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LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AT HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST UNITED STATES: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Abstract

This scholarly paper explores leadership education across Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in the Southwest of the United States. We searched for inclusion of social justice, ethics, and community engagement aspects within leadership programs. Leadership education programs in higher education and specifically at HSIs must be intentional about offering programs, curriculum, and experiences that adopt inclusion of those who are underrepresented within the leadership realm. While scholarship concerning HSIs as complex organizations has grown, consideration of how leadership education programs contribute to truly serving their unique students is still in its infancy. This inquiry found that there are a number of similarities among leadership programs at HSIs in the way of academic location, degree offerings, and class format, but it also details missing characteristics of social justice, ethics, and community engagement within these areas. We propose that through further examination and future research, a framework of leadership education with underpinnings of social justice, ethics, and community engagement can be beneficial in truly serving underserved and underrepresented student populations specifically at HSIs.

Purpose of Inquiry

While there is an abundance of scholarship on leadership theory (Northouse, 2019), behaviors (Kotter, 2012), and practices (Rogers, 2003), contemporary literature focuses on leaders and organizations that are already widely represented within the leadership realm. Moving forward attention needs to be focused on how educators can actively transform leadership education across programs (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). In an effort to challenge historical models of leadership which are exclusive and targeted towards a limited number of privileged individuals, this study aims to better understand leadership education programs across Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in the Southwest United States. As institutions become more diverse and take their role to provide more inclusive curriculum, it is important for leadership programs to engage students in matters of social justice, ethics, and community engagement. Combined, these attributes, as a part of their programs, show a commitment to promote leadership for underserved students within your institution, the community, and society. We aim to highlight existing theoretical and practical frameworks that consider underrepresented and underserved individuals in leadership education. Further, this paper aims to explore new leadership paradigms for leadership education at HSIs that are grounded in social justice, ethics, and community engagement. We can use findings from this study to improve leadership programs for more diverse leaders that allow us to train individuals to address complex issues that impact society in a meaningful way.

Assessing Leadership Programs

We propose that to better understand leadership education programs at HSIs, an intersection of social justice leadership and leadership education lenses should be utilized. In particular, the Pedagogy of Transformative Leaders Model (Brown, 2004) can serve as a useful framework for analyzing leadership education. This model offers a multidimensional assessment that addresses leadership education for social justice and equity.

Brown (2004) combined Adult Learning Theory (Brookfield, 1995), Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1997), and Critical Social Theory (Freire, 2000) with pedagogical strategies for action within leadership programs to develop this multidimensional theory. We find this model useful when considering underrepresented and underserved student populations at HSIs because of the inclusion of social justice, race/ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic lenses. It also helps us to recognize if HSIs are delivering leadership education that prepares leaders to be the change within their society. Being the change embodies respect and empathy, disrupts structures that support marginalization and exclusive practices, and encourages a move towards equity and justice (Gewirtz, 1998; Godfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Theoharis, 2007). While these frames and inquiries have primarily been used in educational leadership programs, an expansion into other leadership programs (i.e., leadership studies, agricultural leadership, nursing leadership) will benefit leadership education across the board for underrepresented student populations.

Some leadership scholars have called for equity-based leadership approaches that challenge traditional models widely used in practice today (Tillman & Scheurich, 2013; Santamaria, 2014). By incorporating social justice leadership along-side common concepts such as authentic, transformational, and transactional leadership theories, educational leaders can begin to form a foundation inclusive of social justice leadership. Equity based research may be useful as programs establish approaches that increase social justice and equity awareness. Further, taking into consideration how the sharing of marginalized experiences has significantly contributed to improved perceptions, understanding and application of social justice leadership, it can also encourage practices that promote social justice and equity (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Jean-Marie et al., 2006; Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998). These frames and approaches are useful when exploring a dedication within programs to transform oppressive structures that perpetuate inequities within leadership and beyond.

Hispanic Serving Institutions

Hispanic Serving Institutions have increasingly become the fastest growing Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the U.S. (Noopila & Pichon, 2020; Núñez et al., 2015). "HSIs are defined as public and private not-for-profit degree-granting institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more undergraduate full-time equivalent Hispanic enrollment" (Santiago, 2006, p.3). With a dedication to enroll and serve underserved groups, HSIs can be found across the country, but over half of HSIs are located in the Southwest of the U.S. (Noopila & Pichon, 2020; Núñez et al., 2015). These institutions are dedicated to meeting the needs of minority students, lower income, first-generation, and other underrepresented students; additionally, they are uniquely suited to lead in the effort to fill gaps in leadership that persist today.

Because HSIs employ a diverse workforce, they offer environments that significantly increase learning and cultivation of necessary leadership skills for a diverse and socially just society (Gasman & Conrad, 2013). HSIs enroll a substantial share of minority students, many of whom might not otherwise attend college. The continuous development and success of these institutions is critical for realizing our nation's higher education and workforce goals and for the benefit to society. Further they play vital roles for the nation's economy, especially with respect to elevating the workforce prospects of disadvantaged populations, reducing the underrepresentation of minorities and disadvantaged people in graduate

and professional schools, and providing career advancement in positions that require post baccalaureate education and training (Gasman & Conrad, 2013). It is time for HSIs to dedicate efforts towards getting underrepresented groups into leadership positions where they will enact change.

Leadership for Tomorrow

The call for leadership education and development has never been more critical than it is today; organizations of all types require multidimensional employees capable of leading at various levels. Today's workforce seeks employees who possess soft skills, adapt to change, and work collaboratively and efficiently in diverse teams (Ahmed et al., 2012; Komives et al., 2011; Yilmaz et al., 2017). Further, individuals should have knowledge of transformational leadership and broad change which involves people within organizations formulating consequential decisions; displaying courage and skills and doing these things better; and reacting smarter and quicker in order to compete in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment (Moldoveanu & Naravandas, 2019; Warrick, 2011). The need for leadership development is not one that is group specific; it embodies the realms of governments, organizations, disciplines, communities, and social structures across the country.

In higher education, the demands to prepare the leaders of tomorrow are much needed. A closer look at interdisciplinary leadership education and development reveals significant initiatives aimed at the preparation of leaders across the board. From university mission and vision statements that underscore the commitment to leadership development and to the exponential growth of leadership programs across academic colleges, there are numerous efforts to make higher education the central driver of leadership education (Mitchell & Daugherty, 2019). In the last decade, we have seen an emergence of leadership programs across fields to include health, social sciences, nursing, STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, math), and engineering, to name a few (Burman & Fahrenwald,

2018; Davis et al., 2018; Ihrig et al., 2018; Kendall et al., 2018; Sheetz et al., 2019). Further, non-academic leadership training, panels, programs, and centers have surfaced in virtually every area of the university. More established in theoretical and conceptual frames are formal leadership education programs such as leadership studies, educational leadership, and business management which are areas of study that grant degrees. These efforts underscore the pursuit for leadership development that is multidisciplinary and uniquely suited for students within an academic environment.

Leadership education and development are important to institutions of higher education and various programs across units have surfaced as a result. However, conventional concepts and practices which dominate curriculum and program development today were designed for a limited number of privileged individuals who inherently viewed themselves as leaders (Hackman et al., 1999). These structures are neither complete nor sufficient for leadership education at HSIs because they perpetuate inequities among populations that are already underrepresented and underserved in leadership. Further, foregoing approaches neglect considerations of those that will undertake positions of responsibility outside of senior leadership and formal authoritative positions (Hackman et al., 1999). Individuals will shape the face of leadership within their communities and beyond through their unique leadership identities (Komives et al., 2005). By bringing unique lived experiences to the table, tackling issues of injustice, and sharing community initiatives in which they are involved, students play a pivotal role in directing the narrative for social justice, ethical, and community engaged leadership. For these reasons, meaningful leadership education initiatives at these institutions must be considered.

Because HSIs have the opportunity to impact leadership education programs, we should seek to know more of how they espouse their commitment to social justice, ethics, and community engagement. HSIs must rise to the challenge of fostering justice within leadership education, i.e. preparing future

leaders for a world that is diverse in ideas and practices (Hackman et al., 1999), while considering the wealth of knowledge to develop leadership frameworks for underrepresented population. Through a dedication for conceptualizing leadership education for social justice, programs can enhance research and practice that develop new thinking and transform various areas (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). By setting the foundation for HSIs and other MSIs in leadership education delivery specifically geared towards historically underrepresented individuals we can become trendsetters and pave the way for our students to attain leadership roles that will change our society.

An increasingly important mission of higher education is developing and preparing students with ethical and socially just leadership qualities (King, 1997). The new paradigm of leadership education recognizes the increasing necessity for all students to participate in leadership development within higher education and become a force for change (Astin, 1993; Astin & Astin, 2000; Mendez-Morse, 1992, 2004). This movement challenges traditional models of leadership development which are narrowly focused on a few designated individuals and encourages full participation and access. Leadership education and development can expand to be all-encompassing, enable abilities and frame competencies that are inclusive of those who are not traditionally represented within the field or in the workforce (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This is contrary to prescriptions of the past which offer leadership education to an elite group or those who choose to aspire to leadership positions.

Now more than ever, it is collectively agreed that higher education has the responsibility to develop future leaders (Astin & Astin, 2000; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). This call can be seen through missions and the emergence of leadership programs and initiatives across institutions of higher education (Cress et al., 2001; Dugan, 2006). Moreover, leadership has been designated as an essential college outcome expected from higher education (Sommers et al., 2004). There is a call to prepare leaders that are equipped in removing oppressive practices and replacing them

with ones that are mindful, accepting, equitable, and culturally responsive (Furman, 2012). HSIs can lead the way to make this call a reality through a dedication to educate their richly diverse student populations with the necessary proficiencies to change the landscape of leadership. To move towards leadership education specifically designed to promote change for the future, this study sought to better understand leadership education programs at Hispanic Serving Institutions in the Southwest United States and recognize a baseline in which programs can grow.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the central research question "What does leadership education look like at Hispanic Serving Institutions in the U.S.?" A case study is a design that allows individuals to perform an in-depth investigation of program constructs within institutional settings by using various sources of data and analysis (Yin, 2003). Qualitative research allows for recognition of emergent themes and patterns for in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002); therefore, it was a natural fit to explore aspects of leadership programs as articulated by the institutions. Document analysis was utilized to further investigate if aspects of social justice, ethics, and community engagement were included within leadership programs. According to Fitzgerald (2012), document analysis allows the researcher to review documents that were created previously to draw conclusions about a phenomenon, policy, event, and/or an institution. It allows the researcher to "locate, interpret, analyze, and draw conclusions about evidence presented" (p. 298). Adding to that, Fitzgerald explains that documents have to be systematically analyzed requiring checking, rechecking, and refining. Qualitative comparative Analysis (QCA) was used to analyze the data across the different cases (Patton, 2015). QCA allowed for assessments of differences and similarities amongst cases.

Analysis. Data from the 46 HSIs were placed into a table for systemic and critical analysis. The tables organized the data by program description, curriculum description and mission and vision. Emergent themes across data were identified and the themes were coded in clusters of related topics, each of the codes were given a specific color code for ease of analysis. The consolidation of all coded data was entered into one document and preliminary analysis began.

The data collected from institutional websites were analyzed for overarching patterns. These data were coded and grouped together into clusters, further the clusters were put into a table to prepare for analysis. From there, data were analyzed and "+" was used to denote presence of phenomena while a "-" was used to denote absence of phenomena. We then reviewed tables looking for similarities among cases as well differences.
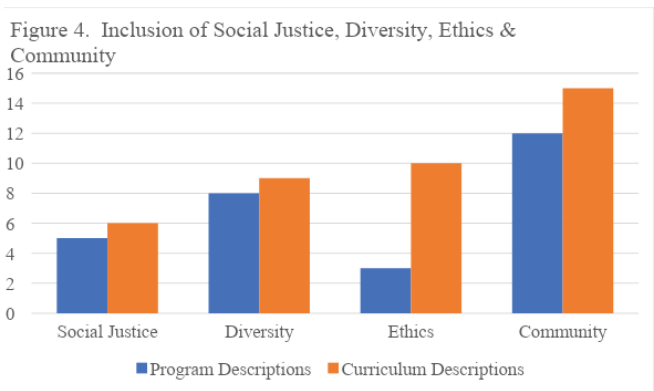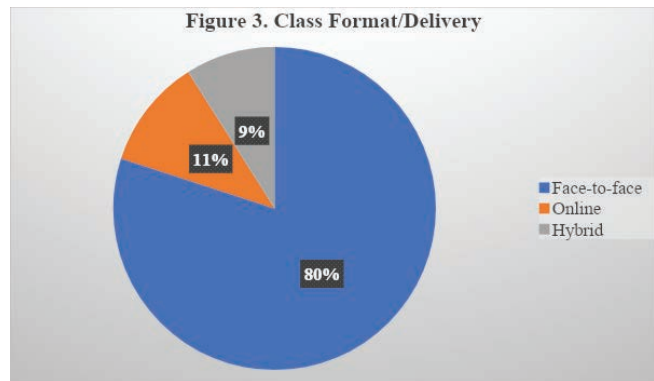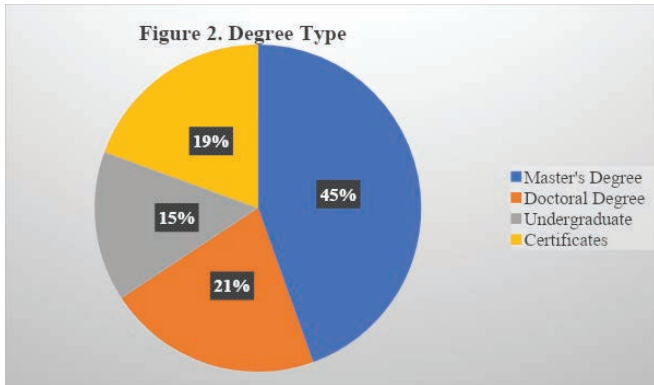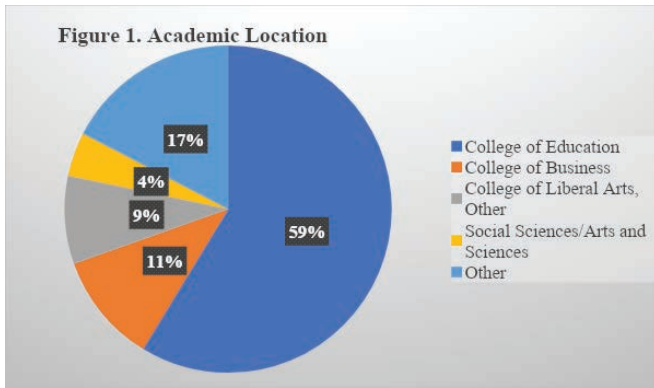
For this study, we examined 46 leadership programs across 13 Hispanic Serving Institutions in the Southwest United States. All programs that included leadership within the title were assessed. Pseudonyms were given for each of the respective programs, all programs are referred to using pseudonyms Public-1 through Public 46. Document analysis was used to consider the written communication of programs across HSIs. A document summary form was created to highlight programs that embraced aspects of social justice, ethics, and community engagement. The intent of the analysis was to investigate the landscape of interdisciplinary leadership education programs across HSIs. Specifically, we analyzed data from the websites that included the following: program descriptions, curriculum, and information about program values and prioritizations. The data were put into a table for qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (Patton, 2015). QCA allowed for the examination of similarities and differences between the individual programs. The data were organized based on themes that emerged from program descriptions. The analysis explored aspects of social justice, ethics, and community engagement. Once the analysis was completed multiple peer reviewers examined the QCA table to ensure trustworthiness of these data.

The four peer reviewers examined the data to check for researcher interpretations and consideration of the emergent themes. Further, the reviewers scanned the data clusters to ensure that they fit into the specific categories, all discrepancies within the data were deliberated and revised accordingly.

Researcher Positionality. As full-time educators at postsecondary institutions, the researchers bring unique perspectives to their understanding of leadership education. Through their interactions inside the university setting, there is a chance for continuing progress in establishing inclusive leadership education. The research was conducted with the utmost care to avoid misrepresenting the data acquired and allowing for the influence of prior experiences, influences, dispositions, and attitudes on the outcomes. Additionally, the researchers maintained a neutral stance, conscious of the way their beliefs were conveyed through the data interpretation.
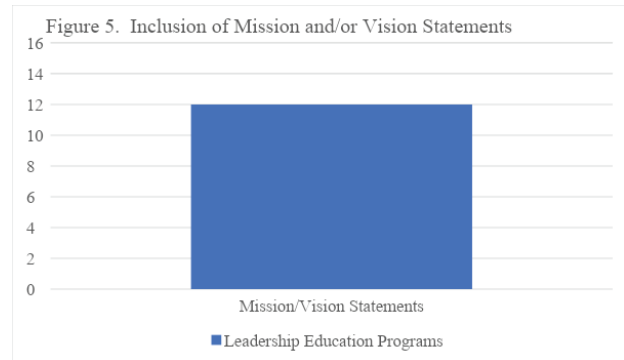
Findings

Description of Leadership Programs. Each of the 46 (N=46) leadership programs were public, four-year, HSIs in the following states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Using the acquired data, we systematically searched for themes across programs to include: the college or academic location of the program; the type of degree or certificate awarded; the class format; the program description; curriculum requirements; and mission/vision statements. Based on these data, academic location showed that an overwhelming 59% (n=27) of the programs were housed within Colleges of Education, followed by 11% (n=5) within Colleges of Business, and 9% (n=4) within Colleges of Liberal Arts, Nursing and/or Health. While 4% (n=2) of the programs were located in Social Sciences/Arts and Sciences Colleges, and 17% (n=8) are in a college other than these mentioned (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Academic Location

College of Education — 59%
College of Business — 11%
College of Liberal Arts, Other — 9%
Social Sciences/Arts and Sciences — 4%
Other — 17%

Figure 2. Degree Type

Master's Degree — 45%
Doctoral Degree — 21%
Undergraduate — 15%
Certificates — 19%

Figure 3. Class Format/Delivery

Face-to-face — 80%
Online — 11%
Hybrid — 9%

We assessed data from websites to learn more about what types of degrees and certificates were awarded by the program as well as the format in which the classes are offered. The majority of degrees were graduate level with 45% (*n*=21) master's degrees and 21% (*n*=9) doctoral degrees. Undergraduate minors and degrees made up 15% (*n*=7) of the program offerings; certificates accounted for 19% (*n*=9) (see Figure 2). Delivery of leadership programs were offered in three formats: face-to-face 80% (*n*=37), online 11% (*n*=5), and hybrid 9% (*n*=4) (see Figure 3).

Program descriptions, curriculum, and program mission and/or vision statements were analyzed for inclusion of verbiage associated with social justice, diversity, ethics, and community. Looking at program descriptions, out of the 46 (*N*=46) programs, 11% (*n*=5) included content about social justice, 17% (*n*=8) on diversity, 7% (*n*=3) on ethics, and 26% (*n*=12) on community (see Figure 4). Class descriptions for the programs were also assessed for language of social justice, diversity, ethics, and community. Upon review of each of the programs, 13% (*n*=6) included classes with features of social justice, 20% (*n*=9) on diversity, 22% (*n*=10) on ethics, and 33% (*n*=15) community (see Figure 4). We searched each of the program websites for mission and vision statements. From the 46 programs that were considered, 26% (*n*=12) included a mission and or vision statement located within the program's websites (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Inclusion of Social Justice, Diversity, Ethics & Community

Program Descriptions / Curriculum Descriptions

Figure 5. Inclusion of Mission and/or Vision Statements

Mission/Vision Statements

Leadership Education Programs

Themes or What Was Learned? There were a number of key takeaways gained from the study, specifically leadership education programs have similar characteristics across HSIs, primarily in the way of degree offerings, academic location, and course delivery. Few programs mentioned social justice, ethics and community engagement within program and curriculum descriptions which may highlight the need for wider articulation and inclusion within programs.

Leadership education is wide ranging with programs in business, nursing, tribal leadership, and philanthropic areas to name a few. While there were differences in the types of programs by their disciplines, objectives were similar throughout. This is consistent with literature that suggests programs should define skills, approaches, and concepts necessary for individuals to lead effectively (Huber, 2002). Several differences noted among them were with the students that were being targeted as well as outlined goals and outcomes. Interdisciplinary programs sought to educate students in a more holistic nature and tended not to require years of professional experience. For example, Public-36 focuses on developing leaders with the desire to train:

Professionals capable of intelligent and creative analysis, communication, and action in leadership functions. Some flexibility in the curriculum is permitted to meet the diverse educational needs of our diverse array of students who are often at different points of time in their careers.

This interdisciplinary program emphasized building a foundation of leadership that can be used by students within their profession. Public-43 targeted individuals with years of professional experience and highlighted their program was designed by high level executives and aimed to "equip MBA graduates with the leadership skill set that will propel their careers and give them and their organizations a sustained competitive advantage." Public-45 described the preparation of "scholarly practitioners and is designed for practicing educator-leaders who work in a range of settings and who want to transform their practice and create better learning opportunities for students of all ages." A stark difference between programs was whether they were seeking to build the foundation for leadership or to propel existing leaders within their profession.

There are common themes that are present across disciplines; these include equipping students with understanding and skill in knowledge, praxis, and reflection (Harvey & Jenkins, 2014). For instance, one program, Public-6 shares that they give "graduate students in environmental disciplines the important leadership and communication skills needed to increase their influence and reach above and beyond academia." Public-2 describes equipping students with:

the skills to facilitate school-level and systemic change; create and sustain a culture of innovation and collaboration; successfully lead curriculum development; interpret and use data to support student success; provide effective feedback, support, and evaluation for teachers; build a community network of support for students and schools; and ensure equitable and excellent educational opportunities and support for all students.

Focusing on knowledge, Public-3 states "this rigorous, standards-based leadership preparation program provides students with the knowledge and expertise to become transformative administrators or teacher leaders with a deep and unwavering commitment to providing excellent and equitable educational opportunities for all students." While another Public-11 "offers students opportunities to develop the added knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for leadership roles in a variety of educational settings." Clearly, the acquisition of skill and knowledge of leadership is present in several programs.

Taking a look at leadership education specifically at HSIs brings in a new layer of complexity, but one that is vital to understanding how to progress in teaching leadership to those who are historically underrepresented and underserved within programs and professions. Since the inception of HSIs there has been growing appeal on how institutions can adapt their practices to better serve their unique student

populations (Santiago, 2010). Considering the needs of students at HSIs, leadership education at these institutions must take on a structure of their own. This requires a commitment to reconceptualizing and creating education that is inclusive of those marginalized and enhances the practice and understanding of social justice leadership.

 A preliminary finding of this study suggests that a typology of programs which are inclusive of foundational elements for advancing leadership studies through lenses of social justice, ethics, and community engagement is lacking. Garcia (2017) calls for a typology of HSI identity which includes cultural and institutional theory that guides how to truly serve students at the organization. Even today with the number of HSIs growing so rapidly, there is a lack in consensus about HSI identity. What scholars do agree is that designating organizational identity to those earmarked as HSIs is a complex task. Of the variables that weigh into the complexity, HSIs do not have a rich history or structure for serving their students (Gasman, 2008). At the programmatic level, there is the presence of culturally relevant curriculum at some HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019; Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Martinez & Gonzales, 2015) but the number of these offerings are limited. As scholars, we must continue our pursuit for theories and practices that illuminate what it is to be an HSI and further establish models of programs at HSIs that purposefully act to serve our unique student populations.

What Does Leadership Education Look Like Across HSIs? Leadership education is definitely robust across institutions in the Southwest but there are some similarities in academic location, degree offerings and class delivery. While programs can be found in Business, Liberal Arts, Social and Health Sciences Colleges, the majority, 59% of programs offering leadership education are found within Colleges of Education. Each of the respective colleges have programs that are common across HSIs, i.e., Educational Leadership and Nursing Leadership. Other programs are more unique to a specific institution and or colleges, i.e., Engineering Leadership and Philanthropic and Community Based Leadership. Most programs are graduate level with 45% offering Master's degrees and 21% offering Doctoral degrees. Programs are offered in three primary formats, face-to-face, hybrid and online, with 80% offered face-to-face, 11% online and 9% hybrid. While offerings in undergraduate education include bachelor's, undergraduate minors, and certificates there are far fewer opportunities to study leadership formally at these institutions for undergraduate students, this is also the case across institutions throughout the U.S.

The program descriptions outline specific content included within the area of study. For this particular sample, knowledge, skills, experiences, values, and behaviors were among the most commonly mentioned characteristics. There was emphasis on aspects of diversity and community engagement within many of the programs and across the board there was language of preparing students who are capable of intelligent analysis, communication, action, and research. Much of the development and capabilities that were articulated address the needs of employers who specifically seek to fill leadership positions within organizations. A clear consensus can be established among these programs in the Southwest when it comes to articulated purposes and goals.

Among the programs there were clear expressions of offerings for professional students who already possessed work experience. The descriptions targeted individuals earlier in their careers and those who already had skills and knowledge within their professions, for example the descriptions explain that the program will "assist leaders in all industries who are in early or first-time leadership or managerial positions" (Public-44), "prepare educators with the skills and knowledge needed to be effective leaders in technology" (Public-42), and meet the "needs of full-time professionals in the field" (Public-18). These are examples of how HSIs have extended their graduate education to non-traditional students and working professionals.

Leadership Education for Social Justice. As we move into analysis in terms of emphasis on social justice, ethics, and community engagement, cohesion among programs becomes less apparent and themes began to appear based on academic location. Institutions of higher education have increasingly worked to develop and prepare leaders who are socially just and ethical (King, 1997). Scholarship on social justice within leadership has established frameworks that encompass three central concepts to include social justice as a praxis, social justice crossing multiple dimensions, and social justice necessitating the development of competences on the part of the leader (Furman, 2012). Together these concepts contribute to social justice leadership as praxis.

We scanned program documents for inclusion of the term social justice. Of the programs assessed, five (*n*=5) of the 46 programs included the term social justice in the course description. Some of the descriptions illustrated a commitment to social justice, for example "the Doctorate in Educational Leadership is a dynamic program designed to prepare educational leaders to be reflexive scholar-practitioners who are committed to promoting equity, social justice, and transformation" (Public-37). Others explained the building of philosophies, like these who state, "students acquire valuable analytical skills while developing their philosophies in social justice and leadership" (Public-17) and "the minor degree emphasizes a social justice approach and offers students hands-on experience in exercising critical sociological consciousness in venues concerned with pressing local, national, and international issues" (Public-16) to highlight a few. Through commitment to social justice philosophies and development programs can prioritize social justice leadership praxis for their students at HSIs in the Southwest.

Scholarship on social justice within education focuses on multiple methods used within classrooms. To embrace inclusive practices within schools, social justice and marginalization issues must be addressed (Cooper, 2009; Furman, 2012; Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken, 2009; Giles et al., 2005; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; López et al., 2010; Merchant & Shoho, 2010; Riehl,

2000; Riester et al., 2002; Ryan, 2006; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008; Wasonga, 2009). Further, authentic participation that facilitates the opportunity for empowerment is fundamental (Goldfarb & Grinberg 2002). Programs can display inclusive practices and authentic participation through course offerings that specifically speak to social justice and empowerment within the curriculum. For the programs that we assessed, a mere six out of the 272 classes offered specifically mentioned social justice within the course descriptions. This finding suggests that an emphasis on social justice is less likely embedded within leadership programs across HSIs.

Leadership Education for Ethical Leadership. Of the 46 leadership education programs across HSIs that were examined, only three (*n*=3) of the programs included ethics within the program description. Further, of the 272 classes that were offered by the programs 10 of them included ethics within the course descriptions. These data reflect that few of the programs and course offerings within leadership education across HSIs articulate ethics as part of their agenda. Ethics is an imperative part of curriculum in higher education and many parts of education have ethical features (Illingworth, 2004). Because of the need for professionals to lead ethically and with integrity, teaching ethics within leadership education is imperative (Ahmad et al., 2017). It should no longer be an option but a requirement for programs. Curriculum design and classroom activities can be an excellent place for ethics learning and development. Further, activities that engage in examination of ethical values and behaviors can greatly contribute to students' own ethical leadership expansion (Wall, 2018). Scholars argue that if practicing professionals have a fundamental understanding of ethical theory they will carry that into the profession where they will achieve ethical behaviors (Altekruse et al., 2004). With the necessity of leaders to act and make ethical decisions, inclusion within leadership education should naturally integrate aspects into the curriculum. The importance of future leaders being adequately educated and trained in leadership ethics cannot

be overstated, the absence of ethical components embedded within leadership program descriptions and curriculum is a matter that must be addressed.

Mission and Vision. Mission and vision statements display the priorities and values of institutions, colleges, and programs in the Southwest. Scholars consider mission statements when assessing institutional purpose and responsibility (Caruthers & Lott, 1981). Further, for institutions that are dedicated to serving historically underserved student populations, like HSIs, mission and vision statements can serve as a clear call to action. If the mission of an institution highlights the efforts to educate marginalized students it signals to the leadership that policies, procedures, and resources should adhere to these promises (Contreras et al., 2008). Looking for mission and vision statements can be useful in identifying program priorities, especially in regard to the inclusion of key terms.

Because of the importance of mission and vision statements we examined leadership education programs for their inclusion of mission and vision statements. Of the 46 programs, 12 included mission and or vision statements that speak to the program objectives. A few of the statements include a commitment to ethical and social justice leadership. For example, Public-17 explains:

The mission of the Higher Education Administration and Leadership (HEAL) program is to develop ethical leaders whose practice relies on critical thinking and is informed by research and theory to work in colleges, universities, and other educational agencies as a means of advancing social justice and diversity.

Yet another, Public-29 states:

The mission of the Department of Educational Leadership and Administration at …University is to prepare and graduate capable, skillful, and dynamic educational leaders for a diverse society. Through the use of theory and practice we aim to develop change agents and role models for socially-just educational systems.

Others indicated transforming the lives of others by enacting change, Public-39 describes their mission to "educate, enhance and transform the lives of our students" and their vision imagines:

…a society in which those in leadership and management positions affect changes that benefit individuals, groups, communities, and organizations through the application of time-tested practices, innovative problem solving, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to anticipate and embrace change.

These statements are examples of programs signaling their values and expectations.

Implications

This exploratory study aimed to understand what leadership education looks like at HSIs in the Southwest United States. This study is a first step in gaining information about social justice, ethics and community engagement within leadership programs and intends to encourage more empirical research about education for students at HSIs, particularly those underrepresented and underserved within the realm of leadership.

There are a number of takeaways that can be gained from this study. While leadership programs across colleges and departments are extremely diverse in their focuses, there are a few characteristics that hold true of programs across HSIs. This is particularly the case when it comes to degrees offered by leadership programs and class delivery. The great majority of leadership education programs are offered at the graduate level, this finding suggests that HSIs may want to explore offerings for undergraduate students. This finding is consistent with Riggio et al. (2003) who explains that while the number of leadership education programs have grown, there has been a lag in curriculum based and undergraduate leadership options for students. To address these types of

issues efforts towards clear leadership practices grounded in fundamental principles help to improve education across programs (International Leadership Association, 2021). Another similarity among programs were their face-to-face course formats, this paves the way for consideration of hybrid and online formats. As we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to accommodate student learning classes must be flexible and have the capability to be offered either hybrid or online. A number of students at HSIs are non-traditional students, these include first-generation, adult learners, working professionals and others that work multiple jobs. For this student population, face-to-face courses offered on campus during the day may not be a viable option and can act as a barrier to student access.

Several leadership programs are located within colleges of education across HSIs, this opens opportunities for leadership education within other colleges, and a consideration of how interdisciplinary programs can benefit students across majors by providing many with foundations of leadership that are necessary when they enter the job market. Because leadership studies programs must prepare students to operate within a diverse world and navigate change (Huber, 2002), the importance of educating students across disciplines cannot be overstated.

One of the more surprising findings of this study was the lack of ethics verbiage within leadership programs. Ethics is central to leadership, and leaders are influential in establishing ethical conditions within their environments (Northouse, 2019). But to lead ethically and justly requires preparation with theory, practice and self-reflection, a deep mindfulness of one's identity and morals which sets the foundation for guidance within the societal context (Tenuto & Gardiner, 2018). HSIs are capable of paving a path for ethical leadership that prepares underserved populations to lead for change. The International Leadership Association (ILA) established principles for the development, reorganization, and evaluation of leadership programs to encourage quality and growth (2021). Increasingly, there is a call for intentional

consideration of how ethics are and will be addressed and engaged as well as ethics as a central feature embedded within leadership education programs (Ritch & Mengell, 2009). Research on leadership preparation suggests that programs should seek out innovative approaches that encourage consideration of social justice and equity issues (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). These important matters are present within many educational leadership programs across the country but should not be limited to programs housed within the College of Education (Young & Lopez, 2005). Undertaking these important initiatives would ensure the best academic preparation and social outcomes for all students at HSIs. To establish strong leadership models specifically geared toward underrepresented populations HSIs need to take into consideration important factors such as the campus culture, leadership content that is inclusive, how to deliver and evaluate knowledge and skills necessary for student success (Kuh, 1996). Before we move towards a framework for leadership education, careful inquiry of current programs and practices should be considered, this will allow for us to take inventory and build on what we know about existing programs.

Recommendations

Based on this study we have a better understanding of what leadership education looks like at HSIs located in the Southwest United States. To move forward and be intentional about a commitment to leadership education for our unique student populations we must first recognize who our students are and how our programs speak directly to them. Inquiring about how programs articulate features of social justice, ethics and community engagement is a good first step.

King (1997) stressed the importance of higher education in developing ethical and socially just leadership qualities. We believe that it is imperative to clearly articulate these initiatives and commitments at the program level. Programs can articulate features of ethics and social justice within

their descriptions, missions, and vision statements, as well as their curriculum. Program assessment can be used to gain an understanding of features that are already included within program documents and what needs to be added. In order to explore the contents and contexts of leadership programs across HSIs we recommend the use of the International Leadership Association website. At minimum setting forth frameworks and distinctiveness of leadership programs will allow for special consideration of unique student populations and program directions.

We suggest that future research in the area of leadership education at HSIs may benefit from considering if frames of social justice, race/ethnicity, gender, and socio- economic status are utilized within programs. Further, inquiry about how leadership education at HSIs is different or similar to that of other higher education institutions. These inquiries are a good start and can provide valuable information on how to move forward with curriculum and leadership development for underrepresented populations.

justice frameworks and practices that specifically meet the needs of our underrepresented and underserved student populations. A comprehensive knowledge of leadership education frameworks being used across leadership programs at HSIs will help build educational initiatives that promote social justice and change for underserved populations. Further, this work hopes to bring together a coalition of HSI leadership faculty and staff that are dedicated to promoting research and scholarship within all areas of leadership education. This scholarship will be utilized to link research, policy, and practice by building a network of educators and policy makers affiliated with HSIs focused on establishing practices that support socially just and ethical leadership education for underrepresented and underserved populations.

Conclusion

To truly serve our underserved and underrepresented student populations at HSIs we must find innovative ways to provide exceptional education and experiences that empower us to lead the change in all aspects of life. Social justice, ethics and community engagement are fundamental to leadership development and should be considered within leadership education programs at HSIs. While this is not an exhaustive study it is a first step in demonstrating areas of leadership education that can be investigated in the future. We hope to further the discussion on how HSIs in the Southwest and specifically leadership education programs across disciplines can work to deliver the best education for their underserved and underrepresented populations.

Information gained from the inquiry into leadership education at HSIs will expand knowledge of social

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