July 2012

To:  Advisory Board Members, Co-Principal Investigators

CSULB’s Title V, Hispanic Serving Institution grant

From:  Donald Para, Provost

Re:  HSI Grant Transition

On behalf of California State University, Long Beach, I am writing to express my great appreciation to you for your service on the first Title V, Hispanic Serving Institution, *Mi Casa, Mi Universidad* grant, which has recently concluded federal funding. The grant was originally scheduled to conclude in June 2011. Because the grant had not been spent out, the federal grant managers gave approval to spend out the grant by May 31, 2012. Due in part to the lack of cooperation between political parties in Washington, an opportunity to apply for continuation of this grant was not available to our campus.

I am also writing to provide you with a status report on many of CSULB’s efforts to support the success of Latino students, and all students on our campus.

**CSULB Diversity**

CSULB is among the most diverse universities in the nation with no majority ethnic group. CSULB has a very high percentage of first-generation and Pell-eligible students. In the past eight years, the number of Pell-eligible entering freshmen at CSULB has increased by 80% (to 1,937 from 1,076). In Fall 2011, 49% of CSULB entering freshmen were Pell-eligible. The troubled economy has also prompted a large increase in students attending locally; in the past eight years, local students have increased by over 100% (to 1,783 from 867) and in Fall 2011, 45% of new freshmen were local.

By federal definitions, CSULB is both an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Pacific Islanders Serving Institution (AAPISI). In 2010, 29% of all CSULB students were Latino and 22% Asian. Among freshmen entering in Fall 2011, 75% of Native Americans, 65% of
Latinos, 64% of African Americans, and 51% of Asians were Pell-eligible. These statistics demonstrate that CSULB serves a high need population.

**Student Success Initiatives**

CSULB’s academic purpose is “to graduate students with highly valued degrees.” This expresses a commitment to both the quality of the degree and to supporting all students all the way to completion. Student Success is a central organizing principle of the mission of California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). In the last ten years many campus programs and initiatives have been established which have significantly and positively impacted each student’s path to graduation. The improvements in CSULB graduation rates have been dramatic and improvement has been evident for quite a long period of time. From 1996 to 2008, campus graduation rates rose steadily from below 30% to 54% for all freshmen (1990 to 2002 cohorts). In most recent data, lower division retention for all students is showing 6-7% gains for underrepresented and non-underrepresented students. Gains for Latino students are encouraging:

- 2.2% gain in Latino freshman 1-year retention (2010 cohort measured in 2011 compared to prior year)
- 1.5% gain in Latino freshman 2-year retention (2009 cohort measured in 2011 compared to prior year)
- 6% gain in Latino freshman 3-year retention (2008 cohort measured in 2011 compared to 2003)
- 2% gain in Latino freshman 6-year graduation rate (2005 cohort measured in 2011 compared to 2003)
- More than doubling (118% increase) in Latino freshman 6-year graduation rate (2003 cohort measured in 2009 compared to 1990)

These dramatic gains mirror improvements for other subgroups on campus and reflect the campus-wide efforts to improve success for all students. To sustain and enhance improved graduation rates, CSULB’s Highly Valued Degree Initiative (HVDI), was implemented in 2010 to support campus wide student success programs. One component of CSULB’s HVDI, The Student Excellence Fund (SEF), was initiated and developed in 2011 by President Alexander. The intent of SEF is to support various programs that support student and programmatic excellence and student success. Last year Academic Affairs allocated about $2.2m to programs aimed at supporting student success through a formal review and selection process. SEF funded student success programs are evaluated each year, based on an increasingly comprehensive collection and evaluation of data.

Dramatically reduced funding from the state, however, has meant severe reductions across the campus, including drastic reductions in HVDI/SEF allocations. Academic Affairs must use all but about $400,000 its 2012-13 SEF funding to protect existing advising positions. Very little is available for any new student success programming, sadly.

While most of the student success programs are campus funded, there are a host of initiatives that bring off-campus funding to complement campus resources.
HSI Mi Casa, Mi Universidad

In 2006, CSULB was awarded a five year HSI Grant, Mi Casa: Mi Universidad. During the funding period, Latino student retention, graduation, and academic achievement have steadily improved, as statistics already cited demonstrate. Under the dedicated leadership of Gloria Inzunza-Franco, who worked collaboratively across campus divisions, student success programs and initiatives for Latino students were created and implemented. Additionally, collaborations were forged with on-going campus programs and initiatives to increase Latino student awareness of and utilization of existing programs and services. Programs and initiatives from the original HSI grant have become part of the university student success programs. These include:

- This HSI grant served as a platform for our second, HSI STEM grant, now entering its second year.
- Promotores de Educación, a peer advising program in the first HSI grant, is continued on a smaller scale in the HSI STEM grant.
- Beach Learning Communities for at-risk freshmen continues.
- A Faculty Training Module on culturally competent pedagogy has been developed, evaluated, and used by faculty.
- Spanish Parent Orientation continues.
- Latino Student Welcome continues.

Gloria Inzunza-Franco has joined the university academic advising team. Under the direction of AVP Lynn Mahoney, the team will continue to develop and administer campus wide programs as part of HVDI.

HSI STEM

In Summer 2011, CSULB was very pleased to learn that it was being awarded a new five-year grant based on Hispanic Serving Institution: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (HSI STEM) programs. Beginning with the Fall Semester 2011, this new grant began to implement its initiatives and actions. Some programs and initiatives that were elements of the former grant have been included in the new HSI Grant. President Alexander has been the Principal Investigator on both HSI grants.

The campus HSI emphasis has shifted to STEM disciplines. At CSULB, these disciplines lag the university in graduation rates very substantially. In recent data, the graduation rate for the science college was 23% below the university average. The engineering college lags as well, although by much less, and is showing recent encouraging gains. STEM disciplines are the site of our most acute current need for improvement. Therefore, it is most important and timely that our focus for Latino students (and other students too) shift to these fields. The HSI STEM Grant is housed in a different location from the first HSI Grant. This means that some of the services offered by the first grant, such as free printing to students, were not included in the new grant.
The Future

HSI is a designation not a project. HSI designation is an ongoing commitment to improvement in the success of Latino students. As statistics noted above demonstrate, the campus has attained very substantial gains in Latino success prior to and during the duration of the prior HSI funding and the campus is committed to additional gains during the period of current HSI STEM funding. A consistent principle of the HVDI is that there are students who need to be educated and assisted in attaining their individual goal of graduation. While grants and other extraordinary funding are very helpful in running pilot programs, some of which become part of the on-going fabric of the university, the university’s commitment to increasing graduation rates for all students and to eliminate the graduation rate gap remain the prime goals of HVDI.

Again, on behalf of California State University, Long Beach, I extend my great appreciation to you for your service on the Title V, Hispanic Serving Institution, Mi Casa, Mi Universidad grant, which has recently concluded federal funding. Thank you very much.