



HISPANIC EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND

Honoring Our Legacy. Investing in Our Future.

An Update from the Hispanic Education Endowment Fund (HEEF)

Dear HEEF Family,

We hope you're having a wonderful summer!

The first half of 2026 has been an exciting season for the Hispanic Education Endowment Fund (HEEF). From celebrating our outstanding scholarship recipients at this year's Scholars Luncheon to strengthening partnerships and introducing an exciting evolution of our scholarship program, we've been busy building on the legacy that has defined HEEF for more than three decades.

As we look ahead, we're excited to share highlights from the past few months and a glimpse into what's next for HEEF.

Celebrating Our 2026 Scholars

One of the highlights of our year was the HEEF Scholars Luncheon, where we had the privilege of celebrating an exceptional group of students alongside their families, donors, community leaders, university partners, volunteers, and supporters.

This year's scholarship recipients represent an incredible range of future educators, engineers, scientists, healthcare professionals, attorneys, business leaders, and public servants. Their dedication, perseverance, and achievements continue to inspire us, and we are honored to support them as they pursue their educational goals.

Congratulations to our outstanding 2026 scholarship recipients:

[View the 2026 HEEF Scholarship Recipients.](#)

Relive the Celebration!

We invite you to browse photos from this year's HEEF Scholars Luncheon and celebrate the incredible students, families, donors, volunteers, and community partners who made the day so special. [View the 2026 HEEF Scholars Luncheon Photo Gallery.](#)

Honoring the Legacy That Built HEEF

As we celebrate today's scholars, we also celebrate the people whose vision made HEEF possible.

For decades, our founders, Steering Committee members, Advisory Committee members, donors, volunteers, and community partners have worked tirelessly to expand access to higher education for Hispanic students throughout Orange County and beyond. Because of their commitment, thousands of students have had the opportunity to pursue higher education, achieve their dreams, and become leaders in their professions and communities.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our founders and Steering Committee members:

- Ambassador Gaddi H. Vasquez
- Erlinda Martinez
- Ernesto Vasquez
- Fernando Niebla
- Martha Rivera
- Monica Guillena
- Ruben Smith
- Teresa Saldivar

Thank you for your vision, leadership, and unwavering belief in the transformative power of education. Your legacy continues to inspire everything we do.

HEEF's Next Chapter

As the needs of today's students continue to evolve, so must the ways we support them.

After thoughtful planning and conversations with donors, community leaders, and stakeholders, HEEF is evolving its scholarship program to create even greater long-term impact while remaining true to the vision established by our founders.

Beginning with future scholarship cycles, HEEF will transition to a unified scholarship program that provides:

- **\$2,500 per year**
- **Renewable for up to four years**
- **Up to \$10,000 in total scholarship support**

A college degree isn't earned in a single year, it's a journey. Our new scholarship model reflects that reality by providing sustained support throughout a student's college experience while continuing to welcome new scholars into the HEEF family each year.

This evolution honors our past while positioning HEEF to create even greater impact for generations to come.

Honoring Our Donor Families

This evolution would not be possible without the generosity of the many families and organizations whose scholarship funds have shaped HEEF's history.

As we move toward a unified scholarship model, we remain deeply committed to preserving the values, generosity, and legacy of our donor families. Their vision continues to guide our work, and we will continue to recognize and celebrate their lasting impact in meaningful and enduring ways.

Building a Lifetime of Support

At HEEF, we believe a scholarship is only the beginning. Our vision is to create a lifelong community where students become graduates, graduates become professionals, professionals become mentors, and mentors become the next generation of HEEF leaders and supporters.

In the coming months and years, you'll see expanded alumni engagement, mentorship opportunities, university partnerships, professional development programming, networking opportunities, and new ways for scholars to stay connected long after graduation.

Thank You to Our Advisory Committee

As HEEF continues to grow, we are fortunate to have an outstanding Advisory Committee helping guide our next chapter. Their leadership, expertise, and commitment are helping strengthen the organization while ensuring we remain focused on student success for years to come.

We are grateful for the service of:

- Dr. Oliver Lopez (Co-Chair)
- Araceli Guerrero, Esq. (Co-Chair)
- Ramiro Ochoa
- Lisette Martinez
- Alex Serna
- Evangelina Ruiz
- Alix Portillo
- Dr. Carla Salazar Gonzalez

Thank you for your leadership, passion, and dedication to HEEF and the students we serve.

Looking Ahead

The months ahead are filled with exciting opportunities. You'll be hearing more about:

- New university partnerships
- Alumni engagement and mentorship initiatives
- Scholar success stories
- Professional development opportunities
- Community events
- Volunteer opportunities
- New ways to support HEEF's mission

We can't wait to share this journey with you.

Stay Connected. Get Involved.

HEEF has always been powered by community, and we'd love for you to be part of what's next.

Are you a former HEEF Scholar?

We'd love to reconnect! Tell us where life has taken you, how HEEF has impacted your journey, and how you'd like to stay involved. Whether you're interested in mentoring students, volunteering, serving on a committee, speaking at an event, or simply reconnecting with fellow alumni, we'd love to hear from you.

Interested in supporting HEEF?

Whether you'd like to make a donation, volunteer your time, mentor a scholar, host a community event, partner through your company, or introduce us to others who share our mission, there's a place for you in the HEEF family.

Visit our Contact Us page to connect with us, share your story, or learn more about how you can get involved:

<https://www.heef.org/contact-us>

Together, we are creating opportunities, changing lives, and empowering the next generation of Hispanic leaders.

Thank you for believing in our students and investing in their futures.

With gratitude,

The Hispanic Education Endowment Fund (HEEF)

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