



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Hispanic Serving
Institution Initiatives

ANNUAL REPORT

20
25
—



Meet the Team



Marla Franco, PhD
Special Advisor
HSI Initiatives



Riley McIsaac
Director
Grants Development



Karla Silva, PhD
Director
HSI Initiatives



Mara López, EdD
Director
HSI Research



Dan Xayaphanh, EdD
Director
CIELO



Monique Beltran
Executive Assistant
HSI Initiatives



Martel Serwenda
Senior Coordinator
CIELO



Paulette Nevarez, MPH
Graduate Associate
AZ HSI Consortium



Andrea Salgado
Student Assistant
HSI Initiatives



Maria Cooperstein
Student Assistant
HSI Initiatives

Connections to UA Strategic Imperatives

Each dot represents a UA Strategic Imperative. HSI Initiatives intentionally aligns with the University of Arizona's Strategic Imperatives, which you will see throughout the report.



Success for Every Student



Research that Shapes the Future



Engagement with Our Communities
to Create Opportunity

HSI Programs

Learn more about our signature programs and efforts designed to strengthen servingness in collaboration with campus and community partners.

UA HSI Ambassadors

The UA HSI Ambassadors program aims to cultivate an informed network that can quickly and intentionally mobilize to connect our campus and local community to HSI-related opportunities.



43

Ambassadors since 2023

Centering Servingness Webinar Series

The Centering Servingness Webinar Series features the scholarship of UA faculty and staff, who engage in servingness efforts. The series is free and open to the public. Recordings can be viewed on the HSI Initiatives YouTube Channel.

7

Total Webinars 2024-2025

526

Total Registrants 2024-2025



Hispanic Serving Institutions and STEM Workforce Development



Building Inclusive Communities: The Success of the Blue Chip Men of Color...

HSI Day of Service

Together, 18 students, staff, and faculty supported the institution's strategic imperatives of community engagement, access, and impact. In partnership with Tucson-based nonprofits the Sunnyside Foundation and Flowers & Bullets, volunteers participated in a neighborhood clean-up and service activities.

72

hours of service



Día de los Muertos

To celebrate Día de Los Muertos, a community ofrenda was created using clay pieces designed by participants. The event included musical performances and a mercado. Thank you to the Co-chairs, Dr. Nadia Alvarez Mexia, W.A. Franke Honors., Dr. Sandra Bernal, School of Landscape Architecture, and Dr. Karla Silva, HSI Initiatives.

Organizers & Sponsors

Hispanic Serving Institution Initiatives, W.A. Franke Honors College, College of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Architecture, University of Arizona Campus Store, College of Humanities.



HSI Programs

Hispanic Heritage Football



The day brought together alumni, students, and community members with food, music, and cultural celebration leading up to the game. The event honored the vibrant Hispanic community connected to The University and Tucson area, aligning with the broader Hispanic Heritage festivities on campus.



UA HSI Forum



The 2025 UA HSI Forum provided participants with university-wide highlights on HSI capacity building efforts, connection with others seeking to advance servingness, an HSI grant awardees panel, and the opportunity to deliver input on future priorities. Additionally, a team of leaders from Rutgers University attended to learn about the UA's servingness efforts.



89

Registrants



Hispanic Heritage Soccer



The Arizona Wildcats women's soccer team hosted Grand Canyon University at Murphey Field. The celebration included a tailgate before kickoff with food and mariachi. The Wildcats secured a 5-2 victory.



HSI Greek Coalition



The HSI Greek Coalition, in partnership with [Fraternity & Sorority Programs](#) and HSI Initiatives, supports leadership, service, and engagement opportunities that advance The University's strategic imperatives of student success, belonging, and inclusive excellence.



- Gamma Alpha Omega, Sorority, Inc.
- Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc.
- Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity, Inc.
- Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc.
- Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc.
- Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc.
- Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc.
- Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority, Inc.



59

Total active members

HSI Programs

UNIDOS Faculty & Staff Association

The UNIDOS Faculty & Staff Association at the University of Arizona is dedicated to building a strong, inclusive community among all faculty, staff, and interested professionals.

2025-2026 Co-Chairs



Martha Sestega, PhD
Program Manager
Office of Curricular Affairs



Adrián Arroyo-Pérez, PhD
Associate Director
Faculty Affairs

2025 Award Recipients



Yonarki Garcia Varela
Assistant
Professor of
Practice



Dominique Calza
Co-Director,
Student Culture
& Engagement
Hub



Karla Silva
Director,
HSI Initiatives



Vanessa Perry
Associate
Professor of
Practice

UA Hispanic Alumni Club

Visionary Hispanic leaders joined together in 1982 to establish the UA Hispanic Alumni Club. The Club has provided millions in financial aid to thousands of scholars. Their community-wide impact can be seen in their fundraising efforts which include multiple endowments and scholarships.



More Than
\$2.2 M
Endowment

\$1.26 M
Awarded in
2025-2026

Scholarships
Awarded to
3,800 +
Scholars

Bilingual Initiatives Symposium

The 2nd annual Bilingual Initiatives Symposium titled, "Building Capacity for Bilingual, Bicultural and Biliterate Higher Education," was hosted on March 28, 2025. This one-day symposium sought to foster conversations on bilingualism (English / Spanish) across the UA within the Hispanic Serving Institution and Borderlands contexts.

The symposium was hosted by: Jhonatan Henao-Muñoz, W.A. Franke Honors College, Dr. Matthew Austin, W.A. Franke Honors College, Dra. Jessica Zeitler, University Center for Assessment, Teaching, & Technology (UCATT), and Dra. Itzel Íñiguez, Office of General Education



72
Attendees



21
Presenters



4
Institutions Represented

- The University of Arizona
- Pima Community College
- Cochise College
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Excelencia in Education

The University of Arizona received the Seal of Excelencia for the third time in 2025. Recertified as a Hispanic Thriving Institution, the certification is grounded in Excelencia's framework. The UA has proven its commitment to transforming with sustainable strategies that intentionally SERVE Latino students while intentionally serving all students.

Excelencia in Education also named Blue Chip Leadership Experience a Program to Watch and recognized the LAWtina Mentoring Program as a finalist for Examples of Excelencia.



HSI Programs

Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities



The Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities is a coalition of 25 research-intensive institutions dedicated to boosting the success of students pursuing advanced degrees and contributing to the scientific research workforce, while leveraging our collective research capacity to address critical societal challenges. The HSRU Senior Faculty Program Liaison is Dr. E. Fiona Bailey.

HSRU Postdoctoral Fellows



Josheili Llavona-Ortiz

Post Doctoral Researcher,
T32 Cancer Prevention &
Control



Rietta Wagoner

Post Doctoral Researcher,
T32 Environmental Toxicology
of Human Disease

Crossing Latinidades



Led by the University of Illinois Chicago, the Crossing Latinidades Summer Institute equips doctoral students in U.S. Latino/a/x Humanities Studies with the intellectual tools, comparative frameworks, and scholarly confidence needed to develop innovative dissertation research as they advance toward candidacy. Through intensive dialogue, workshops, and engagement with leading scholars, participants expand their critical thinking, creativity, and methodological approaches.



Maria Jose Hernandez

Ph.D. Student,
Center for the Study of
Higher Education,
College of Education



Rosa Maldonado

Ph.D Student,
Department of
Mexican American
Studies

Curriculum Development Institute



Launched in 2021, Curriculum Development Institute (CDI), is a week-long, summer immersion focused on training and coaching faculty and instructors towards implementation of effective teaching practices into existing courses of all modalities, including distance and online learning environments.



55

2025
Participants



58%

Represented
STEM disciplines



22,000

2025 Enrollment
in Redesigned
Courses



99%

Retention for 1st
year students in
CDI course



78,000

student
reached since
2021



195

Total courses
redesigned
since 2021



191

Faculty
participants
since 2021

Collaborative partners include:

HSI Initiatives, University Center for Assessment Teaching, & Technology (UCATT), Center for University Education Scholarship (CUES), Faculty Affairs, College of Science, and College of Education

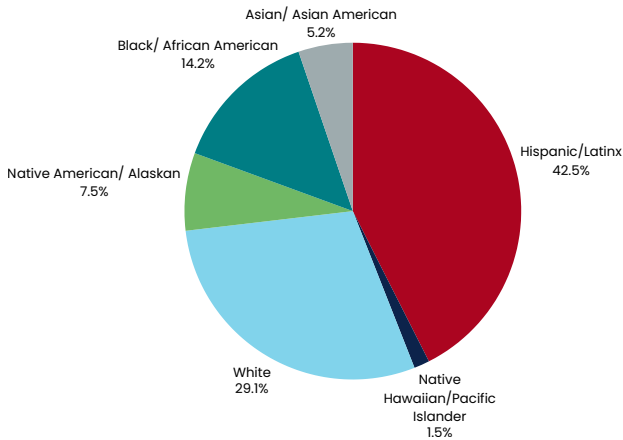


CIELO provides high-impact experiential learning opportunities that integrate travel, global education, service learning, cultural exchange, and community-engaged leadership across local, statewide, and international settings to empower students with knowledge and skill sets to utilize as they continue their careers at UA and beyond.



The program has continued to build partnerships across campus and with other HSI institutions, helping it expand its capacity to serve students and bring this innovative learning experience to other institutions. CIELO partnerships have included UA Athletics, Arizona Online, the Agnese Nelms Haury Program, and the W.A. Franke Honors College, among others. Through partnerships, CIELO provided funding for students, offered academic credit, and established new innovative programs. CIELO was also recognized as a micro-credential program offering the Global Experiential Learning & Engagement digital badge for participants.

Racial/ Ethnic Background of student participants since 2022



3,056+

Student Participants since 2022

54%

First-generation college students

90+

Faculty & Staff facilitators

25%

Graduate student participants

43%

Pell students at time of participation

73%

Arizona residents

\$127,000

Scholarship funding secured and awarded in AY 25-26 from Agnese Nelms Haury Programs, HSI, and Maestro Cares Foundation

CIELO Global Education Program Destinations

Bali, Indonesia
Cambodia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic

Ghana
Hawai'i
Japan
Laos

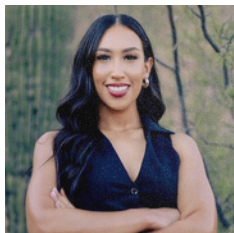
Mexico
New York
Peru
Puerto Rico

Thailand
Vietnam

Tribal Nations: Hopi Nation, Navajo Nation, Pascua Yaqui Nation, Tohono O'odham Nation, White Mountain Apache Nation

Maestro Cares Foundation Scholarship Recipients

Co-founded by international pop icon Marc Anthony and entrepreneur Henry Cárdenas, in partnership with the University of Arizona's CIELO Program, is proud to offer a scholarship supporting outstanding STEM undergraduates.



Briana Crystal Buelna



Carlos Ramon Meza Espinoza



Kimberly Becerra



Korina Vianne Loya

HSI Grants & Research Development

Capacity Building Through HSI Grants and Research Development

Receiving HSI designation from the U.S. Department of Education does not provide additional funding. Instead, institutions are eligible to compete for funding opportunities available to HSIs.

HSI Initiative's grants development team works to identify, track, and evaluate HSI related funding opportunities and connect them with PIs and teams throughout campus.

Work in this area aligns with all three Strategic Imperatives. The majority of our grant support centers student success; we work closely with faculty and staff to develop research proposals; and have strong and reciprocal partnerships in the communities we serve.

Proposals may be responding to funding opportunities that are:

1) for HSIs only

2) for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) only

3) any funding opportunity that intentionally involves minority students and/or communities/populations

128

Proposals Submitted, totaling

\$141M

2025

41

Proposals Awarded, totaling

\$30M

2025

2025 HSI Related Award Spotlight



Fostering Undergraduate Student Persistence and Community in STEM Through the Graduate Educators IMPACT Institute

- PI Kimberly Sierra, STEM Learning Center
- Sponsor: National Science Foundation

The IMPACT Institute for Graduate Educators, is a professional development experience that prepares graduate students to teach and mentor with confidence, creativity, and compassion at the UA. Through engaged learning, community collaboration, and intentional mentorship from experienced educators, participants explore student-centered, asset-based teaching practices that recognize the unique stories and experiences students bring to their STEM classrooms.



HSI Grants & Research Development

C-STAR: Increasing Understanding of Degree Completion at the UA



In 2025, HSI Initiatives, Assessment and Research, and Societal Impacts, teamed up to design a new internal, one-year funding opportunity called “Completion Strategies Tested for Acceleration & Refinement” (C-STAR). Directly aligned with Strategic Imperative #1: Success for Every Student, the goal of C-STAR is for selected teams to use a data informed approach to identify strategies, programs and practices that positively contribute to degree completion at the UA.

2025 Funded Projects

Building a Case for Biocalculus

Project Lead: Lauren Harrison, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
This project compares student outcomes (retention, graduation, and time-to-degree) from two Calculus I pathways to determine which path most positively impacts undergraduate student success.



Evaluation of the Efficacy of the UA VIP Program to Improve Student Retention and Graduation Rates

Project Lead: Dr. Kay Orzech, Program Coordinator for Vertically Integrated Projects

This project analyzes five years of existing quantitative and qualitative data for the Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) program to determine the extent to which the program contributes to retention, graduation, and overall student success.

Measuring the Impact of CIELO: Assessing Culturally Responsive Global Experiential Learning as a Pathway to Degree Completion

Project Lead: Dan Xayaphanh, Director, CIELO
This project will focus on analyzing CIELO student participation data compared with institutional data to determine whether CIELO participation is associated with stronger outcomes in student persistence and graduation.



Understanding Impact of AIR Education Program Internships

Project Lead: Maria Sohn Hasman
This project compares retention and graduation rates for two Arizona Institute for Resilience (AIR) student internship experiences, the “RISE” and “Earth Grant” programs.

HSI Grants & Research Development

HSI Grants Development Institute



HSI Initiatives held its 5th annual HSI Grants Development Institute, December 5, 2025, hosted at partnering HSI, Pima Community College. The purpose of this full-day institute is to:

1. Generate awareness of HSI related funding opportunities
2. Strengthen understanding of HSI models and frameworks.
3. Cultivate networks among those with shared interests for pursuing HSI funding opportunities.

To respond to rapidly changing national priorities, this year's emphasis was to provide participants with timely, actionable insights for navigating the current national grant climate.

55

Participants

Hispanic Serving Institutions

17

7

States (Including Puerto Rico)

From 4 Year HSIs

74%

26%

From 2 year HSIs

Had never written a grant

19%

93%

Feel more prepared to write an HSI related grant than before the Institute

Coalition Building

HSI-Honors Consortium

HHSI Webinar Fall 2025

Every fall semester, the Consortium organizes a webinar in coordination with a volunteer steering committee member. This year, the webinar was hosted by St. Edward's University. The leader, Dr. Emma Woelk, coordinated a panel session and small group conversations, whose main topics were mentorship, student funding, study abroad, and experiential learning. More than 40 attendees and five presenters participated in this webinar. California State University, Long Beach, will host the third webinar in Fall 2026 under the leadership of Dr. Sandra Perez, Director of Honors.



40
attendees



National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Conference 2025

- 1. HSI-Honors Interest Group Presentation** chaired by Dr. Andrew Fleck, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. For the second year, this group, as an extension of the Consortium, held a conference session in which more than 50 attendees participated. The two-hour presentation included a conversation forum and panel presentations with the participation of Honors students, faculty, and staff.
- 2. Student Participation.** This is the first year that W.A. Franke Honors participated in this conference as an effort grounded in the Consortium and leadership development. Two students, Gabi Arroyo and Andrea Hernandez, leaders of Nepantla Student Association (NSA) in the UA, represented students in various sessions, including the NCHC Student Committee, to learn and discuss topics related to students in Honors.



Coalition Building

AZ HSI Consortium

Launched in 2021, the AZ HSI Consortium seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of Arizona HSIs to intentionally support conditions necessary for student success in Arizona. The AZ HSI Consortium aims to bring together all HSIs across Arizona to develop a community of practice to engage collectively in professional development, support the exchange of evidence-based and intentional practices, facilitate successful transfer of students to Arizona universities, and collaborate across HSIs when seeking funding opportunities and other important partnerships.



AZ HSI Summit

- The 4th Annual AZ HSI Summit took place on October 24, 2025 at Arizona Western College in Yuma, AZ. The summit is a one-day, in-person conference for faculty, staff, administrators, students, and community partners aimed at:
 - Showcasing and exchanging evidence-based practices.
 - Building capacity among faculty and staff to teach and lead at HSIs.
 - Creating opportunities for networking and community building across AZ HSIs and Emerging HSIs.

All session materials and an executive summary can be found on the [AZ HSI Consortium website](#).



167
Attendees



42
Submissions
Received



26
Sessions



9
STEM Sessions

Coalition Building

AZ HSI Evidence-Based Practices

In 2022, the AZ HSI Evidence-Based Practices Committee launched its inaugural nomination process to begin collecting evidence-based practices from HSIs in Arizona. Since 2022, 12 total programs/initiatives have been deemed evidence-based practices.



12

Total programs recognized since 2022



3

Awardees in the 2024-2025 cycle



7

Awardees in the 2023-2024 cycle



2

Awardees in the 2022-2023 cycle



Awardees

- West Valley (WV) Pathways to Teaching Grow Your Own (GYO) Partnership, Northern Arizona University
- Blue Chip Leadership Experience, University of Arizona
- Project Outreach FAMILIA (Forwarding Academic Mechanisms Integral to Learning in the Academy), University of Arizona

AZ HSI GATE

In 2024, the AZ HSI Consortium launched the AZ HSI GATE funding opportunities. The AZ HSI GATE funding opportunities support individuals and teams at AZ HSIs in leading efforts that align with the consortium's aims and in an effort towards focused change.

Awards were made possible by the Helios Education Foundation and the National Science Foundation (award # 2311013).

Awardees



17

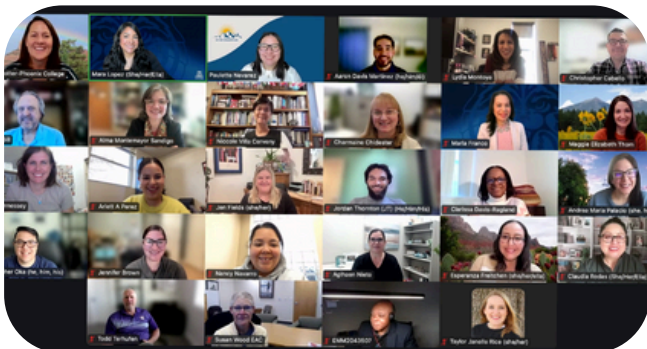
Applications received

\$200,000

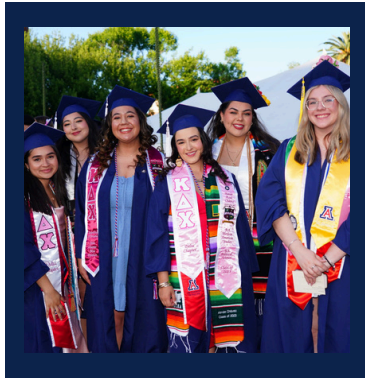
Total funding awarded

9

2025 GATE awardees



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Recognitions



Affiliations

