In the spring of 2008 the HSI Task Force surveyed students at Metropolitan State College of Denver about the College becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). This survey was developed to gain students’ perceptions on the learning environment at the College and if the College supports the students in the best ways possible.

The survey included 31 questions starting with basic impressions of students’ experiences with the College. Then the questions focused on the College becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution. The survey was conducted online with 569 students responding.

Overall the survey resulted in positive responses by students. Over 61% of students surveyed responded that their overall impression with Metro State was positive, the highest choice possible. However, when asked about the College’s job of reaching out to students, potential students and parents, most students answered “Not sure” the majority of the time.
The next questions asked the students about the college becoming an HSI, 78% of the students had not heard about this potential. Only 26% of those that had heard about it were favorable of the change (n=181); this response came from less than 32% of the students surveyed. A brief description of what an HSI is was then given to the students, it stated:

An HSI, or Hispanic Serving Institution is a designation granted by the federal government. To receive this designation, a higher education institution’s student population must be 25% or more Latino. HSI status helps an established institution to improve and strengthen its academic quality, institutional stability, management and fiscal capabilities by making funds available to improve the infrastructure of the entire institution.

Students were asked again how they would feel about Metro State working toward becoming an HSI. This time 98.9% of the students responded, with the majority responding with “Favorable” or “Somewhat favorable” (42.1%). The survey questions after this delved deeper into reasons why students would support the College becoming an HSI. The reason that students seemed most supportive of (33%) was the possibilities that this designation will open to the college with grant monies for renovation, faculty development and support for all students.

Finally a series of demographic questions were asked. The first asked students what race they are with over 65% stating that they are White/Caucasian, followed by over 11% stating Hispanic/Latino. Secondly, students were asked about their ethnicity with almost 17% considering themselves to be from Hispanic or Latino descent. Lastly, students were asked about the primary language spoken in their home while growing up, about 90% primarily spoke English, and of those that English was not their primary language, almost 39% spoke Spanish.
Racial Breakdown of Respondents

- a. White/Caucasian: 65.8%
- b. Black/African-American: 11.3%
- c. Hispanic/Latino: 8.3%
- d. Asian-American: 4.3%
- e. Native American: 1.6%
- f. Mixed/multiple races: 1.4%
- g. Prefer not to say: 7.3%

Latino or Hispanic Descent?

- Yes: 16.6%
- No: 83.4%