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Mission-Based vs. Enrollment-Based Institutions: Segmented Governance at a Catholic Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

Gina Ann Garcia & Demetri L. Morgan

Abstract: Despite the increase in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), the role of governing boards in advancing servingness is under-examined. Guided by two organizational frameworks that offer paradigmatic shifts for enrollment-based institutions (Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Understanding Servingness in HSIs) and governance (Equity X Governance), we explored how trustees at one Catholic HSI make sense of their HSI identity in relation to the fiduciary duty of obedience. Drawing from an 18-month research-based partnership that included multiple data sources, we used in-depth interviews to center the voices of six trustees. Findings illuminate a mission-segmented

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approach to governance exemplified by the trustees' comfort in understanding their mission-based Catholic identity while evading the enrollment-based HSI identity. We argue that trustees must understand HSIs as unique and offer recommendations for research and practice, calling attention to the distinct role of boards in influencing servingness.

Keywords: Hispanic Serving Institutions, governing boards, trustees, fiduciary responsibilities, Catholic Colleges & Universities

Since 1992, the number of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), which are non-profit U.S. colleges and universities that enroll at least 25% fulltime equivalent enrollment of Hispanic students and are eligible for federal funding under Title III and V of the Higher Education Act, increased from 189 to 600 in 2022 (Excelencia in Education, 2024). In that same 30-year period, higher education scholars documented what it means to be Latine-serving¹ beyond enrollment and competitive grants (Castillo-Montoya, 2019; Cuellar, 2014; Garcia, 2016; Núñez et al., 2016). Despite the growth in HSI research, the way governing boards (GBs) make sense of an enrollment-based HSI identity and how this affects their role in governance has not been explored (Garcia, 2023).

The GBs relationship to an institution and their assumed roles are understood (legally and practically) in the context of their fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and obedience (Commodore et al., 2022). The duty of obedience compels trustees to both help the institution comply with applicable laws and policies and “act in accordance with the charitable purpose stated in the corporate charter” (Benjamin, 2009, p. 1687). Said plainly, effective trusteeship includes GBs ensuring that institutions are set up and resourced in ways that are lawful and fulfill their mission Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB], 2015). Yet, when focusing on the mission component of the duty of obedience, institutions typically only have one mission statement (Hartley & Morphew, 2006). Whether and how a GB comes to understand and respond to the emergence of an enrollment-based mission (e.g., HSI), which may not be as codified as a mission-based statement (e.g., Catholic college or university), contextualizes the need for our inquiry. Furthermore, the AGB (2024) suggests that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, independent colleges, and public institutions have a distinct mission and history that may affect the governance process,

¹ We use the term “Latine” to refer to people with origins in Mexico, Latin America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The use of the “e” makes the term gender neutral, replacing the “o” and the “a” which reinforce a gender binary. The “e” is more compatible with the Spanish language than the “x” which has been used in academic writing since 2015.

yet it does not imply the same for HSIs. There is even less distinction around the role of GBs making decisions at HSIs with intersecting organizational identities, including Catholic HSIs, even though 14% ($n = 32$) of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities were HSI eligible by fall 2020 (Garcia et al., 2021).

As enrollment-based institutions with a limited history for intentionally serving Latine students, HSIs struggle to conceptualize their HSI identity and mission (Andrade & Lundberg, 2018; Burmicky et al., 2023; Garcia, 2017, 2019). Moreover, the federal government does not hold HSIs accountable for making sense of this emergent identity (Franco & Muñiz, 2022, Garcia, 2023). Garcia et al. (2019) argue that servingness, or the embodiment of an identity for serving Latines, necessitates a focus on the HSI mission. They further contend that servingness is influenced by GBs while noting the dearth of empirical studies exploring the GB's role at HSIs. Considering these gaps in knowledge, this study explored how trustees at one Catholic HSI make sense of their institution's HSI identity in relation to their duty of obedience to uphold mission.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rall et al. (2021) synthesized the board literature, noting that GBs are understood and positioned as essential stakeholders in helping higher education institutions reach their espoused goals. We point readers to additional literature reviews that exhaustively flesh out the contours of the governance literature with boards as a central focus (e.g., Commodore et al., 2022; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Morgan et al., 2023; Rall et al., 2022, 2023). For our purpose, we begin with a brief review of literature to elevate our assertion that the GBs role in equity work cannot be disentangled from any of its core governance functions (Commodore et al., 2022), with the assumption that HSI work is equity work, and upholding institutional mission and identity are core governance functions. At a broad level, AGB has described boards of trustees as guardians of higher education, safeguarding and conveying the benefits and strengths of the U.S. higher education system in an effort to (re)build public trust (Kerr & Gade, 1989; AGB, n.d.). Research has documented the unique roles trustees play in advancing institutional goals by engaging in the following activities: serving as interlocks between industry and higher education (Barringer & Riffe, 2018; Pusser et al., 2006; Slaughter et al., 2014); hiring executives (Odle, 2022; Rutherford & Lozano, 2018); playing various roles in policy making (Morgan et al., 2021; Ness et al., 2015); navigating the fine line between accountability and micro-management (Bastedo, 2005; 2009; Commodore et al., 2022); and upholding a fiduciary duty of obedience (Benjamin, 2009). Yet despite these various roles and overarching importance, we agree with the contention by Rall et al. (2021) that when compared to

other higher education stakeholders (i.e., faculty, staff, students), researchers understand very little about *how* the roles and responsibilities of higher education GBs relate to and inform desired outcomes such as commitments to diversity and equity, or HSI and servingness. Consequently, while GBs are essential constituents, the frequency and impact of how they enact their roles around outcomes concerning equity broadly and servingness specifically is still relatively nascent, connecting to our desire to conduct this study (Morgan et al., 2023).

Governance in Private Colleges

While there are many commonalities across GBs of higher education institutions, our study is focused on some of the distinct nuances of governance at private institutions. Kerr (1990) devised a set of dimensions that draw stark distinctions between public and private governance that are important to take stock of. Those dimensions include ownership (public or private), control (external or internal), financing (private or public funds), and mechanisms for public financing. Using these four dimensions, Kerr (1990) outlined six categories of institutions, of which the first two, independent private and dependent private, are the most relevant to this study. Independent private institutions have private ownership, internal control, and rely on private financing; dependent private institutions are “independent in ownership and in financing but dependent in control (as some are church-owned institutions)” (Kerr, 1990, p. 3). These dimensions, however, are not that simplistic, as there is immense heterogeneity within the private sector, exemplified by those with religious affiliation.

With regard to GBs at private institutions, current board members select new members to join the board (i.e., self-perpetuating) (Commodore, 2018) and trustees are more likely to be embedded in institutional change efforts (Hartley, 2002). Based on analysis of trustees at elite private universities, Barringer and Riffe (2018) argued that rather than serving as figure heads, trustees are able to influence “institutional behavior, structure, and policies” (p. 156). With these preliminary features of private governance in mind, our argument is that private GBs are poised to play active roles in the governance and outcomes of institutions. Yet, research has not fully considered the role of private GBs in identifying and embracing an emerging mission, especially one that evolved in relation to the racial-ethnic identity of its students (i.e., HSIs).

Catholic Colleges and Universities’ Decision Making

We turn to decision making at Catholic colleges, a specific type of private institution. This brings a governance mechanism (e.g., fiduciary duty of obedience) and our narrowed focus on private institutions into conversation with the conceptualization of an institution’s religious mission and identity. Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have been governed

in similar ways as non-religious institutions, chartered by federal and state authorities but with a distinct connection to the religious congregations of men and women who founded the college or university. Boards of trustees of Catholic institutions, therefore, have followed the same expectations set for non-religious boards, which is to commit to public service, offer expertise in a particular area (i.e., law, finance, technology), and fulfill a fiduciary responsibility to the institution (Locatelli, 2003). In the 1960s, presidents of Catholic universities were compelled to define what it meant to be a Catholic college in an era of change and social transformation (i.e., conceptualize an organizational identity) (Hellwig, 2003). What resulted was the *Ex corde Ecclesiae* which became the guide for U.S. Catholic colleges and universities as they committed to the embodiment of a Catholic identity for higher education.

Under the *Ex corde Ecclesiae* the research and teaching activities of the institution were to be guided by four essential characteristics including: (1) Christian inspiration; (2) continual reflection on Christian faith; (3) fidelity to the Christian mission; and (4) institutional commitment to service to the people of God (Hellwig, 2003). Of importance, this included an affirmed commitment to serve poor and oppressed people and a commitment to global solidarity in order to address social consequences. These principles now serve as guides for Catholic GBs, with trustees understanding their role in upholding a mission-based Catholic identity.

Governance and Decision-Making at HSIs

Next, we explore governance and decision-making at HSI

s, noting that there is not a clear line of inquiry into this area. Our macro-assessment of the literature on HSIs and GBs is that the prevailing norm is to exclude the role of GBs in advancing servingness. Our claim is best reflected with a snapshot into the special topic collection on intersectional servingness in HSIs (Garcia & Cuellar, 2023) where only two of the eight published empirical studies mentioned trustees. Although Aguilar-Smith (2021) conducted an incisive investigation into racialized funding dynamics for HSIs, she only mentioned trustees in explaining the activity of another constituent. Meanwhile, Casellas Connors (2021) highlighted how GBs influence institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plans and the interplay of these plans with state policy and Latine identity realities at HSIs.

There are two additional insights about the HSI governance literature that are key to understanding the rationale for the present study. That is, studies that center HSI

s rarely locate trustees or GBs as a unit of analysis or as a co-equal constituent in governance. Even though Garcia (2023) highlights GBs and governance as one of nine essential dimensions to enact organizational change at HSIs, she too offers a limited view of governance in HSIs, drawing primarily on broad research about governance not specific to HSIs. Recently, Villarreal Sosa et al. (2022) took up faculty governance at an HSI

but only mentioned the GB in its relationship to review and approve actions of the faculty governing body. As the authors offered a decolonized faculty governance approach, no corresponding suggestions were provided about how the institutional GB can support the tenets of a faculty governance body invested in decolonial governance practices.

This one-sided implication that leaves out the GB is not uncommon (Rall et al., 2022), but makes it hard to build empirical, theoretical, and practical insights about HSI governance that correspond to the insights generated for other constituents. On the flipside, studies by Martinez (2015), Garcia (2023), and Garcia et al. (2019) include specific implications for HSI GBs based on their conclusions. However, the unit of analysis for these studies was not the board or trustees as a standalone entity. As is common in the broader governance literature, HSI trustees and GBs get lumped into an institutional leader category despite the unique roles and responsibilities they assume relative to other institutional constituents (Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Ness et al., 2015).

Another area worth noting is the literature on decision-making at HSIs. Garcia (2017, 2019, 2023) argues that, in order for servingness to come to fruition, the HSI identity must be clearly articulated. This claim is justified in relation to GBs when considering their role in upholding and protecting the institutional mission and identity as fiduciaries (Bastedo, 2009; Commodore et al., 2022; Kerr & Gade, 1989). Jones and Sáenz (2020) talked to administrators across three Hispanic-serving community colleges (HSCCs) who made sense of a Latino male-serving organizational identity, finding that participants believed that addressing inequitable outcomes for Latino men was a way to serve them. This conceptualization influenced their decision making, with participants describing their use of data to make decisions about inequities and an elevated campus commitment to ensuring student retention and degree completion. Participants also said that having administrator buy-in was essential to servingness, but did not mention GBs specifically. Flores and Leal (2020) similarly found that colleges and universities with a baseline understanding of what it means to be an HSI were more likely to include servingness as a dimension in their strategic plans. In reviewing the strategic plans of 19 HSIs in Texas, they discovered that six did not mention the HSI designation or Latine students as a distinct population in need of support, while eight mentioned the HSI designation and articulated student characteristics as part of their strategy for serving. Only five of the strategic plans had an elevated focus on being an HSI. Yet, these studies did not center trustees or boards. This review of research gave us many things to consider as we explored the role of trustees at a private Catholic university in advancing an emerging enrollment-based mission.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From our assessment of the limitation of governance, GBs, and HSI literatures, we rely heavily on related theoretical advancements to conceptualize our study. In particular, we rely on a theoretical framework that braids together the servingness framework, which provides critical insights into organizing HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019), and the Equity X Governance framework, which reimagines the study of governance with boards at the center (Morgan et al., 2023).

Servingness Framework

The Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Understanding Servingness in HSIs (Garcia et al., 2019) articulates the structural ways that HSIs can move from Latine-enrolling to Latine-serving and in direct response to the question, “what does it mean to *serve* Latine students?” As a federal construct defined in legislation by the Higher Education Act (HEA), the HSI identity had primarily been reified to an enrollment threshold (25%) or to measurable outcomes such as 150% graduation rates prior to the establishment of the framework. Garcia et al. (2019) argue that servingness cannot be determined by one or two factors (e.g., enrollment, graduation), but instead is a multidimensional approach to enacting a mission, identity, and purpose for serving Latine students.

The servingness framework, developed through a systematic literature review of all HSI research from 1992 through 2017, has four major dimensions. The first is the structures for serving, which shape the institution’s ability to serve students and includes tangible organizational dimensions such as mission, identity, strategic plans, hiring practices, compositional diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators, curricula, student support services, incentive structures, and decision-making strategies. The second is the indicators of serving, which are the measurable ways for HSIs to assess their efforts and progress towards serving Latine students. Garcia et al. (2019) broke these indicators into three types including academic outcomes (e.g., persistence, 150% graduation rates, transfer, post-baccalaureate enrollment, job attainment, social mobility), non-academic or liberatory outcomes (social agency, racial identity development, critical consciousness, graduate school aspirations), and experiences (validating experiences, racialized and microaggressive experiences).

The third major component are the external influences on serving, “[which] includes a consideration of federal, state, and local legislation, as well as the decisions of state governing boards, advocacy groups, and community leaders” (Garcia et al., 2019, p. 773). The institutional GB is included as an external influence, although at the time of the systematic literature review there were no empirical articles that focused on the role of institutional GBs

on servingness, and there continues to be a dearth of research about this concept. Garcia et al. (2019) contend that decision making and boundary management are within the structures for serving, although these activities may fall under the purview of the trustees and institutional GBs. Finally, Garcia and colleagues argued that white supremacy is an added layer of influence, or a fourth dimension of servingness that requires a race-conscious approach to education and decision-making.

Equity X Governance Framework

The Equity X Governance (pronounced “equity by governance”) framework was designed to invoke a paradigm shift because “current governance paradigms and the research and practice that emanates from those paradigms are inadequate to address the multifaceted nature of postsecondary education’s challenges while also locating and implicating the role of the GB” (Morgan et al., 2023, p. 5). The animating premise of this assertion is that it is far too common that DEI research and practice fail to locate the role of the GB in DEI efforts, and governance literature tends to overlook the essential nature of institutions attending to DEI issues. Drawing insight from brand collaborations, the Equity X Governance framework intersects these two disparate concerns (e.g., equity and governance) in an effort to synergize the activities and actions that create a new overarching paradigm that “(re) centers the [governing board] and seeks to realize equitable opportunities for stakeholder success through institution/system-level governance processes” (Morgan et al., 2023, p. 6). That is, Equity X Governance is additive and transformational in the respective considerations that governance issues manifest for equity and that a concern for equity brings forth in the pursuit of good governance.

To operationalize the Equity X Governance paradigm, Morgan and colleagues created an accompanying model. The model is broken into three levels. The first level highlights the role of individual trustees and the governing board as a whole. Key concerns at this level include board composition, board onboarding processes, and trustee training and development. These concepts create the operating norms and culture of the governing board. Level two illuminates five core tactics that governing boards can leverage to facilitate the success of stakeholders within the institution. These include:

- (1) working to collaboratively fix dynamics between actors through policies, processes, and planning, (2) embracing efforts to be held accountable as a GB and individual trustees, (3) the process of presidential selection and evaluation, (4) actively promoting the mission, values, and purpose of an institution and the broader postsecondary education sector, and (5) enhancing their relationships with various stakeholders (Morgan et al., 2023, p. 39).

Finally, the third level focuses on the non-governing board actors and how they come together to implement various activities that contribute to stakeholder success. Because the Equity X Governance model is from the vantage point of the GB, the third level is meant to highlight the structural and relational nature of other actors and the activities that seek to advance DEI work relative to the role of the GB. Accordingly, the model presents an assertion that one key reason DEI efforts are consistently unsuccessful for non-governing board actors is that the GB rarely or inconsistently attends to the undergirding dynamics (e.g., bottlenecks) that exist between and impede actors and activities (what the model terms “ecosystem architecture”).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study uses in-depth interviews with six trustees at one Catholic HSI as a way to explore their subjugated knowledge (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The interviews were one source of data from a case study that also included surveys, observations, and participatory methods. The case study explored how organizational members at one Catholic HSI conceptualize their HSI identity, with six trustees participating. As one of the first studies to include trustees as informants in the co-construction of HSI identities, we focused solely on their interviews. We centered the trustees as the unit of analysis and primary creators of knowledge guided by the research question, “How do trustees at one Catholic HSI make sense of their institution’s HSI identity in relation to the fiduciary duty of obedience?”

Context for the Study

Morado Catholic University (MCU; pseudonym) is a small, private, four-year college in Illinois. It is one of 32 Catholic colleges and universities eligible for the HSI designation (fall 2020 data; Garcia et al., 2021) and has been designated as an HSI since 2011. These 32 Catholic HSIs (C-HSIs) are in 12 states/locations, including Washington DC and Puerto Rico. Most are small, enrolling 2000–3500 students. A majority of these 32 C-HSIs enroll a large percentage of Pell grant students (see Garcia et al., 2021 for a detailed description of these 32 C-HSIs).

The undergraduate enrollment of MCU in fall 2019 when the project launched was 2,151, with 57.7% identifying as Latine, 26.7% as white, 5.2% as Black, 3.5% as Asian/Asian American, and 0.3% as Native American/Native Hawaiian. MCU had two Department of Education Title V HSI grants in 2019, including Title V, Part A (2017–2022) and Title V, Part B (2019–2024), with multiple projects underway to enhance servingness. According to Núñez et al.’s (2016) classification, MCU is a small communities four-years, which includes private, liberal arts, and religious institutions. MCU has shifted or-

ganizational identities multiple times over the years, including its transition from a women's college to a co-educational campus.

Participants in the Study

The five-member research team, including one PI and four doctoral students, collected qualitative data via interviews with 13 faculty, 15 staff, and six trustees. For this study, we focused on interview data with six trustees who serve as members of the Board of Trustees. On average the MCU board includes 29 trustees, three trustees emeriti, six corporate members, and five members of the president's cabinet. There is one student trustee, one faculty trustee, between 10–15 alumni trustees, and between 2–3 Sisters of the Catholic order of the institution. This 43 member board makes decision for a small Catholic institution that enrolls approximately 2000 undergraduate students and 1000 graduate students. For comparison, AGB (2016) notes that private independent boards average 29 members, while Rubin and colleagues (2020) suggest an average board size of 54 for AAU private institutions.

Trustees expressed that they had a strong relationship with the president, with most being recruited by the president to serve on the board (except the faculty trustee who applied to serve). This relationship was beneficial in the recruitment process of these elite participants (commonly defined as both elected officials with political power and as those with prestigious professional positions; Boucher, 2017) as the president sent the request for an interview directly to the trustees who responded directly to the PI (first author) with their interest in participating. All six interviews were scheduled during the summer of 2020, which had a distinct character to it since the world had completely shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic and all university operations were occurring via Zoom. That time period was also unique in the United States because it was the summer of racial consciousness awakening as we collectively watched and/or participated in Black Lives Matter protests across the country resulting from the killings by police officers of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other unarmed Black people.

All six trustees self-identified through an open-ended survey as white or Caucasian, and five identified as female or woman. Three were alumni of the institution and two were Sisters of the Catholic Order of the institution. One was a faculty board representative, and one was a community member. All were retired except for the faculty representative. The names are pseudonyms to protect the identities of the participants. See Table 1 for sample description.

Data Sources

Each trustee participated in a 60–90 minute interview via Zoom. Since these were elite participants, the PI interviewed all six trustees herself. The semi-structured protocol was grounded in the servingness framework (Garcia et al., 2019) while allowing for direct questioning and emerging ideas

TABLE 1.
SAMPLE

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Sex/Gender</i>	<i>Description</i>
Margaret	White	Female	Alumni
Notting Hill	White	Male	Alumni
Frances	Caucasian	Female	Alumni, Sister
Barbara	White	Female	Sister
Stella	White, non-Hispanic	Cisgender Woman	Faculty
Liz Caro	White	Female	Community Member

Note. Participants indicated race/ethnicity and sex/gender through an open-ended question.

as guided by the participants’ worldview (Merriam, 2009). We started with general questions including “Tell me about your time, your duties, and the process of becoming a part of the board of trustees of MCU,” and “How would you answer the question, ‘Who are we as an organization?’” We then moved into HSI meaning-making questions guided by the servingness framework including “What do you think it means to be an HSI and/or “Latinx-serving?” and “In what ways does MCU’s mission describe its commitment to being an HSI?” The semi-structured approach helped cover the questions that needed to be asked but allowed some control in the order and progression of the interview (Hesse-Biber, 2014). This became relevant as the interviewer realized that the trustees were unfamiliar with the concept of being Hispanic-serving beyond the basic definition needed for federal eligibility. Although they all said they were aware of the HSI designation, it was clear that they lacked a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. The PI used the interview as an opportunity to educate the trustees on servingness, often steering away from the protocol questions and engaging in deeper meaning-making conversations. All interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed.

Analytic Process

The PI invited the second author to collaborate on this study due to his expertise on institutional governance and GBs. We met eight times over an 8-month period to discuss the data and the analytic process that we would follow. We used a method that Deterding and Waters (2021) call flexible coding, which presumes that data analysis is informed by existing theories and that researchers use qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, which is designed to analyze non-numerical data such as text. Data reduction began with a review of the six transcripts produced from the trustee interviews. We both open coded the six transcripts and wrote memos for each participant, noting ideas that were emerging from the data. In line with flexible coding, this process allowed us to index the transcripts, anchored in the protocol,

and document the hypothesized relationships between concepts. After meeting to discuss the emerging concepts, we created a list of preliminary codes and attached relevant quotes that represented the codes. Codes were both inductive, allowing for new ideas to emerge, and deductive, grounded in the guiding frameworks (Saldaña, 2016).

Next, we developed a coding structure within Dedoose 9.0.86, which is a QDA used for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods data. At this stage we created analytic codes, including seven parent codes such as “structures for serving” and “race & equity neutral or evasive” and 30 sub-codes such as “roles of the board” and “conflation of student identities.” We independently coded two transcripts to determine interrater reliability and consistency in the coding process. We met again to finalize the code book within Dedoose and agreed upon a structured coding method to highlight segments as they related to the research question (Saldaña, 2016).

As we moved into a systematic analysis process, we found that the servingness framework was insufficient for making sense of the phenomenon, mostly because board governance is not a part of the framework. Moreover, because the Catholic identity and tradition were so strong, we needed a way to make sense of governance within Catholic institutions as well. We created a code matrix that allowed us to compare the conceptual frameworks guiding the study and to use data to illuminate the concepts we were seeing. For example, we coded the statement, “changing the trajectory for a family” as mission and identity under the servingness framework, but found that this is also in the Equity X Governance framework as promoting mission, value, and purpose. Further, this connects to the Catholic colleges and universities governance literature where mission is also important. This eventually led to the theme of historical and contemporary mission and identity in tension. As noted by Eisenhardt (1989), the within case data allowed us to build theory within the case, yet the frameworks enabled a deeper level of theory development about a particularly unique concept not yet studied empirically – trustee conceptualization of a Catholic HSI identity and its relation to governance roles. From the code matrix, we created a list of six potential themes, before collapsing them to three.

From Positionality to Reflexivity

As qualitative researchers, we are instruments in the data collection and analysis process and acknowledge that our positionalities matter. Aligned with Boveda and Annamma’s (2023) framework for reflexivity statements, here we state our intersectional identities (using first person) and describe how we navigated these identities within the interlocking systems of oppression across the research process. The first author identifies as a third generation Chicana cis-gender woman who first learned about racism and discrimination towards brown Spanish-speaking people from my parents. Stories about and

experiences with discrimination directed at Latine people fueled my passion for social justice and heightened my awareness of the constant attack on and erasure of Latine people. My analytic process as a critical scholar of higher education is grounded in a desire to deconstruct the ways we have historically approached the study and practice of higher education. I developed this study with both Latines and HSIs at the center, developing the research purpose and protocol through the lens of the servingness framework, which was created by myself and two other Latina scholars who wanted to create an asset-based framework for studying HSIs. This research process centered HSIs which have been nearly ignored in MSI research and reified as ineffective and insignificant institutions in the larger system of higher education because they are not white enough and yet still too white to be considered spaces of justice for people of color (Garcia, 2019).

The second author identifies as a Black cis-man and first generation U.S. citizen. Raised by a Jamaican mother, my initial socialization to race and ethnicity dynamics were nuanced and layered by the realities of the South Florida context in which I grew up. In particular, amongst communities of color, people were more often identified by their familial ancestry (e.g., “so and so is Haitian, so and so is Cuban”), rather than their racial or phenotypic presentation. As a result, I learned very early on how interlocking systems of oppression operated both within and across different demographic groups. With this insight, I have oriented my research agenda around higher education’s role in cultivating a diverse democracy, with particular attention to the role of governance. Similar to patterns identified in our literature review, I have often overlooked the specific context of HSIs in prior work. With this project, I sought to be intentional in rectifying this pattern through collaboration that focused on the intersection of governance and HSI with an eye towards ultimately better serving Latine students, staff, and faculty. The project also aligned with my ongoing desire to dismantle racist structures and replace them with more imaginative and equitable realities within higher education.

Triangulation of Data

Although we did not draw on all data sources from the larger case study, it is worth noting that I (the PI, first author) engaged in a collaborative 18-month research-based partnership with the institution that enhanced my knowledge about MCU in ways that could not be separated from the analytic process and is a source of triangulation. This collaboration included monthly meetings with the Title V grant director, a series of workshops about what it means to be an HSI, and formal and informal meetings with faculty, staff, and students. I came to understand MCU to be Latine-producing, which is theorized as an institution that meets the 25% Latine enrollment criteria to be a HSI and that equitably graduates Latine students but does not have a

focus on the experiences and ways of knowing of Latine people within the structures for serving or campus culture (Garcia, 2017). During one workshop that I facilitated, faculty, staff, and administrators also classified themselves as having a Latine-producing identity. This identity was further elucidated by the numerous stories of people of color feeling tokenized and experiencing microaggressions at MCU (Zaragoza & Garcia, 2023).

In acknowledging the need to develop a campus culture that is grounded in Latine ways of knowing, the Title V grant director focused on curriculum transformation and training and development for faculty and staff (Petrov & Garcia, 2021). Throughout the data collection process, many participants stated that Mission & Ministry, a distinctly Catholic college entity that is charged with enacting a Catholic education, was one place where servingness was occurring. The director of Mission & Ministry put into practice his knowledge of Latine theologies specifically within co-curricular programs and community engagement practices (DeCostanza & Garcia, 2023). The Theology Department, also an essential space for enacting Catholic education, was also starting to engage with servingness and develop culturally relevant curriculum (DeCostanza & Garcia, 2023). The Catholic identity of the institution led people to believe that it was committed to social justice, yet they continued to do this in a race-neutral way (Garcia et al., 2021). This context hindered the campus's efforts to become a racially just HSI, which I heard over the 18 months.

FINDINGS

Our systematic analysis process illuminated the overarching finding, which we describe as *mission-segmented governance*. The identified themes reveal the intangible facets of institutional mission and the practice of institutional governance that sometimes operate synergistically but, more typically, at cross purposes. Mission-segmented governance borrows from the marketing concept of segmentation, which is “the process of partitioning markets into groups of potential customers with similar needs and/or characteristics who are likely to exhibit similar purchase behavior” (Weinstein, 2004, p. 4-5). This strategy is deployed in opposition to an undifferentiated marketing approach which assumes all customers of a business are the same. However, the challenge with segmented marketing is determining the “optimal resource utilization” given the various needs and wants of different consumers (Weinstein, 2004, p. 5). Therefore, segmentation done well finds ways to better serve all consumers (i.e., is synergistic) and when done less optimally, erodes one group of consumer's interest and trust in a product/business in service of another.

In similar ways, replacing a focus on marketing with governance concerns, our findings highlight how the trustees at MCU sought to navigate, in seg-

mented ways, the dual missions of being a Catholic university (historically) and an HSI (contemporarily), while minding the relationships and tensions of their fiduciary roles (i.e., duty of obedience). We frame the findings across three themes that emphasize various ways this particular board enacted a segmented understanding of governance within a Catholic HSI: (a) HSI-evasive board approaches; (b) historical and contemporary mission and identity in tension; (c) HSI-centric fundraising efforts.

HSI-EVASIVE BOARD APPROACHES

The first theme that highlights how mission-segmented governance operates at MCU emanates from the board enacting their primary roles and responsibilities through an HSI-evasive approach, or one that avoids acknowledgment or understanding of the HSI designation. In particular, how trustees understood and enacted typical governance functions were not influenced by the evolving HSI identity, and instead governance as usual seemed to emerge. Take, for example, the trustees' understanding of the responsibility to be aware of and intentionally shape the demographic composition of the board. When prompted to consider how board composition might play a role in servingness, trustees were able to recognize shortcomings of a board that lacks racial and ethnic diversity but stopped short of connecting strategies to diversify the board as a mechanism to help advance the HSI mission and identity—creating a segmented focus. Trustee Barbara said,

One thing we talk about on the mission and identity committee is more diversity on the faculty, and on the staff, and on the board. Most of the people look like me. We do have some men and women of color...but I just keep feeling that this is a big lack, and especially on the board. I find on the board when we say we need more diversity, we don't go towards African Americans. We waft to the Asians...why can't we diversify this more so with people of color, and especially African Americans? We have some Hispanics on the board, but like I said, the majority of the board are white folks.

While quotes like this show that trustees acknowledged that they needed to diversify their board (i.e., good governance segment), there was no connection to how board composition could help advance the institution's commitment to being an HSI or differently serving the Latine population (i.e., servingness segment). The quote exemplifies how trustees made sense of their board work disconnected from HSI and Latines. Because trustees demonstrated an HSI-evasive approach to board composition, a segmented governance process that placed emphasis on a diverse board but not for the purpose of advancing the HSI-mission became apparent.

Another dimension of how HSI-evasive board approaches contribute to mission-segmented governance was evident in how the GB described their

overarching governance responsibilities. When asked what the board's main roles were, Trustee Liz Caro attested:

I think the main role is oversight of the institution. We don't run the institution. I think we get to ask questions about things that are being done. I think that if there's something big enough being done, we get more than a right to just ask questions. We sometimes get the right to say, "Wait a second!"

Since the HSI designation was not salient for Trustee Liz Caro, oversight of how the institution was engaging in servingness or whether being an HSI qualified as big enough to invite trustee intervention was underspecified. Building on an oversight role, when asked the same question about his role on the board, Trustee Notting Hill declared:

The role of the board is governance. Are we doing things the right way? Do we understand? None of us are there every day. I've taken more of a corporate view on that to say, are we being the best we can be? Are we doing it well? Do we have appropriate governance, oversight, transparency, and sustainability for the future?

The notion of taking a more corporate view played out for the trustees in various ways and added another segmented dimension to their perspective on governance both of a Catholic university and an HSI. Trustee Notting Hill went on to explain:

How can this place be the most well-run and the most sustainable? To be sustainable, you have to be ready for 5 years from now, 10 years from now, and 20 years from now, but you also have to be ready today. Things like the COVID situation is really tough, 'cause it hurts enrollment. We're very tuition-driven, so we've been focusing on that.

Yet an acknowledgement of how enhancing the institution's HSI identity was not articulated by Trustee Notting Hill as a component of what might help the institution be sustained into the future or be responsive to tuition-driven pressures. Ironically, the Latine student population is the largest at MCU, suggesting that these trustees lacked a clear pulse on the student population that is driving their tuition-driven model.

In contrast, at least one trustee viewed their role as advancing various aspects of the institution's mission. Trustee Stella shared:

I think community partnerships is where the board thrives from a so far outside perspective. They are tapped into business networks that faculty aren't. I think trying to deepen those roots in the Hispanic community in our neighborhoods is key for recruiting students, for getting philanthropic dollars, and for getting high impact experiences for the students. That's probably the only other thing I could think of with the board is just really getting the board to mine as many of those community partnerships that we can find.

This quote elevates the importance of how community partnerships and networks can connect the institution to neighborhoods and communities that can better serve Latine students (i.e., a servingness segment), yet Stella, the faculty board rep who had daily interactions with the Latine student population, was the only one to articulate this.

Finally, the responsibility of presidential selection was a prominent example of how certain trustees engaged in being HSI-evasive and created additional segmented approaches to governance. For instance, when asked a hypothetical question about the importance of a future presidential candidate knowing what an HSI is or identifying as Latine, Trustee Liz Caro asserted, “I think [understanding HSIs] is part of the conversation for sure because that’s been part of who the university is.” However, she went on to clarify that “whether or not someone needs to be a Hispanic, I’m not sure that—I think—you look for the best candidate.” This segmented approach underscores how a trustee can cite how important it might be for a president to understand the mission of an HSI, but also stops short of additional commitments to being intentional about recruiting and selecting a Latine candidate. This lack of prioritization of a Latine identifying president served as another form of being HSI-evasive; a more critical read of the quote illuminates the trope that somehow the best candidate and a Latine candidate will be at odds, which lacks race-consciousness, in general.

Historical and Contemporary Mission and Identity in Tension

The second way we identified mission-segmented governance was connected to how the trustees made meaning of MCU’s multifaceted mission and identity from their vantage point on the board and in seeking to construct a coherent institutional mission and identity. Yet there were tensions as they had a clear understanding of what it meant to be a Catholic institution while segmenting their understanding of the HSI mission and identity in often uninformed ways. For instance, when asked about how MCU’s mission conveys that the institution is Hispanic-serving, Trustee Barbara recounted, “Well, what’s our mission statement? For a more just and humane world, to include people, and to find the common humanity.” Trustee Barbara, a retired immigration attorney, went on saying:

One thing that’s been a gift for me is the joy that my Hispanic friends have. They’ve got so much trouble. When I’d be talking to a client and hear so much trouble, and I say, “Oh my God. If this was my situation, I might just keep walking east into the lake,” but their trust in God, God is taking care of me, I can laugh at it.

Here the trustee’s response starts off as a cohesive articulation of MCU’s historic mission that is focused on supporting and including all people and then transitions to a hyper-personalized reflection on the trustee’s Hispanic

friends or clients—but not necessarily constituents of the institution or a connection made to being an HSI specifically. This indicates a form of segmentation related to an institutional versus personal understanding of the institution's mission as Hispanic-serving. Trustee Barbara relied on a deficit understanding of Latine people as having “so much trouble” and laughing off these troubles because “God is taking care of me.” This is almost caricature in nature, with no real effort to understand the nuances of Latine people and what it might mean to strive for a more humane and just world with and for them.

Another example of the tension is from Trustee Liz Caro's reflection on wrestling with the transition of MCU's identity towards HSI, stating:

How do we break down what's already there and embedded in—that's part of who we are and our history—and become something a little different. I don't think we've done that. I think it's gonna be really hard work. I don't think it's impossible work because then the other part of it is, okay so we're gonna identify as an HSI. Maybe we're gonna advertise it. Then what about people—the other people who aren't Hispanic. Can I come to [MCU] or not? Or our alumni... how does that impact them? There's a lot of work that needs to be done to better understand the impacts of if we start to publicly say, “Hey! Guess what about [MCU]? We're a Hispanic Serving Institution.” What does that mean? I think it's more than just declaring that we are. It's how it's part of our identity, but there's still more to our identity than just that.

Trustee Liz Caro's assessment shows an openness to a more well-integrated identity that is responsive to the realities of being an HSI but expresses apprehension to what being an HSI means that underscores a differentiation in how she viewed the institution's identity. Trustee Liz Caro stressed that being a Catholic institution “is and isn't” a core part of the institution's identity, conveying some nuance by explaining:

It is 'cause obviously we are rooted in the Catholic faith. You have the Sisters there. That's the biggest indication that it's rooted in the Catholic faith. It gets talked about sometimes, but that's not—what gets talked about more than being rooted in the Catholic faith is the *caritas* and *veritas*... Yeah, it's Catholic, but I—it's not like we have to wear it on our t-shirt.

This quote exemplifies an acknowledgement of the Catholic identity but also a desire to not solely be defined by that aspect of the institution's identity. Alternatively, other trustees felt confident in the Catholic identity of MCU being the leading or primary aspect of the institution. This is evidenced by Trustee Margaret's assertion that:

The Catholic piece is a driving factor, and it permeates throughout. Nobody tries to hide anything Catholic. In fact, it is very present, and you've been on

campus to see the Catholic identity. We also want to be very welcoming to all those who are not practicing Catholics and come from other faith orientations. It's a fine line. They know they're in a Catholic school. When you walk in the school, you know it's a Catholic school.

In addition, when considering the influence of the Catholic identity on the emerging HSI identity, Trustee Margaret continued:

Definitely in the HSI world, you need to do more for your largest population, but I think also at [MCU] we do really well with the smaller slice of the pie by calling out and finding—I don't know if it's 20 Muslim students or 40 Muslim students, but making sure that they feel equally supported in their space and that, most importantly, there's integration between all those groups on an education front, on a social front, on outside activities, through athletics, that they operate as one, not as separate segments.

As noted by Trustee Margaret, the Catholic identity is the overarching aspect of MCU that informs approaches to various student populations, segmenting the HSI identity and relegating it to the same approach to supporting students with various faith traditions while ignoring race and ethnicity altogether.

HSI-centric Fundraising Efforts

Although HSI did not seem germane to most board specific roles, some trustees noted the critical role of development and philanthropy in relation to the institution's HSI status. This is where we saw trustees make the most specific connection to the HSI identity and their role. When asked what it meant to be, Hispanic-serving Trustee Liz Caro said,

I will tell you that I use, or we have used, the designation Hispanic Serving Institution in our fundraising efforts and coming from the perspective that—We're helping generally lower income, first of generation students. They're not all Hispanic, so you can say we're a Hispanic Serving Institution doing these things. People can connect the dots. I think that helps in our fundraising. What makes us different? I think that's what makes us different.

This quote demonstrates that when the HSI identity was most salient it was connected to opportunities to fundraise for the entire institution, but not necessarily to advance specific and targeted support for Latine students in the holistic ways that the servingness framework invites.

The role of raising resources also underscores a key dimension of mission-segmented governance, which is the difference between a focus on institutional support versus direct financial support for students. Trustees were eager to give examples of fundraising to support student scholarships while lamenting more enduring structural realities connected to the financial condition of the institution. This was most evident in the fundraiser that

several of the trustees mentioned that was setup to support students amid the pandemic. The context was that the board, in a short period of time, met its \$250,000 match to raise a total of \$500,000. They were most pleased by the fact that they had 100% participation from all the trustees. What this experience highlighted, more generally, was Trustee Frances's insight into the board's direct aid mentality when she was asked what it meant to be Hispanic-serving:

Well, I think step one for the board is to enable them to attend. If you're talking [about a] medium income level that would never support college or university education, you understand the need for scholarships. Our board is very instrumental in events that raise scholarship funding and finding those willing to contribute to scholarship funding that enables Hispanic students to attend. You don't have to be Hispanic to qualify for the help, but it's a big part of it.

These quotes represent the trustee's shared mentality of being HSI mission-centric when engaging in their roles as fundraisers to provide direct aid to students. The connection to supporting Latine students was most palpable during some of these anecdotes, and ironically fundraising was brought up on multiple occasions when asked the question "What does it mean to be Hispanic-serving."

However, and undermining the previously shared concern for longer term sustainability, the trustees also acknowledged myriad financial issues with little in the way of how they might address those issues in their role. To illustrate this dynamic, Trustee Stella contended,

I think that [MCU] has some structural issues with how we're compensating faculty that are gonna make it really hard to be competitive....We're losing candidates because the decisions are made very late. Our compensation is too low. I think it's a problem. I know there's a lot that our outgoing CDO [Chief Diversity Officer] has done to put in place—good processes for search committees, hiring committees—to make sure that we are recruiting a good diverse pool and really fairly considering everybody and making sure we have an equity advocate on every hiring board.

Stella, the faculty member on the board, was the only trustee to articulate this issue of faculty compensation so clearly, suggesting that financial concerns of this board do not extend beyond raising money for scholarships. In other words, faculty compensation is not a general conversation for this board, despite the national call to diversify faculty within HSIs.

DISCUSSION

As enrollment-based institutions, HSIs must continue to ask, "What does it mean to be Latine-serving?" beyond the federal definition (Cuellar, 2014;

Flores & Leal, 2020; Garcia, 2016; Núñez et al., 2016). Reaching the 25% enrollment threshold is merely a milestone on the path to servingness, with a much longer process of meaning-making required to adequately serve a population of students that has been underserved by U.S. educational systems. While the servingness framework provides HSIs a tangible way to think about organizational change and accountability for serving Latine students, there are missing components in the framework. By focusing on the role of the institutional GB in HSI efforts, this study fills one of those gaps.

The findings suggest that the board has a unique role not currently embedded in the servingness framework. Much of the framework calls on HSI educators and decision-makers to address organizational transformation at the institutional level (e.g., redesign curriculum, implement culturally relevant student services, hire a compositionally diverse faculty). As a result, the board's fiduciary duties (care, loyalty, obedience) or its core governance practices (e.g., budget management, presidential selection, upholding the mission) are not outlined in the framework. In fact, AGB (2021) states that trustees should respect the difference between the board's role and administrators' roles, identifying this as a core principle of trusteeship. The participants in this study understood their role in this sense, yet the ways that they conceptualized their duties were HSI-evasive, especially in terms of duty of obedience to the mission.

We use the term, "HSI-evasive" as an extension to the research conceptualizing HSI efforts as "race-evasive" and "Latinx-evasive" (Aguilar-Smith, 2021; Casellas Connors, 2021; Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2018). In other words, research shows that HSI practice and policy often avoids centering Latine students, instead opting for descriptors such as "low-income" and "first-gen," which hinders efforts to disrupt racism and discrimination experienced by Latine people. Garcia et al. (2021) also noted that Catholic HSIs are operating from a race-neutral perspective. By not naming HSI in core governance practices, trustees run the risk of reinforcing the problematic ways that HSIs use Latine students to achieve HSI eligibility and pursue funding without substantial efforts to transform the institution to better serve them. Alternatively, an HSI-conscious board, operating in the fullness of its duty of obedience, would understand the distinct mission and values of HSIs, select a president that is committed to being an intentional HSI, and consider the budgetary needs of an HSI, which are historically underfunded institutions enrolling large percentages of low-income students (Valdez, 2015).

HSI-evasive board roles that emerged in conversation with trustees included diversification of boards. Data suggest that diverse boards are more likely to engage in better decision-making processes by overcoming narrow thinking (Minor & Tierney, 2005) and contribute to the likelihood that the generative curve will be realized, allowing boards to be effectively value-added

to an organization without delving into management responsibilities (Chait et al., 2005). Several trustees acknowledged that the board was predominantly white and should be diversified, yet none of them made a connection to the national call to diversify decision makers, including trustees, at HSIs in an effort to match the racial-ethnic composition of the student population (Garcia, 2023). Relatedly, trustees were HSI-evasive when thinking about their role in presidential selection, not thinking about the president's role in addressing the needs of an HSI or the needs of Latine students. Alternatively, McNaughtan and Lujan (2023) found that in their interviews with five presidents at HSCCs, these leaders were actively thinking about servingness, including the need for increased representation of Latine faculty and administrators, the need for more HSI training on campus, the need to strategize for their HSI future, and exemplifying servingness in their own leadership actions. Notably, all five presidents in their study identified as Latine, yet the findings suggest that their values and strategies go beyond simply identifying as the same race-ethnicity as the students at HSIs.

Another HSI-evasive board role that emerged was specifically around the conceptualization of GB's duty to uphold and support the mission and identity of the institution (i.e., its duty of obedience). The second theme clearly showed that the historical Catholic identity and evolving HSI identity were in tension. The increase in enrollment of Latine students often prompts dissonance in response to the question, "Who are we as an organization?" with disparate meaning-making around an ideal HSI identity and a current HSI identity (Garcia, 2017). The trustees in this study, however, were unable to conceptualize either an ideal or a current HSI identity, reflective of their mission-segmented governance. Instead, their responses revealed tensions between the identity of MCU as a mission-based Catholic university versus an enrollment-based HSI. Although we acknowledge that most educators are trying to figure out the HSI mission and identity, these trustees had little understanding of Latine students' histories, cultures, languages, or struggles, making it difficult for them to conceptualize what it could mean to serve this population (i.e., ideal HSI identity).

Trustee Barbara drew on her personal experiences working with Latine people as an immigration lawyer while Trustee Margaret deferred to religious diversity, rather than racial/ethnic diversity, nearly erasing Latine students at MCU altogether. It was evident that they had a stronger understanding of and obedience to their Catholic mission and identity while struggling to conceptualize what being an HSI could and should be. In comparison, Burmicky et al. (2023) found that staff who oversee Men of Color programs at six different HSCCs could conceptualize an HSI identity as a campus that sells Latine food (e.g., pan dulce), has a majority Latine population on campus, and regularly recognizes the HSI status in meetings.

The trustees in this study were HSI-evasive except when it came to raising funds for the institution, with Trustee Liz Caro stating that she used the HSI designation in fundraising efforts. Yet even in their efforts to raise funds, their mission-segmented governance was revealed, as they were focused on raising funds for individual students and not on long-term financial stability for the institution. Only one participant, Trustee Stella, was able to conceptualize a much larger financial issue that the board should consider as an HSI, which is to ensure the financial ability of the institution to recruit and retain faculty of color. There is a national call to increase the diversity of faculty at HSIs (Vargas et al., 2019), with fewer solutions to the problem; Trustee Stella conceptualized a concern that boards could grapple with, which is compensation, yet this board did not discuss long-term financial strategies.

This study comes at an important moment for the field of higher education; a moment when we are witnessing an emergence of empirical research about HSIs, yet very little has been written about the role of the board in influencing servingness or reimagining its fiduciary commitments (Commodore et al., 2022). Our sense-making from this particular case illuminates a complicated position for GBs of HSIs. On the one hand, GBs are positioned to advance and safeguard mission-based organizations, such as Catholic HSIs. However, as our findings make plain, the ability to serve both missions well—and ideally synergistically (i.e., ‘obediently’), while staying within the levers and parameters of what is considered good governance—remains elusive for this GB. The result is a mission-segmented approach where the GB prioritizes or feels more comfortable promoting the more longstanding mission (i.e., Catholic) to the detriment of the emergent mission (i.e., HSI). The acknowledgement of this tension prompts us to make recommendations to the conceptual frameworks we utilized and to the ways we call GBs into governance that is focused on equitably serving students at HSIs in accordance with their fiduciary roles.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study brings renewed attention to institutions that must tend to multiple identities, including those that are mission-based and enrollment-based. Institutions that become HSIs must contend with their historical [religious] mission as much as their emergent [HSI] mission. Garcia and colleagues (2021) have begun to theorize the unique realities of what it means to be a Catholic HSI by tapping into decolonial theories and Latinx theologies, yet they did not delineate the unique role of the GB. Future research must tend to the distinctive role that the GBs can play in conceptualizing and enacting the mission and identity of an HSI in relation to its historic characteristics (i.e., religious, private), extending what we know about GBs and their role in

upholding missions (Commodore et al., 2022; McGuinness, 2016; Morphew & Hartley, 2006).

A scholarly offering this study makes to the servingness framework is in revising the location of the institutional governing board as an external influence on serving. Our findings suggest that a new category should be made, described as *peripheral influences on serving*. The periphery sits between the internal and external to capture how GBs are both decision-makers that can have influence on the structures for serving (i.e., internal to an institution) but are also impacted by and shape the external environment. This reframing aligns with the resource dependency conceptualization of boards (Hillman et al., 2009), trustees as microfoundations (Barringer & Riffe, 2018), and GBs as intermediary organizations (Morgan et al., 2021).

There are two implications that flow from setting GBs on the periphery of the servingness framework. First, HSI GBs should be HSI-conscious. Scholars have argued that when GBs are not specifically located in DEI work (in this case, HSI work), their roles can become obfuscated and less effective in facilitating success for minoritized constituents (Morgan et al., 2022; Rall et al., 2020). Simultaneously, prior studies warn against the dangers of activist GBs that get too involved in institutional minutiae (Bastedo, 2009). Locating GBs on the periphery of the servingness framework invites trustees and institutional leaders to be intentional about demarcating the GBs approach to governance in ways that account for the broad, and at times amorphous, fiduciary expectations of GBs. The periphery also allows trustees to be aware of the localized and unique realities of the institution's history (from predominately white to HSI), the configuration of students (increased racial-ethnic and economic diversity), and the pressing challenges that threaten the institution's sustainability (not responding to Latine population).

Second, placing GBs at the periphery of the servingness framework helps to sharpen the line between broader HSI policy that affects all HSIs (i.e., federal legislation, allocation of grant dollars) and the local advocacy that goes into operationalizing servingness (Garcia, 2023). A clearer understanding of broad versus local advocacy can help connect GBs to the one area where we saw participants embrace the HSI identity which was around fundraising. Given the evolution of higher education financing dynamics (Toutkoushian, & Paulsen, 2016), GBs will need to continue their philanthropic support of institutions and broker connections and resources that may be especially attuned to the needs of the Latine community, beyond government resources. For instance, MacKenzie Scott, between 2020–2021, is estimated to have donated over \$890 million to 36 HSIs (Gasman et al., 2022). Given the complex history associated with this sort of philanthropy (McCambly, 2023), future research should closely examine how private and religiously affiliated GBs go about procuring non-governmental support and the extent to which it aligns with the needs of the institution's Latine population.

This study also has important scholarly implications for the Equity X Governance framework. While Morgan et al. (2023) noted the critical importance of mission in the framework, no specific attention given to the various institutional types and their unique realities. The present study highlights the dangers in broad-brush governance prescriptions because the norms and parameters trustees are most comfortable espousing and enacting become segmented from an intertwined and synergistic approach to governance that balances the demands of good governance with the pursuit of equity. The servingness framework, bolstered by insights from this study, offers the Equity X Governance model considerations of research-informed structures and outcomes that are appropriately tailored to and conscientious of the realities of HSI and a holistic manifestation of Latine student success. We encourage researchers who are studying governance within mission-based institutions to conceptually account for additional organizational realities, such as becoming enrollment-based, by pairing the Equity X Governance model with a framework that seeks to account for the unique realities of being an HSI or Minority Serving Institution (MSI) more broadly.

Finally, both frameworks offer multidirectional insights into organizational phenomena—meaning they focus on the relationship and structure between two or more concepts and how they further the concepts of servingness and Equity X Governance, respectively. Bridged together and given each framework's expansive set of features, a merged framework, such as the one utilized for this study, begins to offer an omnidirectional analytical lens that can more fully consider all aspects of an HSI (i.e., governance, leadership, curriculum, composition, policy, student success, etc.), than if leveraged in isolation. As the study of HSIs continues its maturation, we invite researchers to tend to multiple aspects of HSIs while centering them.

We close with a series of recommendations for improved governance of HSIs in practice, with GBs as the focus. First, our study highlights the inadequate to non-existent training trustees at HSIs receive around what it means to be an HSI, much less the various organizational outcomes or servingness levers available to them. Therefore, specific training and onboarding procedures need to be created that will help new and sitting trustees understand this aspect of their institution's mission and their responsibility for safeguarding it. These trainings should account for trustees' Latine informed "policy ways of knowing" or the process of making sense of the features of a policy that impact, for better or for worse, the Latine community (Martinez, 2021). Tailored interventions can then be crafted for the board or rely on established approaches such as AGB's Equitable Student Success curriculum for GBs (Schwartz et al., 2022).

Second, HSI boards must be intentional about the cultivation of the racial/ethnic diversity of their board and the processes that can lead to the selection of presidents with deep familiarity with the HSI identity and/or a

salient identity of being Latine themselves. There is no dearth of qualified Latine leaders who can serve as presidents (Felix, 2021; McNaughtan & Lujan, 2023) or who might make good trustees. However, as this study conveyed, a chasm exists between awareness of demographic needs and a willingness to diversify the GB and potential presidents. Given the chorus of studies that highlight how critical same racial/ethnic representation is for the success of Latine students (Bensimon et al., 2019; Commodore et al., 2022), HSI GBs must focus on diversification to achieve organizational transformation.

We also suggest that GBs tend to the fiduciary duties and core governance practices through an HSI-conscious lens. For example, a president may summons a committee to rewrite the institutional mission statement to include a commitment to HSI and Latine students (Garcia, 2023). When the GB reviews and approves the mission statement, they should support a bold and innovative approach to including HSI in the mission, rather than deferring to the historical mission. As the campus undergoes the strategic planning process, the GB should review the plan ensuring that it calls for equitable outcomes for Latine students. The trustees may also ask questions about how the plan includes HSI strategies. With regard to the GBs oversight of the financial status of the institution, trustees should consider ways for the institution to leverage its HSI designation to pursue both federal and private funding to advance servingness for Latine students, rather than pursuing grants that are Latine-evasive or race-neutral (Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2018). The GB should also work to grow tangible assets, including relationships with community members and donors, that can support the development of endowments and investments that seek to serve Latine students.

Lastly, more coalition-building and knowledge sharing is necessary among HSI trustees. The reliance on a charismatic leader to educate GBs is a strategy that places the burden for learning and leveraging best-practices on entities beyond the GB. As a result, we imagine how specific workshops or national convenings of HSI trustees might effectively foster the development of governance at HSIs that accounts for not only the quandary of segmented missions, as this study brings to attention, but also the confluence of: (a) the reality of intersectional dynamics and the presence of other minoritized students at HSIs (Garcia & Cuellar, 2023), (b) the unique challenges Latine faculty and staff face at HSIs (Zaragoza & Garcia, 2023), and (c) the ever-present interplay HSIs have to the broader Latine community and their surrounding neighborhoods (Cuellar et al., 2020), among other issues. Consequently, we encourage philanthropic foundations, higher education associations, and trustees themselves to start organizing in ways that create formal and informal spaces to share knowledge, insights, and best practices around HSI governance. These spaces can help usher in a new era for HSIs where GBs are integral to actualizing a truly Latine-serving organizational identity (Garcia, 2023).

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