

Serving Hispanic Students Forum

February 11, 2026

Sponsored by — Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH)

Facilitator — Jessica Lugo



Serving Today's Growing Hispanic Student Community

Overview: Be equipped to serve the rapidly growing Hispanic student population effectively. Explore legal and compliance considerations tied to Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation and discover how service-learning can cultivate identity and vocation. Examine evidence-based practices to strengthen academic outcomes. With strategies for becoming a culturally relevant institution that fosters belonging, equity, and biblical inclusivity. Gain practical tools, shared insights, and a collaborative vision to enhance institutional impact and advance Hispanic student success.



7:00 – 8:00 Forum Breakfast — Regency Foyer

8:00 – 8:15 Welcome & Introductions

8:15 – 9:30 Session 1: Risk & Reward: Legal Implication for HIS Designation & Title V Grants

Presenter: Jeffry Caballero, Board Chair | AETH (CA)

Unlock funding: a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is a designated accredited college or university with 25% or more Hispanic undergraduates, making your institution eligible for federal grants. In this attorney-led session, learn how to establish and defend your HSI status while navigating compliance pitfalls that threaten your funding. We'll demystify False Claims Act exposure and related risks and explore additional HSI legal issues.

- Understand the legal requirements and compliance risks associated with HSI designation and Title V grants.
- Identify common legal pitfalls, including False Claims Act exposure, and learn strategies to mitigate them.
- Insights to maximize federal funding opportunities while protecting institutional integrity and reputation.

9:30 – 10:15 Refreshment Break — Regency Foyer

10:15 – 11:45 Session 2: Service as a Formative Axis in Hispanic Contexts

Presenter: Ana Cepero, Academic Dean | Universidad Teologica del Caribe (PR)

Proposes a curricular, practical, and strategic reflection on how community service courses, pre-practicum, and practicum experiences can become formative laboratories where students not only apply what they have learned but also affirm their identity, discover their purpose, and embrace a vocation of impact.

- Explore how service-learning and practicum experiences can function as formative learning laboratories.
- Examine strategies for helping students affirm their identity and discover their sense of purpose.
- Identify ways to guide students toward embracing a vocation of lasting impact.

11:45 – 12:00 A word from our Sponsor

12:00 – 1:00 Buffet Lunch — Regency Foyer

1:00 – 2:15 Session 3: Excellence in Hispanic Student Support

Presenter: Daniel Ruarte, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs | Life Pacific University (CA)

Institutions are welcoming a more significant number of Hispanic students. Serving these students well requires a conscious leadership team and honest commitment to student success.

- Enhance leadership understanding of their role and impact in the academic success of Hispanic students.
- Present a selected number of evidence-based practices to improve academic outcomes.
- Communicate the benefits of excellence in Hispanic student support services.

2:15 – 3:00 Refreshment Break — Regency Foyer

3:00 – 4:15 Session 4: Becoming a Culturally Relevant Serving Institution

Presenter: Jessica Lugo, Executive Director | AETH (FL)

By 2060, Hispanics are expected to make up around 28% of the U.S. population, up from 18% in 2020. Learn key insights that will equip higher education professionals to serve Hispanic/Latino students more effectively. Through a panoramic overview of several core strategic foci, participants will be able to foster academic success, engagement, and belonging for Hispanic communities, promoting institutional transformation and equity.

- Enhancing your institution's cultural awareness
- Developing inclusive strategies
- Building a biblically inclusive and diverse environment

4:15 – 4:30 Wrap Up

6:00 – 8:30 Connections Dinner — Ballroom B/C/D

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