

Countdown to HLC Week 3 Survey Results

The Week 3 Countdown to HLC survey included questions about several major UNC planning initiatives. 286 people completed the survey, with 30 lucky participants selected to win a prize. Keep reading for the results.

Question	% with correct answer
UNC is one of 13 Colorado institutions federally designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI). (True-ish) ¹	81%
UNC's upcoming College of Osteopathic Medicine received the largest financial gift in UNC's history. (True) ²	96%
All UNC students, faculty, and staff can attend free training sessions to learn more about what it means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and how to best serve Latine students. (True)	97%
UNC began developing a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan in Fall 2022 to support optimal student enrollment. (True)	77%
Through UNC's Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan, UNC's optional enrollment is expected to be 12,000 students by the 2029-2030 academic year. (True)	77%

¹While this statement was true based on the information available when the survey was constructed, a couple of sharp respondents noted that the total number of Colorado HSIs has increased. The number will likely continue to grow along with demographic trends in the region.

²The Weld Trust gift of \$25 million to support the College of Osteopathic Medicine is the largest in UNC history.

186 of Week Three survey participants provided a response to the prompt, "How do you think one or more of the strategic initiatives included in this week's questions contribute to the university's mission and goals?"

Major Themes	Description
HSI Designation and Inclusivity	<p><u>HSI as a Catalyst for DEI</u>: The HSI designation is consistently identified as a driving force in UNC's efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable campus. It's viewed as a way to better serve historically underrepresented populations, especially Latine students, while also expanding access for all students. The free trainings on DEI and HSI topics are seen as crucial for faculty and staff to better understand and support the unique needs of these students.</p> <p><u>Belonging and Cultural Support</u>: Respondents stress that the HSI designation is more than symbolic. It signals to Latine students that they are welcome, supported, and included in the university community, reinforcing UNC's broader commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p>
Strategic Enrollment Growth	<p><u>Focus on Increasing Enrollment</u>: Many respondents highlight how UNC's enrollment initiatives, including the SEM plan and the new College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM), are essential to the university's growth and financial stability. The HSI status is seen as key to attracting Latine students, helping to diversify the student body, and ultimately contributing to the institution's enrollment goals.</p>

Major Themes	Description
	<p><u>Accessibility and Retention</u>: Improving financial aid, support services, and addressing students' unique challenges are viewed as pivotal in increasing both enrollment and retention. The university's focus on these areas is widely seen as aligned with its mission of providing access to high-quality education for all students, especially those from underserved backgrounds.</p>
<p>Students First Mindset</p>	<p><u>Commitment to Student Success</u>: There's a strong emphasis on UNC's "Students First" mentality, with respondents consistently affirming that the university's strategic initiatives—from the HSI designation to the SEM plan—place student success at the center. Improving retention, providing effective support services, and tailoring educational experiences to meet diverse student needs are all seen as core to this mission.</p> <p><u>Support for First-Generation and Underrepresented Students</u>: Participants recognize that many of UNC's initiatives, particularly the HSI designation, are helping to create a more supportive environment for first-generation and minority students, reinforcing the university's commitment to serving all students.</p>
<p>Alignment with Workforce and Community Needs</p>	<p><u>Meeting Workforce Demands</u>: A key theme is that UNC's initiatives, especially the development of the COM, will help prepare students to be workforce-ready and address the healthcare needs of Colorado. This initiative is also expected to contribute to diversifying the workforce by increasing opportunities for students from marginalized communities to pursue medical and health-related careers.</p> <p><u>Engagement with Local Communities</u>: The HSI designation and outreach efforts are seen as tools to build stronger connections with local Latine communities, creating educational pipelines that encourage more students from these populations to attend UNC. This engagement aligns with the university's mission of fostering inclusivity and serving its region.</p>
<p>Financial Stability and Institutional Growth</p>	<p><u>Enrollment as a Path to Financial Health</u>: Several respondents point to the critical role that enrollment growth plays in securing UNC's financial future. They see the SEM plan and HSI designation as central to achieving these goals by boosting student numbers and attracting federal funding tied to serving Latine and low-income students.</p> <p><u>Sustainability through Diversity</u>: By focusing on increasing enrollment, particularly among historically marginalized groups, UNC is seen as working toward long-term sustainability. Expanding access to higher education through these efforts not only supports the institution's goals but also enhances its reputation for being inclusive and student-focused.</p>

Representative Comments

- Working to ensure we "earn" our HSI designation, and it's not just a lip-service designation, is super important. Opportunities to learn and grow and better support our Hispanic students is incredibly important.
- The HSI UNITE sessions help staff and faculty gain knowledge and prepare their department to be more inclusive and accommodating to the diverse student population of the institution.
- UNC's strategic initiatives contribute to UNC's values of respecting diversity of thought and culture and affording equal opportunity as well as our goals for gaining and retaining more students.

- I think that these opportunities will make college more accessible and attainable for people who maybe thought they would not be able to attend for any reason, especially financially.
- I believe the College of Osteopathic Medicine will greatly benefit the university's enrollment and the betterment of the state of Colorado. This initiative will help produce more local physicians and improve recruitment to UNC.
- Developing strategies that improve student access to education with successful outcomes at UNC are critical which are at the core of the university's mission and goals. The strategies included this week contribute to our core values and goals.
- The COM will be a wonderful asset to health programs across campus and the region.
- Increasing enrollment helps sustain UNC initiatives and budget.
- HSI status enables UNC to better serve our local, regional and national student populations.
- Increasing enrollment and our efforts to support/prepare enrolled students helps us prepare graduates to be workforce ready and meet workforce demands. Additionally, we are helping to diversify the workforce by preparing graduates from marginalized communities.
- Federal funding through HSI programs can be used for institutional development, such as improving academic programs, upgrading facilities, and expanding research opportunities. These improvements demonstrate the institution's commitment to enhancing its quality and can be a key factor in maintaining or achieving HLC accreditation.
- HSIs often form partnerships with Hispanic communities, businesses, and K-12 schools, creating pipelines that encourage students from these communities to enroll. These partnerships can provide scholarships, internships, and job opportunities, making the institution more attractive to prospective students.
- By maintaining a student first mindset and expanding to being an HSI, we can market ourselves in a different niche than other universities to attract more students to boost enrollment.
- Enrollment is clearly an important part of UNC's goals and ongoing success and having strategy to develop this is crucial.
- The DO school offers key opportunities for enhancing educational opportunities and innovation within our rural connected community. Supporting enrollment (and retention) means additional resources for putting students first.
- The COM will be a great connection between UNC and the community and is an amazing way for UNC to tackle the needs of our region.
- All of them contribute in their own way to the university's mission and goals in one beneficial way. Either by building onto campus (new college), adding and retaining more students, or helping those who may not see going to college as something obtainable.