to develop proposals[76] (Monahan & Fortune, 1995), and serving on grant review panels (Porter, 2011b). Indeed, there are copious ways for an HSI to increase its competitiveness in this exchange (see, e.g., Porter, 2011b for some cost-effective options). However, towards advancing the equity of this program, I offer the following recommendations for HSI leaders and advocates: (a) *resource-share with other HSIs*, (b) *host multi-campus grant-writing groups*, and (c) *advocate for this program*.

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[76] Monahan and Fortune (1995) examined the extent to which 33 discrete institutional variables predict success in the acquisition of sponsored projects. Based on their analysis of 163 colleges and universities, they found that release time and reduced workloads significantly predicted slightly better outcomes, meaning a larger rate of funded proposals and total dollars awarded.

Resource-Share with Other Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Participants' insights, particularly their comments about the benefit of connecting with peer HSIs and the broader HSI network, highlight the value of resource sharing. Beyond simply providing an HSI an edge in this competition, resource sharing offers a cost-effective way to improve the equity of this program. For instance, HSIs could share materials (e.g., exemplar evaluation plans or logic models) and insights on how to strategically frame these proposals. Weary of ceding any advantage they may have this competition, some HSIs will understandably not meaningfully entertain this recommendation. Nevertheless, resource-sharing provides HSIs ways to learn from one another and collectively improve their ability to competitively pursue these awards. Bearing this mind, community college districts or state systems with multiple HSIs (e.g., Lone Star College System or California State University System), in particular, should actively encourage their constituent campuses to collaborate in this way.

Another prime opportunity for resource-sharing and collaboration among HSIs centers on professional development. For instance, beyond identifying and circulating potential funding opportunities , offices of sponsored programs and research at HSIs could collaboratively put on training series, with participating campuses taking turns hosting relevant workshops and informational webinars. Based on participants' insights, training on project evaluation methods and logic models as well as on how to write compelling proposal narratives would be especially useful. These workshops, for example, might include readings like Porter's (2011a) guidance on how to persuasively pitch grant proposals. Outlets, such as the *Research Management Review* and the *Journal of Research Administration,* are ripe with information that may support personnel in these offices in creating such training. Lastly, explicitly considering Title V grants, workshop developers might also pull from resources from the Alliance of Hispanic Serving

Institution Educators, including information it publishes on HSI grantisanship. By resource-sharing in these varied ways, HSIs may help level the playing field or make this competition at least somewhat more equitable.

Host Multi-Campus Grant-Writing Groups

In addition to such resource sharing, HSIs should establish writing groups for faculty, administrators, and staff members at different campuses, who are developing grant proposals. Ample empirical research has shown collaborative writing initiatives (see, e.g., Banta et al., 2004; Campbell, 1998), including writing groups, to be an effective strategy to increase research productivity and grant acquisition. For example, based on their comprehensive literature review, McGrail et al. (2006) found that writing groups increased, on average, academics' publication rates. Meanwhile, specifically investigating the value of these groups in the context of grant seeking, Weibe and Maticka-Tyndale (2017)[77] found that ongoing workshops on grantisanship strategies in concert with grant-writing groups contributed to increased grant applications and greater success in securing competitive external funding at their university. Indeed, these special focus writing groups might be especially beneficial for faculty. Although most faculty members have extensive experience with academic writing (e.g., journal articles, books, and conference proposals), many have far more limited experience with grant writing—a completely different genre of writing (Porter, 2007; Walden & Bryan, 2010).

In terms of organizing such writing groups, HSIs may want to refer to Lee and Boud's (2010) article on using writing groups as a research development strategy; it details key factors and contextual conditions necessary to ensure these groups are effectively implemented. They

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[77] More specifically, Weibe and Maticka-Tyndale evaluated the effectiveness of an 8-month grant-writing group for 14 social scientists in a mid-sized Canadian university.

may also find Dopke and Crawley's (2013) piece insightful as it outlines strategies for increasing the efficacy of writing groups, specifically preparing proposals for federal grants.

Advocate for This Program

Finally, this study's findings highlight the need for continued advocacy efforts on the part of HSI leaders and groups, such as HACU and *Excelencia* in Education. In the absence of concerted demands for both increased appropriations to Title V, Congress will invest as little as possible. As the history of HSIs and enactment of Title V detailed in Chapter 2 makes clear, Congress will likely only increase funding to this program in the face of intense public outcry. Similarly, without advocates championing for specific changes to this policy, Congress will put off restructuring or reconsidering any part of this program, assuming that it operates efficiently, effectively, and equitably—that it satisfies the three pillars of solid policy (Rosenbloom, 1983; Svara & Brunet, 2005). In short, considering the inequities reflected in the findings of this study, HSI leaders and advocates must come together and organize their platform or legislative agenda and then doggedly push for the changes they identify as key to improving this policy.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study lays the foundation for future research in multiple directions. Building off this study, three potentially generative areas of further study center on (a) *HSIs' grant-seeking rationale,* (b) *specialized grant writing consultants*, and (c) *grant management*. Across these three research areas, it is also paramount to continue to actively disrupt the monolithic characterization of HSIs (Núñez, 2017b). The prevailing portrayal of HSIs as under-resourced, public community colleges can lead to misguided policies and practices—ones with enduring, adverse impacts on these institutions and the many communities they serve.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions' Grant-Seeking Rationale

Several opportunities exist to expand on this present study. First, attempting to gain a broad understanding of issues of equity with the Title V Program, I interviewed faculty members and administrators at HPSA, HPUA, and Non-Applicant institutions. However, more in-depth studies specifically on each of these three groups will provide richer insight into the views, needs, and experiences of these HSIs with grant seeking. Indeed, the variation in participants' observations and among HSIs within these three groups found in this study suggests that in-depth case studies of HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants are warranted. Second, while this study focused on HPSAs, HPUAs, and Non-Applicants, researchers should interview or survey institutional agents at HSIs that moderately engage in the Title V grant competition. Learning more about these institutional agents' experiences with the program and how they understand their institution's competitiveness for this federal funding merits exploration, particularly since these colleges and universities currently represent the bulk of all HSIs.

Third, based on my analysis of all Title V applicants and recipients from 2009–2017, only a few HSIs in Puerto Rico classified as either HPSAs or HPUAs, making recruitment and confidentially tricky in the context of this study. However, based on my analysis, many HSIs in Puerto Rico are Non-Applicants. Thus, future researchers should either survey or conduct in-depth interviews with institutional agents at HSIs in Puerto Rico to understand why many of these institutions opt out of this opportunity. Such research is needed since HSIs in Puerto Rico participate far less in this program than their mainland peers (Aguilar-Smith & Yun, 2019).

Fourth, as part of this study, participants shared their experience and thoughts on individual and cooperative Title V grants, including both DHSI and PPOHA grants, where applicable. However, given this study's focus on Title V broadly, it does not address differences

among these distinct funding opportunities. Cursorily, however, participants viewed individual and cooperative grants quite differently. Thus, HSI scholars may want to parse out these differences. A more robust understanding of what funding opportunities HSIs pursue and why enables researchers to offer more relevant, actionable recommendations for these institutions.

Specialized Grant Writing Consultants

Based on this study's findings, another prime area of future research revolves around the use of specialized grant writing consultants in the collegiate context. For instance, considering the Title V Program, it is worth exploring potential ethical issues with this practice. Specifically, researchers may take up the question: What are the ethical implications of these consulting firms serving multiple HSIs in preparing Title V proposals at the same time? Beyond Title V, however, this study's findings suggest that the use of such consultants is a pervasive practice among U.S. colleges and universities. And yet, few studies specifically examine the use of such consultants in the context of a specific grant program or across competitive external funding opportunities, more broadly. Again, given the profound resource differences among institutional types in the U.S. system of higher education, the seeming growing reliance on such firms strongly merits scholarly attention.

Grant Management

Although not the focus of this study, across interviews, participants aired an array of challenges associated with grant implementation and management, so much so that some of the institutional agents with whom I spoke basically treated grants as a dirty word. In the end, after listening to the sea of challenges HPSAs shared about implementing Title V grants and sustaining these projects long term, I encourage future researchers to explore in greater depth awardees' experience with administering these particular grants and other major federal awards.

Such empirical research is paramount because access to this money alone, even if equitable, does not realize Title V's purpose. Therefore, beyond ensuring that HSIs may equitably access this funding, researchers must assess how these institutions can be better served in effectively implementing and institutionalizing grant-funded, capacity-building efforts.

Conclusion

The growth and institutional diversification of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) is a prime example of how the U.S. system of higher education is rapidly changing and how these shifts present significant challenges for equitable educational policy and practice. Specifically, the growth of HSIs versus stagnant congressional appropriations to Title V has led to concerns about the growing scarcity of these federal funds. However, amid the institutional diversification of HSIs, this precarious situation also surfaces the possibility of inequities in the allocation of resources and opportunities among this group, as these colleges and universities increasingly have varied organizational conditions. In light of this possibility, in this critical qualitative study of Title V, I interviewed 29 institutional agents at 17 HSIs across the United States and asked:

1. How do institutional agents at Hispanic-Serving Institutions understand their competitiveness for Title V grants?

    a. What sources of inequity does this reveal about Title V?

Reflecting on their experience, or lack thereof, with the Title V Program, participants underscored the defining role of four primary conditions to an HSI's competitiveness in this program: institutional capacity, institutional action, institutional knowledge, and institutional leadership. More specifically, based on my analysis of participants' responses, I found that the confluence of specific organizational conditions empowers an HSI to competitively seek Title V grants; however, such conditions are not universally shared among HSIs.

Despite mounting evidence of the extensive and increasing institutional variation among HSIs (Núñez et al., 2016; Núñez & Elizondo, 2012, 2015), all HSIs may apply for these exceedingly scarce funds. Problematically, in treating HSIs as a monolith, Title V both actively and passively engenders inequity among HSIs since competitiveness for this funding hinges on an HSI having a specific set of organizational conditions, which again not all HSIs have. Moreover, with the ongoing diversification of this group, HSIs will vie for these grants on increasingly unequal terms, with some operating with far more resources—or more advantageous organizational conditions—than others. In doing so, the Title V Program may, indeed, be "taking a step back, in a way, from [its] original intent" (Benjamin), benefiting relatively more well-resourced colleges and universities as opposed to more resource-limited and organizationally constrained HSIs.

Of course, when Congress first enacted Title V almost 25 years ago, most HSIs were public community colleges in the West and Southwest United States or postsecondary institutions in Puerto Rico (Santiago et al., 2020). Even then, this group was not a perfect monolith; however, it was far more homogenous than it is today. In that context, this grant competition may have been less problematic, as these institutions were far more equal in terms of their organizational conditions and resources. However, policies should not be stagnant and unresponsive; rather, they must adapt to the needs of the present sociopolitical moment and its realities (Anderson, 2011). For instance, although Congress evidently did not foresee Latinxs enrolling in 4-year colleges and universities, including research-intensive institutions, Latinxs clearly have. Therefore, it is past time that Congress revisits this program—what purpose it should serve and which institutions it aims to truly support.

To conclude, while many scholars and educational advocates frame the problem of Title V as one of scarcity, participants highlighted inequities inherent in a grant competition operating with neoliberal and meritocratic logics. The findings from this study, moreover, demonstrate the pressing need to not only increase federal funding to Title V but to recognize how this program gives way intentionally or unintentionally to significant problems for educational equity. Given HSIs' central role in the postsecondary education of Latinxs and other minoritized or otherwise marginalized college students, ensuring these institutions receive adequate public support is essential. As Title V serves as a core source of funding for HSIs, grappling with the issues of inequity presented by this program's meritocratic design grows only more pressing as this group grows and further evolves. Even more fundamentally, as a field, we must seriously consider how HSIs and their students are (under)served by the system of U.S. higher education and educational policies, such as Title V.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Timeline of Latinx Postsecondary Educational Advocacy Efforts

This timeline documents major events within the long line of advocacy efforts related to the education of Latinxs in the United States, particularly the postsecondary education of this population. This historical account also interweaves the creation of key organizations, coalitions, federal task forces, and other entities which, in varying ways, contribute to the larger *lucha* (fight) for Latinxs' access to higher education, as well as these students' experience and success within U.S. higher education. This timeline also records the introduction and enactment of key pieces of state and federal legislation pertinent to Latinxs' postsecondary education.

Numerous sources either provide a chronology of significant historical markers pertinent to Latinx community in general or document in depth specific sociocultural or political events, especially pivotal to a particular segment of this larger pan-ethnic community (see, e.g., Alaniz, 2008; Fernández-Armesto, 2014; Gonzalez, 2011; Martínez, 2008; Massey et al., 2003; Montemayor, 2004; Ortiz, 2018; Pitt & Gutierrez, 1999). Others have published work, documenting Latinxs' relationship with the U.S. educational system, particularly within the P–12 sector (see, e.g., Gonzalez, 1990; MacDonald, 2004; Noboa-Rios, 2019; Strum, 2010), although numerous works focus specifically on Latinx college students (see, e.g., Flores, 1992; MacDonald et al., 2007; MacDonald & García, 2003). A few publications even specifically attend to the historical development of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (see, e.g., Arciniega, 2012; *Excelencia*, 2014; HACU, 2011; Valdez, 2013, 2015). Considering this breadth of work, this timeline is not intended to be pointlessly duplicative of those efforts. Rather, I purposely filtered through hundreds of sources to create a more comprehensive, historicized rendering of the development and evolution of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which elevates the considerable

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efforts spearheaded by Latinx advocates, as well as the details of the policymaking process,

following the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). Although significant

advocacy work preceded the enactment of the HEA, I start historicizing HSIs at that specific

sociopolitical moment, since this legislation is a key turning point in U.S. higher education, one

that served to catalyze, in part, extensive grassroot organizing, policy initiatives—action.

The 1960s: The Growing Momentum of Grassroot Organizing

1965
- President Lyndon B. Johnson signs into law HEA. This legislation (a) increased congressional appropriations to degree-granting institutions; (b) established federal financial aid programs, such as Pell Grants, the Federal Work-Study Program, and Stafford loans; (c) formed student support services like TRIO Programs; and (d) created the National Teachers Corps.

- President Lyndon B. Johnson also signs into law the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, replacing the immigrant quota system in place with a policy toward immigrations that was more focus on familial ties and skills (Gasman et al., 2015).

1967
- Dr. Antonia Pantoja, along with a group of Puerto Rican educators, found ASPIRA to address the educational opportunity gap experienced by Puerto Rican youth (De Jesús & Perez, 2009).

- With a $2.2 million grant from the Ford Foundation, Pedro "Pete" Tijerina, alongside other activists, founds The Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) to represent Latinxs in legal issues, particularly around educational opportunity, employment discrimination, and political rights (MALDEF, n.d.).

- On April 22, the New York Board of Higher Education charters Eugenio Hostos Community College—the first Puerto Rican college on the U.S. mainland (MacDonald et al., 2007; Laden, 1999; Olivas, 1982).

1968
- Two hundred graduating seniors walk out of their commencement ceremony at San José State College because of the underrepresentation of Chicanx students on campus and absence of bilingual programming. This walkout spurs a series of walkouts, now commonly referred to as the East Los Angeles Walkouts or the Chicano Blowouts (García & Castro, 2011; Simpson, 2012).

- The Southwest Council of La Raza (later The National Council of La Raza and now UnidosUS) formed; this group monitors data acquisition capabilities of federal agencies and disseminates this data to Latinx communities (*Hispanic Organizations*, ca 1976).

Appendix A (cont'd)

1969
- At the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver, activists write the *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, a pro-indigenist manifesto on Chicano nationalism and self-determination (Acuña, 2011).

- At the Santa Barbara Conference, a group of activists create an agenda of educational reforms, including recommendations for Chicano Studies Programs and for the access and retention of Latinx college students. Soon after, these activists—a coalition of students, faculty, and staff across colleges in California—brand themselves the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education and publish their educational plan as book, entitled *El Plan de Santa Bárbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education.* This group would later become the Moviemiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, referred more commonly to as MEChA (MacDonald & García, 2003).

- The Puerto Rican Alliance alongside the Black League of Afro-American Collegians occupy the office of the president of Brooklyn College, demanding the college implement more inclusive admission policies (MacDonald et al., 2007).

- A group of Puerto Rican students enrolled at Yale University form Boricuas Unidos, a student organization focused on increasing the enrollment of Latino students at the university (MacDonald, 2004).

The 1970s: Early Latinx Advocacy Efforts

1971
- A group of Chicanxs found the National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens to remedy the underrepresentation of Latinxs in the D.C. policy arena (*Hispanic Organizations*, ca 1976)

- National Incorporated Mexican American Government Employees, or IMAGE, (renamed National Image in the 1990s), forms to promote the employment of Latinxs in federal government (National Image, n.d.)

- The Spanish Speaking Advisory Committee to the U.S. Secretary of Labor organized the National Spanish Speaking Coalition on Domestic Affairs to assist other organizations addressing issues affecting Latinx communities (*Hispanic Organizations*, ca 1976)

1972
- On June 23, the 92nd Congress amends the Higher Education Act of 1965. Notably, with this amendment, Congress adopts Title IX, which prohibits the discrimination on the basis on sex in educational institutions receiving federal aid (Education Amendments Act, 1972).

- Cesar Perales, Victor Marrero, and Jorge Batista establish the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (renamed LatinoJustice PRLDEF) to protect Puerto Ricans' civil rights (LatinoJustice PRLDEF, n.d.).

1973

- In April, the Federal Interagency Committee on Education's Subcommittee on Minority Education issues a report on the higher education of Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians, which recommends the creation of standard definitions for racial/ethnic groups in order to compare education data across racial/ethnic groups (Office of Management and Budget, 1994).

- The League of United Latin American Citizens, or LULAC, establishes its National Education Service Centers (more commonly referred to as LNESC), a non-profit working to narrow the opportunity gap for disadvantaged youth through education and leadership programming (LNESC, n.d.).

1974

- The New York State Board of Regents charters Boricua College, the second college created specifically to meet the educational needs of the Puerto Ricans, particularly those living in the Bronx (Olivas, 1982).

1975

- Richard Salvatierra, LNESC's Assistant National Director, and Dr. Candido de León, President of Eugenio de Hostos Community College, testify before the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities of the House Committee on Labor and Human Resources on the Higher Education Amendment Acts of 1976. In their testimonies, they remark on the inequitable allocation of Title III grants and petition Congress to invest in Spanish-speaking programs in the same it currently supports HBCUs (Rodríguez et al., 2018).

- The Hispanic Scholarship Fund forms, with the mission to "empower Latino families with the knowledge and resources to successfully complete a higher education, while providing scholarships and support services to as many exceptional Hispanic American students as possible" (Hispanic Scholarship Fund, n.d., para. 2).

1976

- On October 12, the 94th Congress amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 again, this time expanding and refining vocational education programming in public schools and postsecondary institutions (Education Amendments Act, 1976).

1977

- Four years after the Subcommittee on Minority Education recommended the creation of standardized racial/ethnic categories, Office of Management and Budget (1977) adopts Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, *Race and Ethnic Standard for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*, which establishes Hispanics as a federally separate identifiable racial/ethnic group, defined as "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race" (p. 37).

1978	• The Hispanic Higher Education Coalition forms, a group including: ASPIRA, El Congreso Nacional de Asuntos Colegiales, LULAC, MALDEF, National Association for Equal Opportunities, National Council of La Raza, PRLDEF, the Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, and the U.S. Catholic Conference (Rivera, 1981).
1979	• Three separate times this year, the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition testifies before congressional subcommittees, arguing for a more equitable distribution of Title III funds to include programs serving large numbers of Latinx students (Rodríguez et al., 2018).

<p align="center">The 1980s: The Era of Educational Reform</p>

1980 .	• George H. Brown, Nan L. Rosen, and Susan T. Hill from the NCES along with Michael Olivas from LNESC publish *Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans.* This report spurs substantive debate and several congressional hearings on the postsecondary education of Latinxs (MacDonald et al., 2007).
	• The 96th Congress reauthorizes the HEA, redefining a *developing institution* as one with below average educational and general expenditures, which also enrolls a large share of financially needy students (Education Amendments Act, 1980). However, at this time, Congress does not adopt any of the recommendations issued by the HHEC about the redistribution of Title III funds.
1981	• Dr. B. Roberto Cruz founds National Hispanic University, a small private, 4-year college in Oakland, California. Closed August 23, 2015, the mission of the university was "to enable Hispanics, other minorities, women, and others to acquire an undergraduate degree or certificate using a multicultural educational experience to obtain a professional career in business, education, or technology" (National Hispanic University, 2018, para. 1).
1982	• On September 16, the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Committee on Postsecondary Education and Labor holds a hearing in Washington, D.C., where they hear from numerous Latinx educational activists, such as members of the National Chicano Council on Higher Education, LNESC, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, and the HHEC. These representatives share insight on the educational attainment of Latinxs and offer recommendations to improve the educational achievement and experiences of Latinx college students (*Hispanic Access to Higher Education,* 1982).
1983	• Ismael Almodóvar, President of the University of Puerto Rico and Chairman of the President's Association, testifies before the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor. In his testimony, he refers to colleges and universities, particularly those in Puerto Rico, has "Historically Hispanic Institutions," effectively introducing this term into the federal record (*Hispanic Access to Higher Education*, 1983).

Appendix A (cont'd)

- Congressman Paul Simon (D-IL) introduces H.R. 5240 before the 98th Congress. This proposed, but unenacted, bill authorized a capacity-building program for institutions serving large numbers of Latinx college students, or for Hispanic Institutions, which defined as a postsecondary institution with a student enrollment of which at least 40% are Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or otherwise Hispanic, or a combination thereof (Higher Education Amendments Act, 1984).

1984.

- In a prepared statement, Representative Robert Garcia (D-NY) and Chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, explains how the high attrition rates of Hispanic college students can be explained, in part, by the insensitivity of institutional settings to the particular needs of these students and urges Congress to set aside money expressly for "Hispanic Institutions," as well as to increase the amount of federal financial aid available to Hispanic college students (*Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act*, 1984).

- On April 5, Rafael J. Magallan, Executive Director of the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition, testifies before the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of House Committee on Education Labor. In his prepared statement, Magallan requests that Congress examine the way it enacts equity for Hispanic college students in the design and implementation of federal policies and discusses how elements of proposed bill, H.R. 5240, particularly how parts of Title I, Title III, Title IV, Title V, and Title IX, affect Hispanics' access and persistence in higher education (*Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act*, 1984).

1985

- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* releases a list of U.S. colleges and universities' student racial/ethnic demographics, revealing that more than 50 institutions in the continental United States had 25% or more Latinx enrollment shares (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- Dr. Antonio Rigual and Sister Elizabeth Anne Sueltenfuss, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement and President of Our Lady of the Lake University, respectively, visited the Xerox Corporation in search of money to open a Center for Hispanic Higher Education. From this meeting, the idea for the Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities emerges (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012; Revilla-García, 2011).

1986

- With 18 charter member institutions, the Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities (HACU) forms with the mission to promote the development of member institutions and to improve access for Latinx college students (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012). HACU also coins the term "Hispanic-Serving Institution" (*Excelencia*, 2014; Valdez, 2015).

- The 99th Congress enacts the Higher Education Amendments Act of 1986, which defines a "Hispanic Institution" as a postsecondary institution with a student enrollment of which at least 20% are Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or otherwise Hispanic identified (Higher Education Amendments Act, 1986).

1987
- MALDEF files a class-action lawsuit, *LULAC, et al. v. Ann Richards*, *Governor of Texas, et al.*, in which it argues border colleges in Texas, which heavily enrolled Latinxs, received inequitably less state funding than colleges and universities in other parts of the state. On October 6, 1993, the Texas Supreme Court did not find the State guilty of discrimination; however, many people credit this case for inspiring the South Border Initiative (Carales & Doran, 2020; Ortegón, 2013).

1988
- HACU's executive committee alongside its member institutions decide to assume a stronger advocacy role in advancing educational equity, leading to HACU to devise its first legislative and educational agenda, designed to advance Latinxs postsecondary education (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

1989
- On March 22, Congressman Albert Bustamante (D-TX) introduces H.R. 1561 before the 101st Congress, a bill that proposes federal financial aid to HSIs for student financial aid, recruitment and retention, academic tutoring and counseling, special educational initiatives, and local partnerships dedicated to dropout prevention and reentry, as well as defines an HSI as a public or private accredited, degree-granting 4-year or 2-year institution with 25% or more Hispanic enrollment (Hispanic-Serving Institutions of Higher Education Act, 1989). Although referred to the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Congress does not enact the bill (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- Senator Lloyd Millard Bentsen Jr. (D-TX) proposes S. 1669 before the 101st Congress. Although the bill did not make it out of committee (i.e., Senate Labor and Human Resource Committee), it sought to provide Hispanic-serving institutions with financial assistance to improve their capacity to expand Hispanic educational attainment (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- 71st Texas Legislature authorizes the South Texas Border Initiative, which finances educational programs at the nine public universities in South Texas with large Latinx enrollments (Flack, 2003; Ortegón, 2013).

The 1990s: The Legal Recognition of Hispanic-Serving Institutions

1990
- On September 24, President George H.W. Bush signs Executive Order No. 12729, creating the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, focused on expanding educational opportunities and outcomes for Latinx P–20 students (Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 1990).

1991
- HACU opens an office in Washington, D.C. to ramp up its federal advocacy work, particularly its efforts to secure the legal recognition of institutions with large Hispanic enrollments (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) introduces S.1150, which federally recognized HSIs under Title III's Strengthening Institutions Program (*Excelencia*, 2014)

1992

- On July 23, the 102nd Congress reauthorizes the Higher Education Act of 1965, legally recognizing and defining HSIs as accredited, degree-granting non-profit institutions that (a) have an FTE undergraduate Latinx enrollment share of at least 25%, of which at least 50% are also low-income, first-generation college students, and (b) in which at least another 25% of its Latinx students must also either low-income or first-generation college students (Higher Education Amendments, 1992). Although federally authorized in 1992, Congress did not appropriate any funds for HSIs until 1995 (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- On October 12, the U.S. President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (1992) publishes *A Progress Report to the Secretary of Education*, which outlines current trends in the degree completion of Hispanic college students and lists recommendations to improve these outcomes.

1994

- Through the instrumental work of HACU, on February 24, President William J. Clinton signs Executive Order No. 12900 (1994), the Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Gasman et al., 2015). Like President George H.W. Bush's White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, this group works to improve the conditions of Latinxs through policy initiatives (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012). Specifically, this "Initiative serves as a conduit between HSIs and the various federal agencies, ensuring that the mission, activities, and contributions of HSIs [are] in the forefront of the minds of policymakers and the federal government" (Gasman et al., 2015, p. 131).

1995

- The 104th Congress appropriates $12 million to HSIs under Title III's Strengthening Institutions Program (Salas, 2011).

1997

- On September 24, Representative Larry Combest (R-TX) sponsors H.R. 2534, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reauthorization Act (1997), which includes a grant competition for HSIs for fiscal years, 1997–2002. Although passed by the House on February 24, 1998, Congress did not enact the bill.

- Leaders across various MSIs form the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, as way to counterbalance some of growing intergroup tensions arising with the impending reauthorization of the HEA (Gasman et al., 2015).

1998

- Leading up to the impending reauthorization of the HEA, Congressman Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX) advocated for the following HSI-related legislative changes (a) the redefinition of HSIs, which removed the first-generation requirement and the additional proof that 25% of Latinx students were low-income; (b) the creation of a standalone grant program for HSIs, and (c) increased appropriations for HSIs (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012; *Excelencia*, 2014).

- The 105th Congress amends the HEA to include Title V—a capacity-building grant program specifically for HSIs (Higher Education Amendments Act, 1998).

1999	• HACU, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium found the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, a coalition representing the joint interests of these three separate organizations (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005).

The 2000s: The Expansion of Federal Programs or Latinx College Students and HSIs

2000	• The U.S. President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2000) publishes *Creating the Will: Hispanics Achieving Educational Excellence*, a report providing data on the current educational condition of Hispanics from early childhood through graduate and professional education, as well as offers strategies for various stakeholders to improve Hispanic educational achievement, including increasing the federal support for HSIs.
2001	• On August 1, Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduce S.1291 before members of the 107th Congress—a bill proposing to amend to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility At of 1996 by allowing States to grant undocumented, college-bound students legal residency under set conditions (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minor [DREAM] Act, 2001). Although not signed into law, passing the DREAM Act is one of HACU's key legislative agenda, given that HSIs serve communities in which considerable share of its residents are undocumented (HACU, n.d.b).
	• Similar to his predecessors, President George W. Bush signs Executive Order No. 13230 (2001) on October 12, forming his President's Advisory Commission focused on promoting the educational advancement of Hispanics—a group that among strategies considered the role of HSIs in this larger effort.
2002	• On May 13, the 107th Congress passes the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (2002), expanding competitive grants for HSIs first created under the 1996 reauthorization of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977.
2003	• On March 31, the U.S. Presidential Advisory Commission (2003) sends President Bush a report, *From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century,* which outlined an action plan to remedy the opportunity gap affecting Latinx students; among steps, this plan included the need to strengthen HSIs.
	• The Subcommittee on Select Education of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce host a few hearings in preparation of the reauthorization of the HEA. During these hearings, Latinx leaders, such as Antonio Flores and Miguel A. Nevarez, urge Congress to expand Title V to include funds to support the graduate education of Hispanics (*Expanding Opportunities in Higher Education*, 2003).

2005

- On May 5, the Subcommittee on Select Education hears testimonies from several Latinx leaders, who call for Congress to invest federal funding to increase the postbaccalaureate education at HSIs (*Expanding Opportunities for Graduate Study at Hispanic Serving Institutions,* 2005).

2006

- On September 30, President George W. Bush amends the eligibility criteria for HSIs making it so that an institution qualifies as an HIS if 25% of its FTE undergraduates are Latinx and 50% of *all* its undergraduates are considered financially needy per Title IV; this act also ends the mandatory 2-year wait-out period for Title V recipients to re-apply for new Title V grants (Third Higher Education Extension Act, 2006).

2007

- The 110th Congress enacts a provision in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (2007, [CCRAA]). Referred to as CCRAA HSI Program, its purpose is to support HSIs in expanding their capacity to serve Hispanic students and other low-income students" (OPE Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service, 2014). This act also commits $200 million dollars to help HSIs increase their number of STEM graduates and to support transfer articulation agreements (Calderón Galdeano et al., 2012).

- HACU convinces Congress to expand the U.S. Department of Agriculture's support of HSIs with the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, leading to the creation of a new cohort of Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities, five capacity-building programs, and one student career development program to meet Latinxs' higher educational needs—programs, which although legally created, have gone largely unfunded by Congress (Salas, 2011).

- On August 14, the 110th Congress signs into law the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), which creates Title V Part B or the Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities Program—a competitive grant program specifically for HSIs with graduate or professional programs.

2008

- With the passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), Congress also codifies Title III Part F, establishing the HSI STEM Articulation Program—a competitive grant program awarding funds to applicants (a) seeking to increase the number of Hispanics and other low-income students in STEM and/or (b) developing transfer and articulation agreements between Hispanic-Serving community colleges and 4-year institutions. With such a focus, this program mirrors the CCRA HSA Program. As such, the ED used the CCRAA mandated funding to support this program.

2010s: The Current Social Historical Moment

2011

- On September 30, the 112th Congress passes the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act (2011), thereby funding the ED for the remainder of the fiscal year. But amid such budgetary constraints, the HSI Division does not hold a competition for new DHSI grants (HSI Division, 2011, 2020b).

2012

- In the summer of 2012, President Barack Obama announces the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program, which the Department of Homeland Security begins implementing within the month using its discretion to grant deferred action to qualified youth (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2018). Given the communities HSIs serve, many HSIs began developing resources and centers to serve the unique needs of DACAmented students on their campuses.

- The ED does not hold a competition for new DHSI grants (HSI Division, 2020b).

2014

- On December 16, the 113th Congress passes the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (2014), thereby granting postsecondary institutions with endowments supported by Title III and Title V funds of the HEA for fiscal year 2015 to use the income from their endowments to award student scholarships.

2015

- On December 18, the 114th Congress passes the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 (2015), granting postsecondary institutions with endowments supported by Title III and Title V funds for fiscal year 2017 to use the income from their endowments to award student scholarships.

- HACU (2016) launches an online platform to help advocates better spearhead public policy issues affecting HSIs.

2016

- As part of the reauthorization process of the HEA, HACU (2016) advocates for (a) a new MSIs Innovation Fund to increase collaboration among HSIs and (b) the expansion of Title V's allowable activities to include projects designed to promote international engagement.

- The ED does not hold a competition for new DHSI grants (HSI Division, 2020b).

2017

- On April 27, HACU invites almost 40 national organizations to workshop issues pertaining to DACA and undocumented students. Together, these groups create the Community Resource Center for DACA/DREAMers and HSIs, an online resource center providing centralized information for this community (HACU, n.d.a,).

- On September 2017, President Donald Trump rescinds DACA, prompting the Department of Homeland Security to stop accepting new DACA applications and to phase out existing DACA recipients (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2018). This situation particularly affected HSIs given their role in educating many DACAmented students.

Appendix A (cont'd)

2017

- HACU spearheads efforts to launch the Congressional HSI Caucus to ensure policymakers understand the impact of HSIs in their districts, states, the United States, more broadly (HACU, 2017a).

2018

- As part of the reauthorization process of the HEA, HACU advocates for the expansion of Title V to include Part C, which would establish a new grant program to support collaborative efforts between HSIs, Emerging HSIs, Hispanic-Serving School Districts, and emerging Hispanic-Serving School Districts as way to increase student success (HACU, 2018a).

- HACU tries to reinstate the Leadership Group for U.S. Department of Agriculture, which included HSI presidents and key agency officials (HACU, 2018a).

2019

- Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, introduces the Student Aid Improvement Act; among provisions, this proposed bill simplifies the federal financial aid application process, increases aid to students with financial need, and allocates $255 million in STEM funding to MSIs (Smith-Barrow, 2019).

- As of December 16, an institution can check its eligibility Titles III or V grants using an online system developed by the ED (Grants Office, n.d.).

- On January 29, Congressman Henry Cuellar (D-TX) announces an extension for funding for HSIs, representing over $313.9 million for HSIs in the final spending bill, a $69.1 million increase from fiscal year 2019 (U.S. Congressman Henry Cuellar Office, 2020).

2020

- On September 4, HACU announces that National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week will be observed, September 14–20, 2020 (Revilla-Garcia, 2020).

- In response to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passes the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which among items, allocates $13 billion for higher education, designating $214.5 million for this funding specifically for Title V and additional monies for other relevant programs for HSIs (HACU, 2020).

APPENDIX B

Federal Eligibility Criteria for Types of Minority-Serving Institutions

MSI Type	Federal Recognition	Brief Description
Mission Created Minority-Serving Institutions		
This group of institutions, which include HBCUs and TCUs, opened with the explicit mission of enrolling and educating African American/Black and indigenous students, respectively.		
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	Higher Education Act of 1965	Institutions established prior to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 whose principal mission was and is educating African American/Black students.
Tribal Colleges and Universities	Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978	Institutions chartered by federally recognized American Indian tribes or by the U.S. government to provide higher education to indigenous students through locally and culturally based, holistic, and supportive programs.
Enrollment Dependent Minority-Serving Institutions		
Institutions within this group receive this federal designation because they enroll a set percentage of a specific group of racially/ethnically minoritized students.		
Hispanic-Serving Institutions	Higher Education Act of 1992	Institutions enrolling 25% or more FTE undergraduate Latinx students and 50% or more students who qualify for financial aid under Title IV, as well as operating with low core expenditures per FTE undergraduate student.
Alaska Native- and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions	Higher Education Act of 1998	Institutions enrolling at least 20% Alaska Native students or enrolling at least 10% Native Hawaiian students, respectively.
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions	College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007	Institutions enrolling at least 10% Asian American and Pacific Islander students and 50% or more students who qualify for financial aid under Title IV.
Predominantly Black Institutions	Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008	Institutions enrolling at least: 1,000 undergraduates; 40% undergraduate Black American students; 50% low-income or first-generation undergraduates; and that have low expenditures per FTE undergraduate student.
Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions	Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008	Institutions enrolling at least 10% Native American students, which are not Tribal Colleges or Universities.

Note. Data for MSIs' initial federal recognition is from Espino et al. (2017). Data for brief description is from each institution's respective section in the HEA. Many enrollment dependent MSIs satisfy the eligibility criteria for designation as more than one type of MSI.

APPENDIX C

Legislatively Allowable Title V Grant Activities

Authorized Activity	A	B
Purchase, rental, or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment for educational purposes, including instructional and research purposes.	Y	Y
Construction, maintenance, renovation, and improvement in classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities.	Y	Y
Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, curriculum development, academic instruction, and faculty fellowships.	Y	Y
Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials.	Y	Y
Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative and customized instruction courses (which may include remedial education and English language instruction) designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion.	Y	N
Support for low-income postbaccalaureate students including outreach, academic support services, mentoring, scholarships, fellowships, and other financial assistance to permit the enrollment of such students in postbaccalaureate certificate and/or degree granting programs.	N	Y
Articulation agreements and student support programs to facilitate transfer to 4-year institutions.	Y	N
Collaboration with other institutions of higher education to expand postbaccalaureate certificate and postbaccalaureate degree offerings.	N	Y
Funds management, administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management.	Y	N
Joint use of facilities, such as laboratories and libraries.	Y	
Establishing or improving a development office to strengthen or improve contributions from alumni and the private sector.	Y	N
Establishing or improving an endowment fund.	Y	N
Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance education technologies, including purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services.	Y	Y
Establishing or enhancing a program of teacher education designed to qualify students to teach in public elementary schools and secondary schools.	Y	N
Establishing community outreach programs that encourage elementary and secondary school students to develop the academic skills and the interest to pursue postsecondary education.	Y	N
Expanding the number of Hispanic and other underrepresented graduate/professional students that can be served by the institution by expanding courses and institutional resources.	Y	N
Providing education, counseling services, or financial information to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students or the students' families, especially regarding student indebtedness and student assistance programs under Title IV.	Y	N
Other activities proposed in the application submitted pursuant to respective section, which a) contribute to carrying out the purposes of this subchapter; and b) are approved by the Secretary as part of the review and acceptance of such application.	Y	Y

Note: Y indicates "Yes," and N indicates "No." A refers to the DHSI Program and B refers to the PPOHA Program. Data for Part A is from 20 U.S.C. §1101b and for Part B is from 20 U.S.C. §11012b.

APPENDIX D

HSI-Related Grants Appropriation and Awards

Table 20

Title V Part A Grant Appropriation and Awards, 2009–2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Authorized Allocation (in dollars)											
Total New	16,355,000	49,192,000	—	12,522,624	7,426,918	20,141,221	51,066,641	15,839,075	11,324,527	20,345,874	24,687,657
Total NCC	76,798,000	67,304,000	—	87,824,219	87,326,384	78,269,780	48,977,025	91,792,260	95,400,231	98,223,310	98,562,883
Total	93,256,000	117,429,000	104,394,792	100,431,824	95,178,637	98,583,000	100,231,000	107,795,000	107,795,000	123,183,000	124,415,000
Yearly Grant Award Amounts (in dollars)											
Max Individual	—	650,000	650,000	535,000	535,000	525,000	525,000	525,000	—	—	600,000
Max Cooperative	—	775,000	775,000	775,000	775,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	—	—	—
Total Avg. New	611,000	639,500	—	632,518	—	—	544,941	527,969	566,266	598,408	537,131
Number of Grants Awarded											
New Individual	24	65	8	13	7	29	82	23	17	24	43
New Cooperative	5	13	3	7	4	9	14	7	3	10	0
Total New	29	78	11	20	11	38	96	30	20	34	43
Total NCC	133	117	—	143	139	121	109	165	175	184	180
Grand Total	162	195	—	163	150	159	211	195	195	218	223

Note. NCC stands for non-competing continuing grant. The dash indicates missing data. Data for 2015–2017 appropriations is from the ED Budget Office (2015–2017); data for all other appropriations and awards details is from HSI Division (2020b).

Table 21

Title V Part B Grant Appropriation and Awards, 2009–2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2019
Authorized Allocation (in dollars)							
Total New	11,397,000	10,395,000	0	0	0	10,672,000	11,051,370
Total NCC	0	11,488,000	20,836,290	20,511,000	19,454,000	8,845,000	0
Total	11,500,000	22,000,000	20,836,290	20,511,000	19,454,000	19,527,000	11,051,370
Yearly Grant Award Amounts (in dollars)							
Max	575,000	575,000	575,000	575,000	575,000	575,000	600,000
Avg. New	518,000	520,000	—	—	—	—	—
Avg. NCC		522,000	466,129	—	—	—	—
Number of Grants Awarded							
Total New	22	20	0	0	0	19	21
Total NCC		22	—	—	—	—	0
Total	22	42	—	—	—	—	21
Application Details							
Competition	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Application Release	18-Jun-09	27-Jul-10				28-May-14	11-Jun-19
Application Deadline	20-Jul-09	26-Aug-10				27-Jun-14	26-Jul-19

Note. NCC stands for non-competing continuing grant. The dash indicates missing data. Empty cells represent cases when values are not applicable. No PPOHA grant competition occurred from 2015–2018. Data is from HSI Division (2020c).

Table 22

Title III Part F HSI STEM Grant Appropriation and Awards, 2010–2016

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Authorized Allocation (in dollars)							
Total New	100,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	—
Total NCC	0	100,000,000	100,000,000	100,000,000	—	—	—
Total	100,000,000	100,000,000	100,000,000	94,900,000	92,800,000	92,700,000	93,200,000
Yearly Grant Award Amounts (in dollars)							
Max[c]		870,000; 1,200,000					700,000; 1,200,000
Avg. New		870,000; 1,200,000					1,098,957
Avg. NCC		828,048; 1,142,332					
Number of Grants Awarded							
Total New	0	97	0	0	0	0	91
Total NCC	0	0	109	109	—	—	—
Total	0	97	109	109	—	—	—
Application Details[a]							
Competition	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
App. Release		25-Mar-11					04-Mar-16
App. Deadline		29-Apr-11					31-May-16

Note. NCC stands for non-competing continuing grant. The dash indicates missing data. Empty cells represent cases when values are not applicable. The first and second value under grant award amounts represents the average for an individual development grant and the average for cooperative development grant, respectively. Data for allocations and awards for 2010–2013 is from HSI STEM and Articulation Program (2013). Data for 2014–2016 allocations is from the ED Budget Office (2014, 2015, 2016). Data for application details is from the *Federal Registrar* notice inviting applications for new awards (2011, 2016).

[a] The ED used funds appropriated in FY 2010 to support the FY 2011 competition and used FY 2011 funds for the FY 2012.

[b] After sequestration funding for FY 2013 was only $94,900,000; thus, the ED reduced each NCC by $3,623 since the requested amount exceeded available funding.

[c] In 2016, the maximum grant award value was not reported; these numbers represent, instead, the ED's estimated award amount range for individual and cooperative development grants, respectively.

APPENDIX E

Geographic Distribution of Institutions by Category

Table 23

The Geographic Distribution of Institutions across Categories, 2009–2017

	HPSAs	HPUAs	Non-Applicants	Total
Arizona	0	0	6	6
California	5	10	38	53
Colorado	0	1	4	5
Connecticut	0	0	1	1
Florida	1	1	11	13
Georgia	0	0	3	3
Idaho	0	0	2	2
Illinois	0	4	5	9
Kansas	0	0	2	2
Louisiana	0	0	1	1
Massachusetts	0	0	1	1
Minnesota	0	0	2	2
Montana	0	0	1	1
Nebraska	0	0	1	1
Nevada	0	0	2	2
New Jersey	0	0	3	3
New Mexico	0	2	2	4
New York	1	1	10	12
North Carolina	0	0	1	1
Ohio	0	0	2	2
Oregon	0	0	3	3
Pennsylvania	0	0	2	2
Puerto Rico	1	5	18	24
South Carolina	0	0	1	1
Tennessee	0	0	1	1
Texas	1	5	18	24
Vermont	0	0	1	1
Virginia	0	0	1	1
Washington	2	0	2	3
Total	11	29	145	185

APPENDIX F

Participant Recruitment Email Templates

Applicant Recruitment Email

Hello {Administrator Name},

Good day! My name is Stephanie Aguilar-Smith, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University. I am emailing you because, for my dissertation, I am interested in better understanding Hispanic-Serving Institutions' (HSIs) grant-seeking and management practices, particularly around Title V grants.

To learn more about this topic, I am interviewing administrators and faculty members at multiple HSIs across the country, whose current position or previous experience affords them insight into how HSIs apply for and use Title V grants.

As you consider my request for a one-time interview, these details may be useful.

Interview Dates & Format: Interviews can be either in-person or virtual, depending on your preference and availability. With your permission, I will audio record the interview for accuracy.

- o If you prefer an in-person interview, I will be in the area <insert dates>.
- o If you prefer a virtual interview, I will schedule one with you at your convenience.

Time Commitment: The interview should take about 60 minutes.

Confidentiality, Risk, & Benefit: The topic of this study is *not* controversial. As there is little research on HSIs, the benefits of this study far outweigh its risks. However, I will still minimize any risk by using several masking techniques to maintain confidentiality.

Incentive. As a graduate student, I am unfortunately unable to incentivize your participation in this study with a large gift card. However, to show my appreciation for your time and insights, I am offering all participants a $10 Starbucks or Amazon gift card.

From my work thus far, I am aware of the many pressures HSIs face. Thus, my aim in doing this study is to support campus leaders such as yourself in securing external funding. If of interest to you, when I complete my dissertation, I will be happy to share my findings with you and others on your campus.

If you are willing to participate in this project or if you have any questions, please email me at aguila48@msu.edu. If you have any questions about the design and appropriateness of this study, you may contact my advisor, Dr. Patricia Marin, at pmarin@msu.edu or Michigan State University's IRB Office at irb@ora.msu.edu.

Thank you for considering my request,
Stephanie

Non-Applicant Participant Recruitment Email

Hello {Administrator Name},

Good day! My name is Stephanie Aguilar-Smith, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University. I am emailing you because, for my dissertation, I am interested in better understanding colleges and universities grant-seeking and management practices.

To learn more about this topic, I am interviewing administrators at multiple institutions across the country, whose position affords them some insight into how their campus approaches seeking external funding. More specifically, I noticed that your institution qualifies as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, so I hoped to speak with you about your campus's eligibility for Title V grants.

As you consider my request for a one-time interview, these details may be useful.

Interview Dates & Format: Interviews can be either in-person or virtual, depending on your preference and availability. With your permission, I will audio record the interview for accuracy.

- o If you prefer an in-person interview, I will be in the area <insert dates>.
- o If you prefer a virtual interview, I will schedule one with you at your convenience.

Time Commitment: The interview should take about 60 minutes.

Confidentiality, Risk, & Benefit: The topic of this study is *not* controversial. As there is little research on HSIs, the benefits of this study far outweigh its risks. However, I will still minimize any risk by using several masking techniques to maintain confidentiality.

Incentive. As a graduate student, I am unfortunately unable to incentivize your participation in this study with a large gift card. However, to show my appreciation for your time and insights, I am offering all participants a $10 Starbucks or Amazon gift card.

My aim in doing this study is to support campus leaders such as yourself in successfully securing external funding. If of interest to you, when I complete my dissertation, I will be more than happy to share my findings with you and others on your campus.

If you are willing to participate in this study or if you have any questions, please email me at aguila48@msu.edu. If you have any questions about the design and appropriateness of this study, you may contact my advisor, Dr. Patricia Marin, at pmarin@msu.edu or Michigan State University's IRB Office at irb@ora.msu.edu.

Thank you for considering my request,
Stephanie

Interview Protocol

Note: This script will be used to set up each interview conducted for IRB# STUDY00003746

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this project. As I noted in my email invitation, my dissertation will include interviews with administrators and faculty members at Hispanic-Serving Institutions across the country. The goal of this work is to learn more about HSIs' grant-seeking and management practices.

This interview will take about an hour of your time. To ensure that I have a good sense of your institution and your position here, the first part of the interview will include questions related to your campus and your role and responsibilities. In following sections, I will ask questions about your institution's grant-seeking and management practices.

To capture our conversation accurately, I would like your permission to record the interview. Before doing so, you should know:

- No one aside from me will have access to this audio file.
- When the audio file is transcribed for analysis, your name and the name of your institution will be masked as will any other identifying details that may emerge in our conversation.
- I will send you a copy of this transcript for your review, and afterward, I will permanently delete the audio file.
- Your participation in this study is completely free and voluntary. Please only share as you are comfortable. Also, you may decline to respond to any questions or stop your participation in the study at any time. Should you choose to discontinue the interview, you will still receive the $10 Starbucks or Amazon gift card.

When I turn on the recorder, the first question I will ask is whether you give me permission to record our conversation. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for those questions. Let's get started!
Turn on recorder.

Do you give me permission to record our exchange?
Obtain verbal consent.

Applicant Interview Guide

Segment 1: Organizational Grant-Seeking and Management Structure

In this first part, I'll ask a few questions about the institution, your office, and your role here.

1. Please describe your position here.
   a. When and how did you come into this position?
   b. What makes up your typical workday?

Use Question 2 for Grant Officers

2. I've read online a bit about the institution, but could you share more about this office?
   a. When was the office established?
   b. Where does this office fit within the organizational structure of the institution?
      i. For example, to whom does this office report?
   c. What are the main responsibilities of this office?
      i. If applicable, about how many grants does the office seek or manage??
   d. About how many staff members work in this office?
      i. Given the workload, would you consider the office under-staffed?

Use Question 3 for All Other Participants (e.g., Provosts, Faculty, etc.)

While I've read a bit online about the institution, I'm interested in better understanding how it's structured in terms of grant seeking. For instance, some institutions have standalone grant offices. Others fold grant related work into their development and advancement offices, and others rely on staff and faculty across several departments to identify and seek grants.

3. In terms of grant seeking, can you share with me this institution's structure? Does it, for example, have a grant office? Staff tasked with seeking and/or supporting grants?
   a. If it has a grant office, refer to relevant questions above.
   b. If it relies on a mix of people, can you tell me more about these staff members?
      i. In what office or department do these staff members work?
   c. If it's is less formally structured, what department or individuals generally seek grant opportunities?
      i. If applicable, what resources or mechanisms in place support these departments or individuals in seeking and managing grants?

4. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about this institution's (campus's) structure for seeking and managing grants?

Segment 2: Rationale for and Prioritization of Seeking Title V Grants

I'm interested in learning *how* and *why* HSIs approach seeking Title V grants in the ways they do. In this segment, I'll ask you about your thoughts on the grant competition itself.

1. How do you view the Title V Program? What are your overall thoughts on these grants?
   a. About individual and cooperative grants? About Part A and Part B?
   b. Do you think others in your office, across campus, or the institution share your views about Title V?

2. Why did your institution (campus) apply for a Title V grant(s)?
    a. Were there institutional needs? Pragmatic or symbolic reasons?

3. As you know, resources are limited. So, in deciding to prepare and manage these grants—should you receive one—your institution (campus) and office likely gave up other opportunities. With this in mind, where do you think applying for Title V grants fits within the institution's (campus's) and office's priorities and activities?

4. As you may know, each year, the number of HSIs increases. So, there may be more and more Title V applicants. Have these trends influenced or changed how your institution (campus) or office approaches applying for Title V grants?
    a. For example, has this informed the kinds of projects you all propose, the effort you put in, or the partners you approach?

5. How do you think these trends affect your you all's chances of getting a grant?
    a. Overall, would say your institution (campus) is optimistic or concerned about its chances of getting a Title V grant?

6. Relatedly, given your past experiences (i.e., grant receipt or rejection), do you expect your institution (campus) will keep applying for these grants?

7. The Department of Education only awards a few Title V grants each year. Considering all the different HSIs and, presumably, applicants, which institutions do you think are best positioned to win these grants? Which do you think would benefit most from them?

8. Overall, what are your thoughts about the equity of this grant competition?
    a. Does this grant competition seem fair to you? How so? Why or why not?
        i. What do you think would make this grant competition more fair?
    b. Do you think others in your office and across the institution (campus) share similar views as you?

9. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about your views on the Title V grant competition? Those of your office? Campus? Institution?

Segment 3: Specific Grant-Seeking Practices

Now, I'll ask about your institution's Title V grant-seeking practices. Some of these questions are sort of specific, so I realize that you may be unsure of some answers and may need to check or look up information to best respond. If needed and appropriate, I'd be happy to follow up with you via email about some of the more specific questions.

1. Do you know when your institution (campus) first applied for a Title V grant? Either a Title V Part A: Developing HSI Program (DHSI) grant or a Title V Part B: Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) grant?

2. Do you know if your institution (campus) has ever been involved in cooperative Title V grant, either as primary applicant or partner institution? If yes, see questions below:
    a. Who was the partner(s) institution?
    b. How did you all set up this arrangement? Prepare and submit this proposal?

3. If applicable, do you know when your institution (campus) first <u>got</u> a Title V grant? Either an individual or cooperative Title V Part A or Title V Part B grant?

Grant Proposal Preparation

1. How do you (or the office) track Title V opportunities?

2. How do you (or the office) come up with potential projects and prepare these proposals?

3. Who is or has typically been part of the grant application process?
   a. Do you (or the office) work with others across campus or externally? If so, who? Why?
   b. Are there people or organizations you wish you all did or could collaborate or consult with when preparing Title V grant application materials?

4. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about your office's or institution's (campus's) grant-seeking practices?

Segment 4: Grant Management (*Only for Highly Persistent Successful Applicants. To note, given the focus of this study on grant seeking, this data was not centered in my analysis.*)

Through this study, one of my goals is to support HSI administrators and faculty seeking and managing grants. So now, I'll ask about your institution's (campus's) experience as a current or previous Title V grant recipient.

1. What has it meant for your institution (campus) to get a Title V grant(s)?
   a. What have been some of the benefits? Challenges?

2. How would you describe your institution's (campus's) implementation of its Title V-funded project?
   a. Has this money enabled you all to launch the project as you proposed it?
   b. Relatedly, how have (or will) you all evaluate(d) your Title V-funded project?

3. Can you describe you all's process in preparing and submitting Title V's annual reports?

4. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about your institution's (campus's) receipt and management of Title V grants?

Segment 5: Wrap-Up

1. Imagine you're speaking to an official who could change any part of the Title V Program, such as which institutions could apply for these grants, the duration of these awards, or anything else. What would you ask them to change? Why?

2. Do have anything else you would like to share with me about your institution's (campus's) grant-seeking and management practices, particularly around Title V?

3. Do you have any questions for me?

Non-Applicant Interview Guide

Segment 1: Organizational Grant-Seeking and Management Structure

In this first part, I'll ask a few questions about the institution, your office, and your role here.

1. Please describe your position here.
   a. When and how did you come into this position?
   b. What makes up your typical workday?

Use Question 2 for Grant Officers

2. I've read online a bit about the institution, but could you share more about this office?
   a. When was the office established?
   b. Where does this office fit within the organizational structure of the institution?
      i. For example, to whom does this office report?
   c. What are the main responsibilities of this office?
      i. If applicable, about how many grants does the office seek or manage??
   d. About how many staff members work in this office?
      i. Given the workload, would you consider the office under-staffed?

Use Question 3 for All Other Participants (e.g., Provosts, Faculty, etc.)

While I've read a bit online about the institution, I'm interested in better understanding how it's structured in terms of grant seeking. For instance, some institutions have standalone grant offices. Others fold grant related work into their development and advancement offices, and others rely on staff and faculty across several departments to identify and seek grants.

3. In terms of grant seeking, can you share with me this institution's structure? Does it, for example, have a grant office? Staff tasked with seeking and/or supporting grants?
   a. <u>If it has a grant office</u>, refer to relevant questions above.
   b. <u>If it relies on a mix of people</u>, can you tell me more about these staff members?
      i. In what office or department do these staff members work?
   c. <u>If it's is less formally structured,</u> what department or individuals generally seek grant opportunities?
      i. If applicable, what resources or mechanisms in place support these departments or individuals in seeking and managing grants?

4. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about this institution's (campus's) structure for seeking and managing grants?

Segment 2: Grant (Non)Seeking Rationale

I'm interested in learning *how* and *why* HSIs approach seeking grants in the ways they do, particularly how they seek Title V grants. And so, I am curious about why your institution (campus), to my knowledge, has not recently applied for one.

1. First, how would you describe your awareness of the Title V Program?
   a. Your institution's (campus's) eligibility for these grants? Their benefits? Implementation challenges?

     b.   Do you think others in your office, across campus, or the institution are similarly aware of the Title V Program?

2. As you know, resources are limited. So, in deciding to pursue a grant or any opportunity, your institution (campus) would possibly give up other opportunities. Considering this, can you share with me, if applicable, what kinds of grants or external funds your office and the institution (campus) prioritizes?
       a.   Why do you think you all pursue those options over others?

3. According to the Department of Education, your institution (campus) qualifies as an HSI and is eligible to receive Title V funds. However, to my knowledge, the institution (campus) has not recently applied for a Title V grant. Can you speak to why your institution (campus) hasn't applied (or hasn't recently applied) for one?
       a.   Would certain information or resources enable you all to pursue Title V grants?

4. As you may know, each year, the number of HSIs increases. So, there may be more and more Title V applicants. Has this affected your office's or institution's (campus's) views or decision-making around seeking Title V grants?
       a.   With this, do you think your institution (campus) will apply (or begin re-applying) for these grants in the future? If no, why?

5. The Department of Education only awards a few Title V grants each year. Considering all the different HSIs and presumably applicants, which institutions do you think are best positioned to win these grants? Which do you think would benefit most from them?

10. Overall, what are your thoughts about the equity of this grant competition?
       a.   Does this grant competition seem fair to you? How so? Why or why not?
             i.   What do you think would make this grant competition more fair?
       b.   Do you think others in your office and across the institution (campus) share similar views as you?

11. Is there anything else that may be important for me to know about your views on the Title V grant competition? Those of your office? Campus? Institution?

Segment 3: Wrap-Up

If the participant seems familiar with the Title V Program.

1. Imagine you're speaking to an official who could change any part of the Title V Program, such as which institutions could apply for these grants, the duration of these awards, or anything else. What would you ask them to change? Why?

2. Do have anything else you would like to share with me about your institution's (campus's) grant-seeking and management practices, particularly around Title V?

3. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX H

Member Checking Email

Hello {Participant Name}

Thank you again for setting time aside to meet with me; I sincerely appreciate it. As discussed, attached is the transcript of our interview so that you can check it for accuracy.

Transcript Details
- The transcript refers to you only by your pseudonym; your name does not appear anywhere within the document.
- Although I pseudonymized your name and that of your institution, I will apply additional masking techniques as I continue with data analysis and dissemination.
- I very lightly edited the transcript for ease of readability by, for example, removing cases in which either of us excessively used filler words such as "like" or "um."

Checking the Transcript
- If you want to redact or revise any part of your transcript to enhance its accuracy, please use Microsoft Word's track changes feature.
- If you do not want to make any revisions or add anything more, please do not feel compelled to respond to this email. I realize you are incredibly busy.

Next Steps
At the close of this study, I will share with you the findings from this research. Of course, if you or others on your campus would be interested, I would be happy to discuss this work with you in more detail either through a campus visit, digital meeting, or some alternative means. In short, please let me know if there is any way that I may be of service to you and your campus.

Lastly, as I reviewed your transcript, I was incredibly grateful for everything you shared with me and all that you and others on your campus are doing to best support your students.

With gratitude,
Stephanie

APPENDIX I

Post-Interview Reflection Questions

Participant: _____

Institution: _____

Interview Date: _____

Please rank the overall quality of the interview

     1 star   2 stars   3 stars   4 stars   5 stars

How did the interview go? Did it go as expected? Were you surprised by the process in some way; how so?

What was the most memorable part of the interview? What was the most salient idea, theme, or dialogue of the interview?

Which interview question was the most generative? Why?

What follow-up questions, if any, do you have for the participant?

How did the interview reflect (or not) the site's organizational documents?

How does the data from this interview relate to data from other sites in this category?

How does the data from this interview relate to data from all other sites.

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