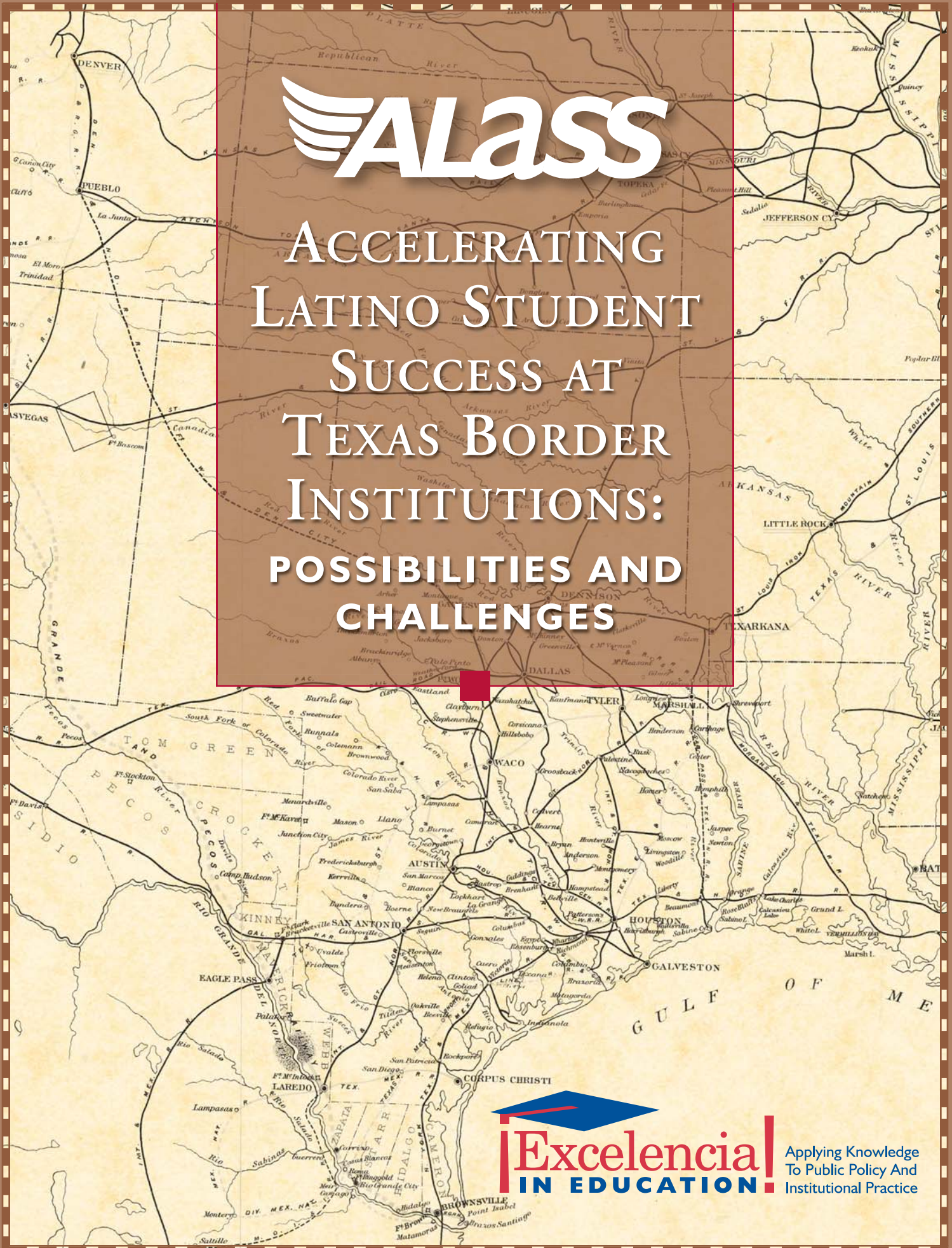


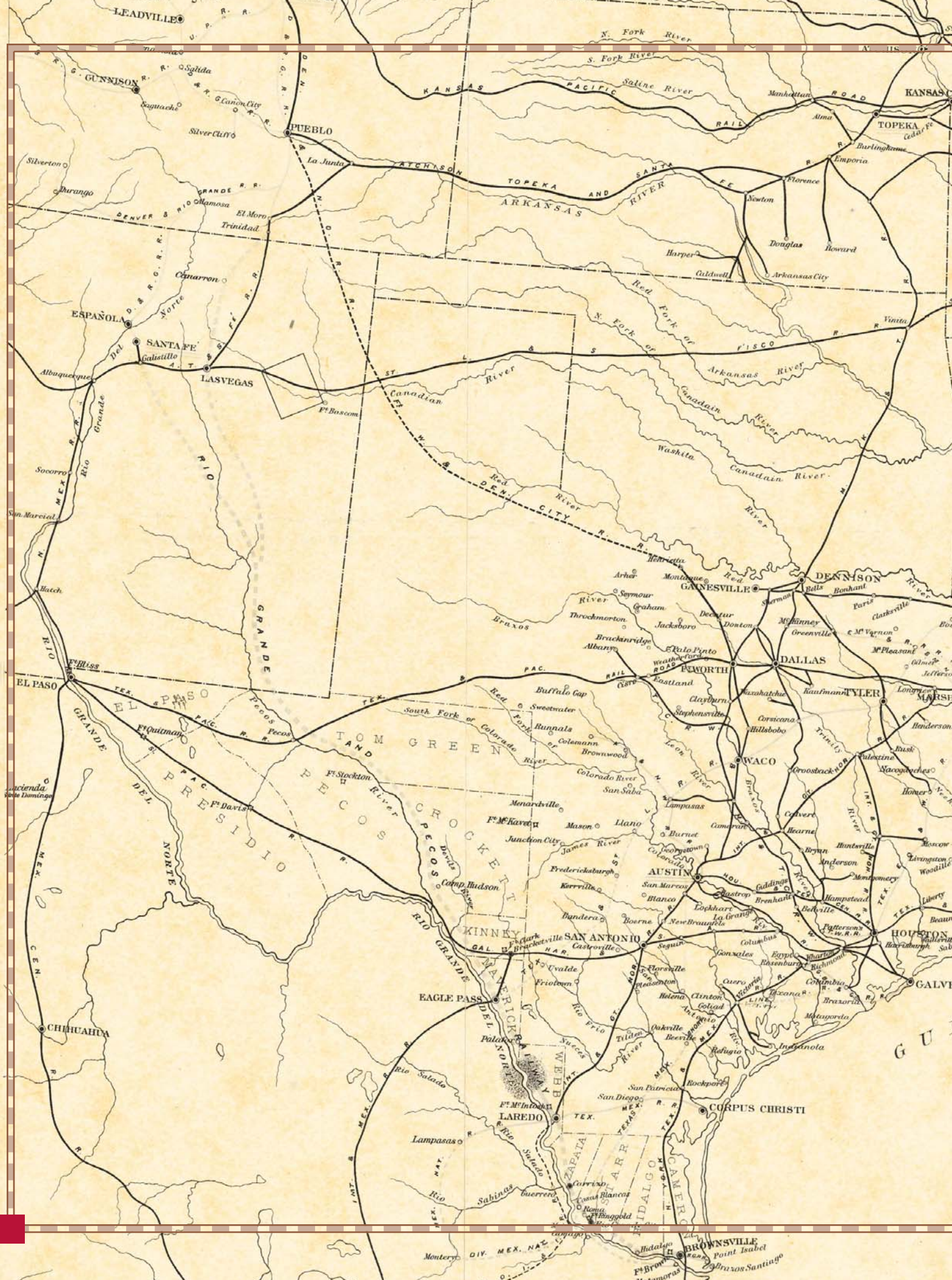


ACCELERATING LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS AT TEXAS BORDER INSTITUTIONS: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES



Excelencia!
IN EDUCATION

Applying Knowledge
To Public Policy And
Institutional Practice



Copyright © 2008 by *Excelencia* in Education. All rights reserved.

This brief was written by Deborah A. Santiago, Vice President for Policy and Research.

For more information on this publication contact:

Excelencia in Education, Publications
1752 N Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
202-778-8323
Contact: publications@EdExcelencia.org

A PDF version is also available on the Web at www.EdExcelencia.org



Excelencia in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latino students, and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement. A not-for-profit organization, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and leadership.



The **Guarantor of Choice**™

TG is a public, nonprofit corporation that helps create access to higher education for millions of families and students through its role as an administrator of the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). Since 2005, TG has awarded nearly \$15 million in grant funding through the TG Public Benefit Competitive Grant Program for need-based aid, academic and support services for students and families, and education research. For more information about TG's Public Benefit Program, please visit <http://www.tgslc.org/publicbenefit/index.cfm>

OCTOBER 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
FOREWORD	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
BORDER INSTITUTION PROFILES	9
South Texas Border Initiative	10
Participation	11
Success	11
Affordability	12
ACCELERATION PLANS	13
Participation	14
Success	16
THE GAP IS CLEAR—BUT THE TOOLS ARE HERE.	19
Key Steps for a Meaningful Hispanic Initiative	19
APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS.	21
APPENDIX 2: DEGREES IN CRITICAL AREAS OF NEED	23
REFERENCES	24

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deborah A. Santiago is co-founder and vice president for policy and research at *Excelencia* in Education and brings her extensive experience in education policy and research to the challenge of accelerating Latino student success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief was developed with the generous support of TG's Public Benefit Grant Program. We are grateful to the institutional leaders—presidents, administrators, deans, and faculty—from the eight institutions of higher education who contributed their time, insights, and expertise on student access and success to inform this brief.

This brief benefited from feedback and perspectives we received in April 2008 during a meeting in Austin, Texas, with staff members from The University of Texas System, Texas A&M System, the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and selected members of the State House of Representatives and Senate. Belle Wheelan, President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and Raymond Paredes, Commissioner for Higher Education also participated in this meeting and provided comments on the data and analysis.

Finally, we are grateful for the insight and edits of Margarita Benitez, a senior associate with *Excelencia* in Education and director of higher education for The Education Trust and Sally Andrade, a senior associate at *Excelencia* in Education and president of Andrade & Associates. The author is solely responsible for any errors in content.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of TG, its officers or employees.

THE FRONT LINES OF ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT IN AN ERA OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

After World War II, we opened the doors of college far and wide to returning soldiers — rich, poor, black, white, or Hispanic. Our nation became smarter, stronger and richer as a result of this egalitarian investment in education. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Higher Education Act, which expanded our national commitment for broad access to higher education. Again, our economic prosperity and capacity for innovation increased as result of this investment.

There is a growing concern that, as a nation, we are losing our competitive edge with the rest of the world. Recent studies emphasize the magnitude of our challenge in higher education. By 2025, the United States would need to increase the number of college graduates by almost 40 percent, over current levels, just to keep pace with our international competitors. We have not aligned our support of higher education to reflect this reality.

Today, in our public schools, over 40 percent of students are racial or ethnic minorities, and one in five is Hispanic. Too many of these children attend schools in high-poverty areas, yet receive inadequate resources for their education. Students who do graduate and continue their education frequently attend institutions of higher education in their communities that tend to have limited resources to serve first-generation students from low-income families.



For Hispanic communities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions are the gateways to higher education for nearly half of all Hispanic students who enroll in college. They do the “heavy lifting” in producing Hispanic college graduates. I commend the efforts of the eight institutions located on the U.S./Mexico border that are featured in this report. Their commitment to excellence, student success and improvement is made clear by their sustained self assessment and analysis over the 24 months of this project and beyond. I also want to acknowledge the commitment to student success demonstrated by TG’s investment in this project. The ALASS institutions exemplify the challenges Hispanic-serving universities and community colleges face and the successes they celebrate.

Our border institutions in Texas are on the front lines of the demographic wave moving across the country. Their success can be replicated. With strategic investments, clear planning, and a primary focus on student success, these institutions will produce even more college graduates ready to assume the mantle of leadership in our communities and in our nation’s workplaces.

RUBÉN HINOJOSA

Congressman, 15th District, Texas

Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Life Long Learning and Competitiveness

PREFACE

Engaging the interests and talents of Hispanic students is one of the most pressing challenges the educational systems of the United States must meet to ensure the country's sustained strength. And higher education must lead the effort to meet this challenge.

During my time as chancellor of The University of Texas System, the opportunities and responsibilities of public higher education to serve the Hispanic college-going population were clear. With the Hispanic population in Texas comprising 36 percent of the total population in 2006 and 42 percent of the college-aged population, one of our most pressing challenges is to develop institutions of higher education ready to capture this wave of human capital. While every institution in Texas must be ready to meet this challenge, the colleges and universities along the vast Texas border with Mexico play an essential role. Not only are they the drivers in the economic, intellectual, and human development of the region; equally important, they are leading the way in addressing the challenges of access and success in higher education for the state's population of the 21st century. The Texas border institutions are making a nationally recognized contribution to quality education for the fastest-growing ethnic group in the country.

The ambitious plans developed in response to the *Closing the Gaps* challenge set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are the most recent, but by no means the only evidence of the dedication of border institutions to serving Latino students well. Having already surpassed every access goal set for them, the border institutions are vigorously



tackling the unfinished agenda of higher education: ensuring retention, academic success, and degree completion for students of all backgrounds and economic sectors.

I salute the vision and commitment of Texas border leaders in higher education who participated in this project: University of Texas Presidents Juliet Garcia, Diana Natalicio, and Blandina Cardenas; Texas A&M International University President Ray Keck; and our indispensable and inventive allies at community colleges, Presidents Richard Rhodes at El Paso Community College, Shirley Reed at South Texas College, and Juan Maldonado at Laredo Community College. Again and again, their campuses are quoted in national reports and publications both for their efforts and for their accomplishments in educating Hispanic students.

I am grateful to *Excelencia* in Education and its dynamic president, fellow Texan and UT-Austin alumna Sarita Brown, for calling national attention to the trailblazing work of Texas border institutions. With the sponsorship of this publication, TG adds another chapter to its already distinguished record of support for the informed discussion of education issues that will shape our state's future.

The perseverance and creativity of the Texas border institutions, which are truly student-centered institutions, provide lessons for all who will meet the challenges of accelerating Latino student success.

Mark Yudof
President, University of California
(Chancellor of The University of Texas System, 2002-2008)

FOREWORD

The U.S./Mexico border—*La frontera*—evokes many things. It is the place where two countries meet and the people have forged a culture, rich in spirit yet challenged by poverty. It is also the setting where productive and ambitious people work to transform their lives, carrying with them wherever they go, dreams of a better life for their children.

The border is a region where the issues of education and the economy have been linked for over 100 years. In writing of the border, historian Oscar J. Martinez draws attention to the economic and social interactions that have existed between the two countries for several generations: “In a functional sense, two systems have combined to produce one order that is quite distinct ...and a population whose lifestyle differs considerably from what is found in the heartlands (1994 Essay, Texas Humanities Resource Center).”

The Texas portion of the U.S./Mexico border region, which comprises more than half of the entire bi-national border, is defined by the long stretch of the Rio Grande River that extends from El Paso in the west, to the Gulf of Mexico, to the southern most point at Brownsville. This is a distance of 1,248 miles, including some of the poorest counties in the state and in the nation.

Approximately 400,000 people in Texas live in colonias, unincorporated, semi-rural communities characterized by substandard housing and unsafe public drinking water or wastewater systems. Overall, the Texas colonia population is predominately Latino, and 85 percent of those residents under 18 were born in the United States.

Two of the 10 fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the United States, Laredo and McAllen, are located on the Texas-Mexico border. Estimates indicate the population of many border cities will double in 30 years. The population along the Texas border region is increasing at twice the rate of Texas as a whole (Census Bureau, 2007).

The eight colleges and universities along the Texas border examined in this brief came to the attention of *Excelexencia* in Education because of their large Latino enrollments. *Excelexencia* in Education, a national not-for-profit organization, focuses on accelerating Latino student success in higher education. Yet, these institutions are also at the forefront of border immigration issues vital to the entire country. For example, The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College

challenged the federal government in court and won, stopping the proposed takeover of campus land to build a wall separating the United States and Mexico that would have cut off 80 acres from the rest of the campus. At the same time, The University of Texas at El Paso was selected as the research university to serve as the National Center for Border Security and Immigration and receive support from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In this dynamic environment the eight institutions participating in the Accelerating Latino Student Success (ALASS) project committed to a process of review and analysis of their institutional data, practices, and opportunities and worked closely with the staff of *Excelexencia* in Education. This brief summarizes what we have learned about these institutions and their national significance to provide a higher education to Latino students.

The eight institutions in ALASS, which are student rich and resource poor, have been forced to reconsider how to clear the pathways to degree completion by providing better academic programs, student support services, and community outreach while building their institutions to address expanding enrollment patterns. Their efforts have led to improved strategies for Latino students and all the students they serve. At the same time, these institutions are preparing for the future of their institutions and communities. These Texas border institutions, while geographically unique, mirror other characteristics of forward leaning academic institutions in U.S. communities with large and growing Latino populations.

It is our belief that every institution and every state has a border to cross when it comes to educating the Latino population. First- and second-generation students and families make choices to adapt to their new environments, master a new language, and do whatever it takes to help themselves and their children gain more education to secure a stronger foothold in their new communities. States and institutions now have choices to make about what they will do to help Latino students thrive in higher education. The success that the participating Texas border institutions have achieved to date in improving access and attainment, while also working to build their capacity, highlights what can be accomplished by making students a priority and by adopting policies and strategies that have proven effective in accelerating Latino student success.

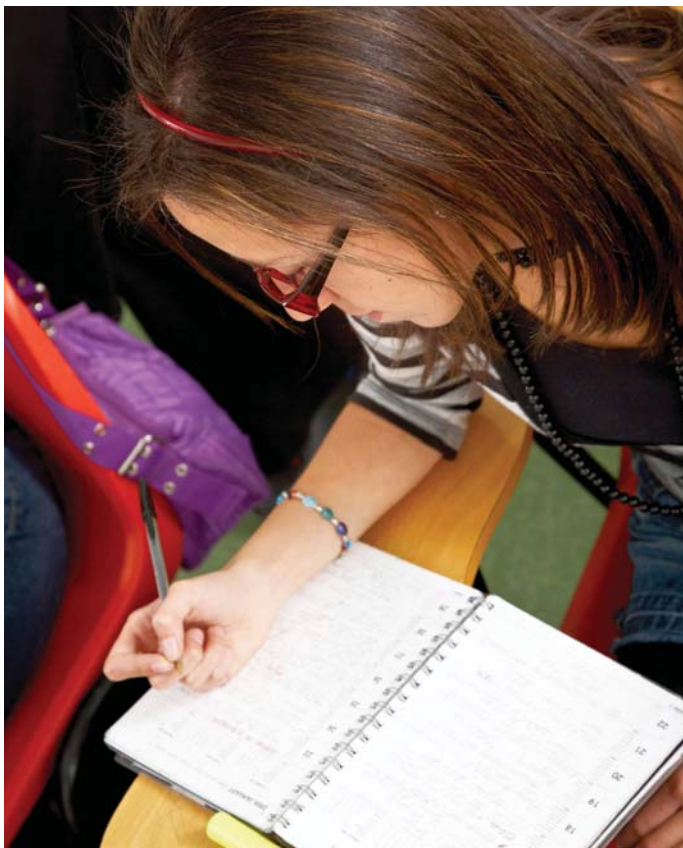
Sarita E. Brown

President, *Excelexencia* in Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neither Texas nor the United States can reach its human capital needs without accelerating Hispanic educational attainment. The institutions on the U.S./Mexico border in Texas rank among the top institutions in Texas and the nation enrolling and graduating Hispanics in higher education. The success of these institutions in enrolling and graduating Hispanics is particularly noteworthy given their history and limited resources. However, these eight institutions are rarely recognized in Texas, or nationally, for their major role in enrolling and graduating Hispanic students.

Excelencia in Education's project, Accelerating Latino Student Success (ALASS) ¹ at Texas Border Institutions examined the data, strategies and acceleration plans at eight public institutions on the U.S./Mexican border to determine their progress in attaining the participation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps by 2015: The Texas Higher Education Plan*. This brief summarizes the findings from ALASS and offers recommendations for accelerating Hispanic participation and success in higher education to meet the state's goals.



¹ *Alas* is the Spanish word for wings.

Need to Accelerate Progress

Leaders of the eight border institutions recognize the need to accelerate progress to serve their communities and increase their efficiency to meet the state's college success goals. While they recognize the collective commitment of their institutions is necessary, but not sufficient, to reach the state's goals, these institutions have designed acceleration plans to continue their leadership in enrolling and graduating Hispanic students. Other institutions and regions must do the same.

Accelerating Latino Student Success (ALASS) at Texas Border Institutions — Participating Institutions	
Public Universities	Community Colleges
Texas A&M International University	Laredo Community College
The University of Texas at Brownsville	Texas Southmost College
The University of Texas at El Paso	El Paso County Community College District
The University of Texas-Pan American	South Texas College

In their acceleration plans,

- ★ Border institutions have targeted participation growth to increase over 50 percent from 2005 to 2015. This is more than three times the national enrollment growth projected and twice the projected growth in Texas in that same period.
- ★ The border institutions have committed to increasing their overall certificate and degrees awarded by over 90 percent from 2005 to 2015. In comparison, statewide public institutions are projected to increase their degrees awarded by 40 percent.

The strategies in their acceleration plans address the numerous challenges the institutions face in providing a quality higher education in their respective regions: college readiness, access, retention and academic progress, affordability, and timely completion.

Recommendations — A Meaningful Hispanic Initiative

As bold as Texas' higher education plan has been in setting meaningful targets, the state must recommit to meeting the statewide needs of educational attainment for all, and specifically for Hispanics. Using the efforts of the border institutions as an example, the state should support a meaningful initiative specifically aimed at Hispanics that is inclusive of all the goals and strategies of the *Closing the Gaps Plan*, and other statewide plans such as the *Uniform*

Recruitment and Retention Strategy Plan. Intentionality matters. This initiative would build from the strengths of investments and practices at institutions like those on the U.S./Mexico border to design a cohesive and intentional strategy that acknowledges the need to accelerate Hispanic participation and success beyond current investments and activities.

Create a statewide acceleration plan specifically for Hispanic participation and success. Just as the eight border institutions have developed their own acceleration plans focused on Hispanic students, so too can Texas. The state can develop a more proactive and even more specific plan to accelerate attainment of both goals by building on the successes and strategies of those institutions that enroll and graduate the largest number of Hispanics in the state.

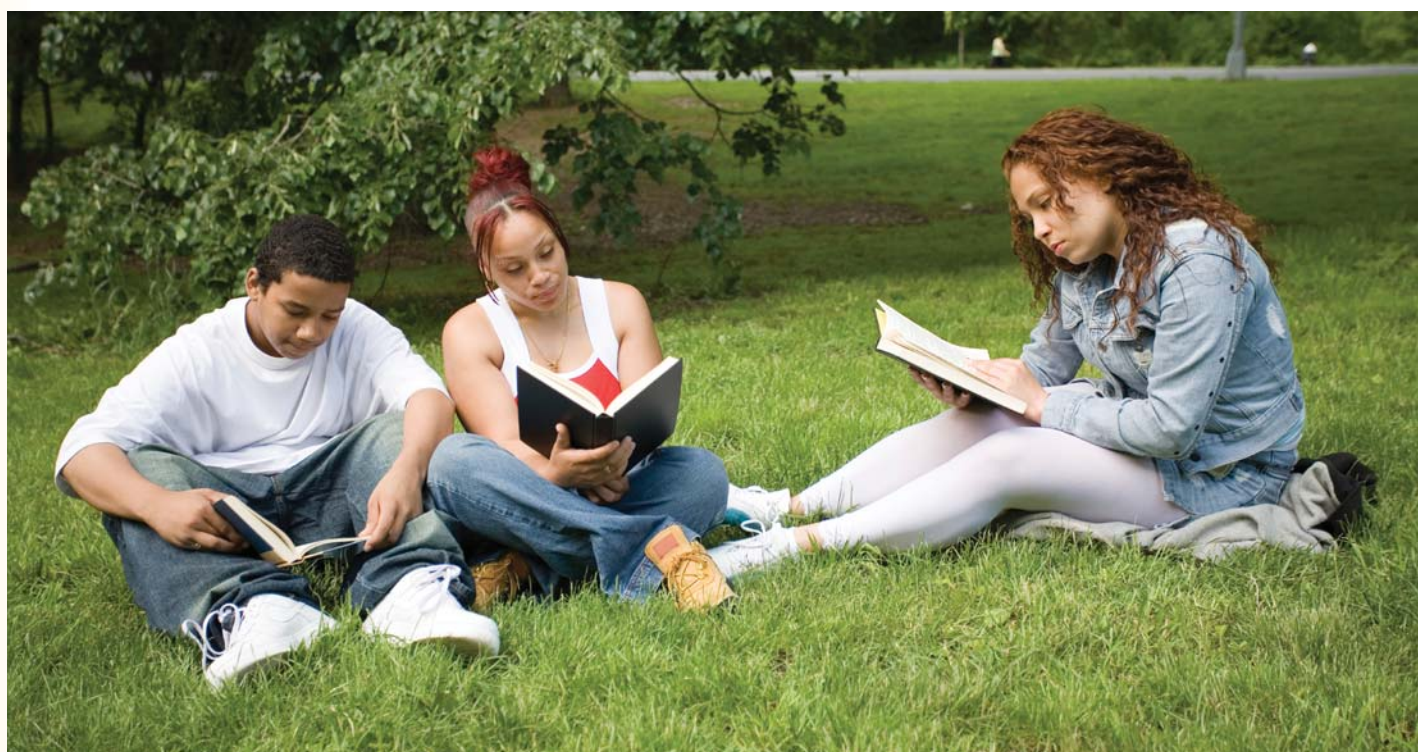
Increase support to border institutions. These border institutions have taken responsibility for educating the communities in their service areas, and have made a compelling case for the returns to their community that result from investing in their efforts. Given the history of limited financial support to border institutions, and the projected population growth in this region, the State has the opportunity and obligation to meet the institutions' efforts to serve a large and fast growing segment of the Texas community with significant additional support.

Replicate or expand institutional practices that are working for Hispanic students. The community colleges

and public universities on the U.S./Mexico border have become effective laboratories evaluating what works to enroll and graduate the nontraditional and Hispanic population of Texas. There are practices that have proven to be effective in serving Hispanic students that can be expanded or replicated in other institutions in the state in an effort to accelerate participation and success of Hispanic students.

Expand need-based financial aid. By providing financial aid for low-income students, the state helps to develop economic mobility for its residents and to support the economic competitiveness of the state. Given the low income of many Hispanics in Texas and the high poverty rates along the U.S./Mexico border specifically, the best way to achieve the preparation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps* is to provide financial aid to increase the educational opportunities of those who may not be the best prepared academically, but who will see a large value-added to their skills and abilities through higher education.

Engage other regions of the state. The largest growth in the population is projected to occur in urban areas, such as Dallas and Houston, and along the Texas border. The work of the border institutions alone will not be sufficient to meet the participation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps*. Texas will have to increase the scale of its efforts at the border and beyond if the State is to meet those goals.



INTRODUCTION



The rapid growth of the Hispanic² population in the United States and the limited educational attainment of Hispanics is a public policy concern. In 2006, Hispanics represented 15 percent of the U.S. population (Census Bureau, 2007), but only 13 percent had a bachelor's degree or more. In comparison, 32 percent of whites and 19 percent of blacks age 25 and over had a bachelor's degree or higher (Snyder, 2008). Hispanics are the youngest, largest, and fastest growing minority group in the country. Their increasing importance for the nation's workforce implies that their levels of educational attainment must increase if the United States expects to maintain and improve its economic competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Texas is at the forefront of the national demographic shift in the K-20 population. In 2005, Texas was second only to California in Hispanic enrollment, and Texas enrolled about 15 percent of Hispanic undergraduates in the United States (Snyder, 2008). At present, a large gap exists among racial/ethnic groups in both enrollment in and graduation from Texas' colleges and universities. Groups with the lowest

enrollment and graduation rates will constitute a larger proportion of the Texas population. If this gap is not closed, Texas will have proportionately fewer college graduates (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000).

Neither Texas nor the United States can reach its human capital needs without accelerating Hispanic educational attainment. At a time when the numbers of Hispanics enrolling for and completing college degrees at the national level are still too low to meet the growing workforce needs of our country, the contributions of institutions that have been successful in these efforts are particularly noteworthy. In analyses of national data, Texas and the institutions on the U.S./Mexico border rank among the top institutions enrolling and graduating Hispanics in higher education.

Texas is tackling the challenge of meeting the educational needs of its future workforce and taxpayers with *Closing the Gaps by 2015: The Texas Higher Education Plan*. The plan was adopted by the state higher education authority in 2000 with strong support from educational, business, and political leaders throughout Texas (Texas Higher Education Coor-

² Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably.

dinating Board, 2000) and is based on solid research that includes the “human capital” required for Texas to remain economically competitive (Murdock, 2002; Perryman Group, 2007). More specifically, *Closing the Gaps* outlines how the demographic changes affecting Texas will impact the state’s higher education system. It also sets goals for closing the educational attainment gap within Texas and between Texas and leading states in four areas: participation (enrollment), success (completion of degrees and certificates), excellence, and research. Of particular importance for Texas and for the United States is the goal to close the gaps in participation and success in Texas by 2015, with numeric goals set by racial/ethnic group.

PARTICIPATION GOAL: Close the gaps in participation rates across Texas to add 630,000 more students.

SUCCESS GOAL: Increase the number of degrees, certificates, and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs to 210,000 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007).

The numbers required to meet each of the stated goals by 2015 are especially large for Hispanics. *Excelexencia* in Education, working in collaboration with campus presidents and their teams, led the Accelerating LATino Student Success (ALASS) at Texas Border Institutions project to examine and benchmark the current status of higher education at eight border higher education institutions that rank among the top institutions in the nation and in Texas in enrolling and gradu-

ating Hispanic students. The project included three meetings to support the design and presentation of campus plans to accelerate Latino student success in higher education. At its conclusion, the ALASS project made clear that this set of institutions is contributing substantially to the established state goals of educational attainment and parity for Hispanics. However, these institutions do not rank as highly on other important institutional measures such as graduation rates.

The Texas institutions of higher education on the U.S./Mexico border are a vital resource for reaching the goals of *Closing the Gaps*. Combined, these eight institutions represent less than 10 percent of public institutions in Texas; yet in 2005, they enrolled more than 30 percent of Hispanics and awarded more than 30 percent of degrees to Hispanics in Texas. Even more importantly, these institutions are taking responsibility and accelerating their participation and success efforts for all of their students and especially for Hispanic students to help meet the state goals spelled out in the Texas plan.

This brief begins with a profile of the eight Texas border institutions participating in the ALASS project and then summarizes the significance of the institutions at both the national and state levels and affordability at the state level. Next, the brief reviews the institutions’ plans and targets for participation and success, as well as their strategies to accelerate Hispanic participation and success by 2015. The brief concludes with recommendations to accelerate Hispanic educational attainment in Texas and the nation.



BORDER INSTITUTION PROFILES

Combined, the following eight border institutions enrolled 5 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates in the United States in 2005, but ranked among the top institutions in the nation in enrolling and awarding degrees to Hispanics (IPEDS, 2005-06).

Public Universities	Community Colleges
The University of Texas at Brownsville	Texas Southmost College
The University of Texas at El Paso	El Paso County Community College District
The University of Texas-Pan American	South Texas College
Texas A&M International University	Laredo Community College

These border institutions have not explicitly formed a consortium, but they do share similar challenges and characteristics in providing a quality higher education to their respective communities. For example, undergraduate enrollment at these institutions is over 75 percent Hispanic. Further, a large percentage of students at all these institutions are first-generation college-goers, low-income students,

older than traditional college-age, female, and working students. These institutions also share a history of limited state financial support to improve their access and quality of education, a disadvantage that was recognized and addressed for the universities through the South Texas/Border Initiative.



★ EL PASO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (EPCC) is the fastest growing community college in Texas. It is also the largest grantor of associate degrees to Hispanic students in the nation. EPCC has five campuses with more than 24,000 credit students and 8,000 non-credit students.

Richard Rhodes, President

★ THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO is the only doctoral-research university with a majority Mexican-American student population. Three-fourths of the undergraduate students are Hispanic, while 9 percent reside in and commute from Mexico. Almost 50 percent of students receive Pell Grants, and 29 percent have family incomes of \$20,000 or less.

Diana Natalicio, President

★ SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE serves a student body that is 95 percent Hispanic, with more than 75 percent being the first in their family to attend college, and more than 60 percent female.

Shirley Reed, President

★ THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN (UTPA) is located in the state's seventh most populous metropolitan area and serves the Rio Grande Valley, one of the fastest growing areas

of the state. UTPA's enrollment is 86 percent Hispanic and 59 percent female. Undergraduate enrollment is 71 percent full-time, and the average student age is 23.

Blandina Cardenas, President

★ THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE AND TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE (UTB/TSC) serve a student population with a majority of first-generation and lower income level college students. Most UTB/TSC students work as well as attend college, resulting in 62 percent going to classes on a part-time basis.

Juliet Garcia, President

★ LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE serves a student population that is 94 percent Hispanic. More than 60 percent attend part-time, and 25 percent are enrolled in remediation.

Juan Maldonado, President

★ TEXAS A & M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (TAMIU) continues to experience enrollment growth, with Hispanic students comprising about 89 percent of the total. Only 50 percent of area high school graduates enroll in higher education the fall following their graduation, however. More than 90 percent of students awarded the baccalaureate are Hispanic.

Ray Keck, President

SOUTH TEXAS BORDER INITIATIVE

In 1987, the *LULAC v. Richards* lawsuit claimed inequities of opportunity for higher education in the South Texas/Border region due to limited academic degree program offerings and enrollment opportunities (Flack, 2003). While the Texas Supreme Court overturned a lower court's finding in favor of LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), the resulting public debate over the needs of border institutions drew the action of lawmakers. In 1989, the Texas legislature approved the South Texas/Border Initiative in an effort to help border universities achieve parity with other Texas institutions (Legislative Joint Committee, 1988). The Initiative increased funding, merged some institutions into a larger governance system, upgraded other institutions, and authorized new academic programs and courses, including important doctoral and master's degree programs.

The South Texas/Border Initiative recognized the important role that Texas institutions on the U.S./Mexico border played in providing access to higher education programs for those in the South Texas region. Today, more than 90 percent of students enrolled at border institutions come from the institutions' service region (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007). The South Texas/Border Initiative provided support for nine institutions stretching from San Antonio

to El Paso to Corpus Christi. These institutions serve communities that are relatively immobile—in terms of college options, and the investment by the Initiative enhanced both access to and the quality of higher education throughout the border region. Four of these institutions and four community colleges in the region that were not addressed in this major higher education investment participated in the ALASS project.

The border institutions remain critical for education and economic growth of their region and for the state. Since 1989, the institutions have grown in both student enrollment and degree completion. While state investment for border institutions through the South Texas/Border Initiative subsided after less than 15 years, the challenge remains to enroll and graduate the large and growing population in South Texas. For this reason, the eight border institutions merit recognition for their willingness to create acceleration plans for Hispanic participation and success with investment of existing resources, rather than delaying their efforts to attain the State's *Closing the Gaps* goals by waiting for new resources.

The following section provides specific information on the national and Texas rankings of these border institutions in both participation and success of Hispanic students.





PARTICIPATION

NATIONAL RANKING. There are 1,045 community colleges and 640 public universities in the United States (Snyder, 2008). In 2005, all four community colleges in the Texas border ranked in the top two percent of institutions in the country in enrolling Hispanics, and three of the public universities on the Texas border ranked in the top two percent of public institutions in enrolling Hispanics (see Appendix 1: Table 1).

STATE RANKING. In Texas, the top five public institutions enrolling Hispanics in 2005 were border institutions (see Appendix 1: Table 2). The eight border institutions participating in ALASS represented less than 10 percent of public institutions in Texas but in 2005, they accounted for more than 30 percent of all Hispanics enrolled in the state. In addition, the three University of Texas campuses on the U.S./Mexico border enrolled 63 percent of all Hispanics in The University of Texas system, and Texas A&M International University enrolled almost 25 percent of all Hispanics in the Texas A&M system.

GROWTH: 2000-2005. The border institutions increased enrollment both overall and for Hispanics at a much higher rate than did Texas or the nation. From 2000 to 2005, the average increase in overall enrollment for the eight Texas border institutions—35 percent—was higher than either the state average (22 percent) or the national average (14 percent) (Snyder, 2008; THECB 2007) (see Appendix 1: Table 3). During the same time period, Hispanic enrollment at border institutions grew an average of 34 percent, higher than the national average (30 percent), but slightly lower than the state (37 percent). In 2005, the border institutions enrolled 10 percent of all students in public institutions in Texas.

SUCCESS

NATIONAL RANKING. The Texas border institutions are top-ranked institutions nationally and statewide in awarding degrees to Hispanics. Nationally, community colleges in the ALASS project ranked in the top six institutions in awarding associate degrees to Hispanics in 2005 (see Appendix 1: Table 4). Further, two of the public universities were in the top 10 of all institutions in awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics in 2005, and all were in the top 35. Beyond overall degrees, border institutions were also among the top institutions nationally ranked in degrees awarded to Hispanics in critical areas of need such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (see Appendix 2).

STATE RANKING. In Texas, the border institutions represented less than 10 percent of public universities and community colleges but awarded more than 30 percent of all degrees or certificates given to Hispanics in 2005 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006). Border institutions held the top four positions among Texas public universities and community colleges in awarding degrees or certificates to Hispanics in 2005 (see Appendix 1: Table 5), and all eight border institutions ranked in the top 20 for the state.

In 2005, the four border community colleges awarded 37 percent of associate degrees awarded to Hispanics in Texas, and the four border universities awarded 30 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanics the state. Furthermore, again in Texas in 2005, four of the top five public institutions awarding associate degrees and four of the top 10 public institutions awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics were border institutions (see Appendix 1: Table 6). The ALASS institutions also ranked highly in number of degrees awarded in program areas of critical need to the state, not just for Hispanics but for all students.

GROWTH: 2000 TO 2005 An increasing number of people in the United States are completing college degrees. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of associate degrees at the national level rose 23 percent, and bachelor's degrees rose 16 percent (Snyder, 2008). During this same period, the border institutions increased undergraduate degrees awarded by almost 50 percent, compared to 31 percent for all public institutions in Texas. Of all degrees awarded by public universities and community colleges in Texas, border institutions increased their proportion from 7 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2005 (see Appendix 1: Table 7).

AFFORDABILITY

Tuition and fees and financial aid

On average, it costs less to attend a border institution than other public institutions in Texas. In 2006, tuition and fees at border public universities were more than \$1,000 less than the average tuition and fees for all Texas public universities (see Appendix 1: Table 8). The average expenses at the border public universities were also lower than the average expenses at all Texas public universities. While the cost of enrolling at a border institution increased an average of 22 percent in three years (2003 to 2006), this increase was less than the 32 percent increase on average for all Texas public universities during that same time.

In 2006, the average tuition and fees at the Texas border community colleges were higher than the average for all community colleges in Texas (see Appendix 1: Table 8). This was primarily because the tuition and fees at Texas Southmost College (\$3,417) were twice that of the other community colleges (\$1,449). Although the “sticker price” at Texas Southmost College was more in line with universities as a result of the partnership with UTB, the Texas Southmost District provides a scholarship of \$19/credit for every student in the district, so the net cost was closer to \$2,925. However, the average expenses for students at the border community colleges were lower than the average for all community colleges in Texas.

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES. The average financial aid grant to Hispanics at border public universities was higher than the average grant to all students at Texas public universities (see Appendix 1: Table 9). However, it was slightly lower than the average grant to Hispanics at other public universities. The average Pell grant and work-study awards to students at border public universities were similar to those awarded to students at all Texas public universities (TG, 2007). In 2006, the average loan amount to Hispanic students at border public universities was much lower than the average

loan amount for all students or Hispanic students at Texas public institutions (see Appendix 1: Table 9).

COMMUNITY COLLEGES. The average grant to Hispanics at border community colleges was higher than the average grant to Hispanics at all Texas community colleges (See Appendix 1: Table 9). The average Pell grant awarded to students at border community colleges (\$2,450) was much higher than the average Pell grant awarded to students at all Texas community colleges (\$2,229) (TG, 2007). However, in 2006, the average loan amount to Hispanic students at border community colleges was much lower than the average loan amount for Hispanic students at all Texas community colleges. Further, the average work-study amount awarded to students at border community colleges (\$1,355) was lower than the average work-study amount awarded to students at all Texas community colleges (\$1,434).

The ongoing and growing contributions of the border institutions to educating Hispanics in Texas—as well as their affordability—are even more remarkable given the history of limited resources and limited state investment in public education in South Texas.



ACCELERATION PLANS



Eight years after *Closing the Gaps* was adopted, the participation and success gaps between Hispanics and other groups remain large. In the *2008 Progress Report for Closing the Gaps*, the following analysis summarizes the status of attaining explicit goals in participation and success:

- ★ Hispanic participation was “well below target” in progress relative to the target trend line. In comparison, the white and African-American participation was “somewhat above target.”
- ★ Hispanic success in earning bachelor’s and associate degrees and certificates was “somewhat below target” relative to the target trend line. Overall, the state was “somewhat above target,” but the success goal for African-Americans was “somewhat below target” as well.
- ★ The progress report stated that, to reach the 2010 participation target for Hispanic students, enrollment growth must accelerate significantly in the next three years.

“The success of *Closing the Gaps* will depend not only on financial resources but on institutional creativeness and initiative in meeting institutional targets.”

— TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD WEB SITE (HISTORY OF THE PLAN)

- ★ The growth of degrees awarded has slowed in recent years, and awards to African American and Hispanic students fell below the target line in FY2007.
- ★ To reach the participation goals set for 2010, the state needs to increase participation overall by 13 percent, increase African-American participation by 9 percent, and increase Hispanic participation by 37 percent (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007).

The ALASS institutions are making substantial contributions to the participation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps*.

Why do the ALASS institutions rank so high in state and national rates of Hispanic participation and success?

Some might argue border institutions enroll large numbers of Hispanics by default because they are located in communities with large Hispanic populations. However, there are

other institutions located in areas with large Hispanic communities along the U.S./Mexico border in California, Arizona, and New Mexico that do not rank as high nationally in Hispanic participation and success. Other explanations for their high rankings may be access and affordability. Most of the Texas border institutions are open-admissions institutions and have lower tuition and fees than other institutions. While these institutional characteristics would generally encourage increased participation or enrollments, they would generally not be considered positive factors supporting high levels of student success (e.g., graduation numbers). An open admissions policy implies the institutions admit students who may have ability to benefit but who may not be college-ready and who thus present a greater challenge for the institution to help succeed. Further, lower tuition and fees generally imply fewer institutional resources to provide academic and support services to retain and graduate students.

What makes these institutions different and may lead to these high rankings of Hispanic participation and success?

The eight border institutions share four common characteristics. First, they have identified their priority to educate the communities in their region, and thus have developed very intentional practices to serve their Hispanic community. They have created a supportive and community oriented approach to their institutional practices. Second, the leaders at these institutions have re-allocated existing resources to support institutional practices they know are improving Hispanic student access and success. Third, these institutions actively use their internal data to inform and reform their existing practices in student participation and success. Fourth, they actively seek other public or private funding to support and their academic experiences and institutional practices serving Hispanic students.

While these institutions rank nationally and statewide in number of Hispanics they enroll and graduate, it is important to note that they do not rank as highly on other important measures such as graduation rates. They also do not serve Hispanics at the expense or to the exclusion of other students. However, the institutional practices and acceleration plans of these institutions are examples of what is possible when institutions commit to increasing Hispanic student participation and success. Their practices can inform and lead the way for other institutions experiencing increased enrollments of Latino students. The institutional acceleration plans are pragmatic about resources while also being assertive in participation and success goals at a time when the state and nation need concerted action.

What the ALASS institutions are doing

Today most institutions of higher education find it a challenge to assure adequate capacity, enhance educational quality, and respond to rapidly changing student bodies in the face of limitations or reductions in state and district funding. Each border institution used the institutional data and the numerical targets generated for *Closing the Gaps* to frame their acceleration plans for Hispanic participation and success. This allowed the institutions to leverage their investments and benchmark their contributions to the state's ongoing effort to increase the participation and success of Hispanic students.

While the financial resources at the eight border institutions are generally lower than at other institutions in Texas, these institutions are continuing to build upon their current levels of success. They are committed to doing more to improve Hispanic participation and success in higher education without limiting their efforts contingent on requests for new resources. The ALASS project was focused on the institutions' explicit commitment and coordinated efforts to meet or exceed state goals in contributing to one of Texas' greatest needs—Hispanic participation and success in higher education.

The institutions' acceleration plans show multiple and coordinated strategies implemented in an intentional plan and growing participation with the limited resources available. Their strategies address the numerous challenges the institutions face in providing a quality higher education in their respective regions: college readiness, access, retention and academic progress, affordability, and timely completion. The following section provides data on the institutions' accelerated participation and success goals and then highlights some of their strategies identified as critical for meeting these accelerated goals.

PARTICIPATION

Border institutions have targeted participation growth to increase 52 percent from 2005 to 2015 (see Table 1). This is more than three times the projected national enrollment growth (14 percent) (Hussar, 2006) and twice the projected enrollment growth in Texas during that same period (26 percent). If the border institutions meet their projected growth in enrollment, they will increase from 10 percent to 12 percent of the state's total enrollment by 2015. It should be noted that little to no participation increases are projected for Texas' two flagship institutions, the University of Texas at Austin and Texas & A&M University (THECB, 2008).

TABLE 1. CLOSING THE GAPS — Participation (Target 1: Fall Enrollment — Overall), projected fall enrollment growth, from 2005 to 2015 for all public institutions in Texas and selected border institutions

Target 1: Fall Enrollment — Overall	Actual 2005	Target 2015	Percent Growth ('05-'15)
8 border institutions	104,932	159,322	52%
All public institutions	1,065,217	1,346,871	26%
Border institutions as percentage of all public institutions	10%	12%	

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007, and campus acceleration plans

Strategies to increase participation

IMPROVE COLLEGE READINESS OF STUDENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES Border institutions serve a high percentage of students who are not college ready. Too often educators point to the deficiencies at an earlier stage of student preparation to explain gaps in the academic performance of their students. The leaders of ALASS institutions have moved beyond pointing fingers. They are reaching out to all sectors of the P-20 continuum, to parents, civic leaders, and community members in order to make student success the entire region's responsibility. In doing so, they are plugging into the educational pipeline earlier to help prepare students by increasing educational and career aspirations, providing information on preparing and paying for college, and analyzing academic preparation, so that appropriate interventions at earlier stages can increase college readiness. This investment demonstrates the institutions' leadership and commitment to the educational needs of their communities and regions.

Example of increasing college readiness

El Paso Collaborative

One of the strongest models of collaboration between K-12 feeder schools, a community college, and a university partner is that of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, established in 1991. El Paso Community College and the University of Texas at El Paso are working to align their curriculum and to ease transitions so that students do not get lost, and for the past decade they have used resources from the National Science Foundation to provide summer programs and tuition support for students transferring to programs in science, engineering, and mathematics. The Collaborative is a nationally recognized example of inclusive strategies to align and improve education. It served as a model for the Laredo Council for Educational Excellence and others across the country.

INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS Many students on the border do not follow the traditional path to a college degree—full-time

enrollment in a baccalaureate-granting institution. To address this the border institutions provide additional support services and pathways to degree completion. Whether through concurrent enrollment or via articulation agreements, community colleges and baccalaureate institutions are improving their interactions with each other on behalf of their students. As regional institutions in close geographic proximity, they are intentionally investing in students in their service area, whether they are enrolled in high school, at community college, or at university. These institutions are also working to reclaim students who have dropped out of high school and college to get them back into the college pipeline.

Example of increasing access to college

Dual enrollment

Dual enrollment programs allow eligible students to take college courses while attending high school. In a recent academic year, South Texas College (STC) enrolled over 4,800 high school students in dual enrollment programs. Hundreds more take part in the Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy (DEMESA) and the Dual Enrollment Engineering Academy (DEEA), which provide opportunities for qualified students to pursue an Associate of Science degree during their junior and senior years in high school. This past year, 33 students graduated from the DEEA, and 13 students graduated from the DEMESA. Most will go on to their junior years in higher education at major universities including Stanford University, Texas A&M University, The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Texas-Pan American, Kettering University, Norwich University, Baylor University and Texas Tech University.

Dual admissions and/or dual enrollment arrangements are also in place between neighboring community colleges and baccalaureate institutions in the border region. They are working well throughout the region, as evidenced by the Early College High School programs in El Paso and UT-Pan American and by the growth of participation in UTB/TSC's dual enrollment program from 2,000 to over 4,000 students in one year (2006 to 2007).

MAINTAIN AFFORDABILITY AND INCREASE FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

The Texas border region is one of the poorest in the state and in the country. Income levels in South Texas counties are well below the national average (Census Bureau, 2008). At the same time they are addressing the need for more resources to increase their capacity to grow enrollment and to strengthen the quality of education and services offered, the leadership of ALASS institutions have made multiple efforts to keep tuition low and to attract funds for scholarships in order to remain financially viable for the students they serve. The vast majority of students at community colleges on the border and just over half of university students are Pell grant recipients (TG, 2007). However, the Pell grant does not always cover all costs. Therefore, these institutions have worked diligently to increase support for institutional scholarships to support students through tuition set-asides, grants, and external donations.

Beyond grants, many students at ALASS institutions must work part- or even full-time to pay for their college education. However, research shows diminishing returns in academic progress when students work over 20 hours a week, especially in jobs unrelated to their studies. To counteract this risk, ALASS institutions make a special effort to create student jobs on their campuses, through federal, state, or institutional work-study programs. If students who must work do so on campus, they have a better chance of succeeding in their studies.

Each of the Texas border institutions is committed to increasing opportunities to pursue higher education, and each is sensitive to the impact of college costs on students' finances and to the added costs required to educate students who are not college-ready. The Texas border institutions have committed to increasing the absolute numbers of Latino students who enroll and succeed at their campuses, and they are also working to remain affordable for prospec-

Example of increasing financial aid options

Imagine College Program

The Imagine College Program at UT-Brownsville complements the Pell grant to cover all tuition and fees for financially needy students who enroll in courses for at least 15 credits per semester and who complete at least 30 credits a year with an average grade of "C" or better. This is one of a number of programs at ALASS institutions that encourage timely completion through financial incentives. Another strategy is tuition rebates, or flat-rate tuition for students who attempt more than 15 credits per semester.



ive students. However, they, and most other public institutions, are perpetually challenged to finance capacity for enrollment expansion and also finance services that support the retention and success of the students they admit.

SUCCESS

The border institutions have committed to increasing their overall undergraduate degree attainment by 93 percent by 2015. In comparison, the state is projected to increase its total undergraduate degree attainment by 40 percent (see Table 2). The border institutions also expect to increase their proportion of undergraduate degrees awarded to all students from 9 to 12 percent of all state degrees.

Beyond overall undergraduate success, border institutions have also targeted increasing their growth in degrees awarded to Hispanics by 93 percent (compared to 82 percent for all public institutions) from 2005 to 2015. The border institutions also aim to increase their proportion in the state of public institution degrees awarded to Hispanics from 30 to 32 percent (see Table 2).

Table 2. Closing the Gaps — Success (Target 1: Associate, Certificates, Bachelor’s — Overall), for selected border institutions and all public institutions in Texas

Target 1: Associate, Certificates, Bachelor’s — Overall	Actual 2005	Target 2015	Percent Growth 2005-2015)
8 border institutions	10,697	20,690	93%
All public institutions	126,470	176,426	40%
Border institutions as percentage of all public institutions	9%	12%	
Target 6: Associate, Certificates, Bachelor’s — Hispanic	Actual 2005	Target 2015	Percent Growth (2005-2015)
8 border institutions	9,335	17,974	93%
All public institutions	31,051	56,439	82%
Border institutions as percentage of all public institutions	30%	32%	

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007 and campus acceleration plans

Strategies to increase success

RETENTION AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS Getting students to college is the first step towards college completion. Retention and academic progress, unfortunately, are serious problems among Latino students at all levels. ALASS institutions have reallocated existing resources and received private funding to put in place multiple retention and student support strategies. Specific programs include Early Alert systems for quick intervention, First and Second Year Experience programs, learning communities in the freshman and sophomore years, the curriculum-focused Foundations of Excellence programs in El Paso and TAMU, academic mentoring through Instructors Promoting Academic Student Success (IPASS) in Laredo, orientations for new students, comprehensive student advising in South Texas College, mentoring programs, economic and employment incentives, supplemental instruction initiatives, and deliberate faculty and staff involvement.

The majority of students enrolling at border institutions require developmental education. It remains a priority at those institutions to address academic deficiencies and

prepare entering students for college-level work. Through their academic collaboration with high schools, border institutions expect to reduce the volume of students in need of developmental education. By identifying student learning outcomes for entry-level courses, institutions such as Texas

Example of increasing retention and academic progress

First-Year Experience program

To meet one of their institutional priorities—and guided by findings and recommendations that emerged from a year-long self-study and the Foundations of Excellence project of the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience—TAMU has begun a comprehensive First-Year Experience program for all freshmen. All freshmen are part of a learning community, and all are enrolled in University 1101, a course especially planned to guide their first steps in higher education. Many faculty members have cooperated in creating this program. In addition, TAMU has complemented these efforts with multiple strategies to better integrate technology and pedagogy delivery in all classes to improve student enrollment, retention, and success.

A&M International University and UTEP are better able to pinpoint what students must be able to do in order to succeed in college. UTEP is also involved in an ambitious course redesign initiative for gatekeeper courses in English and math that has significantly reduced the number of sections required for remedial purposes. In addition, most institutions are using technology in their developmental courses for individualized instruction, especially in English and math, so that students can learn at their own pace and review the material until they master it. Further ALASS institutions are creating academic roadmaps for their students, so they have a clear image of what courses and requirements are necessary to progress towards a degree.



ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES The need to expand the academic experiences in the border regions was recognized in the LULAC v. Richards case and stimulated the creation of the South Texas/Border Initiative and investment by the Texas Legislature. Although this specific funding stream is no longer available to the border institutions, they are reallocating existing resources and attracting other public and private funds to continue to enrich their academic offerings.

Because the institutions are the primary source of intellectual and professional development in their regions, border institutions provide programs in undergraduate research, service learning, international exchanges, faculty development programs, internships, and other enrichment opportunities. The ALASS institutions have also increased their academic offerings in order to expand options for students in the region, address workforce needs, and contribute to the economic development of the border region. These offerings include new academic programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; master's and doctoral programs in areas of state need (such as bilingual education); and incentives for faculty research

projects on topics of interest to the health professions, agriculture, and other industries.

REDUCING TIME TO DEGREE In their acceleration plans, the eight ALASS institutions have identified strategies and incentives to reduce the current time to degree. Some of them were described in preceding sections. In addition, these institutions also provide financial incentives and fast-track programs, course redesign, and curriculum streamlining.

While they are committed to increasing graduation rates, the border institutions emphasize that standard accountability measures designed to reflect achievements of full-time students are less likely to reflect the progress of the nontraditional students who attend their institutions. Many students at border institutions attend part time, interrupt their studies because they have to work to support their families, and/or move from one institution to another before finally completing a degree. Thus, the standard IPEDS graduation rates (defined as a maximum of three years to attain an associate degree and six years to attain a baccalaureate degree) will not capture the achievements of border institutions.

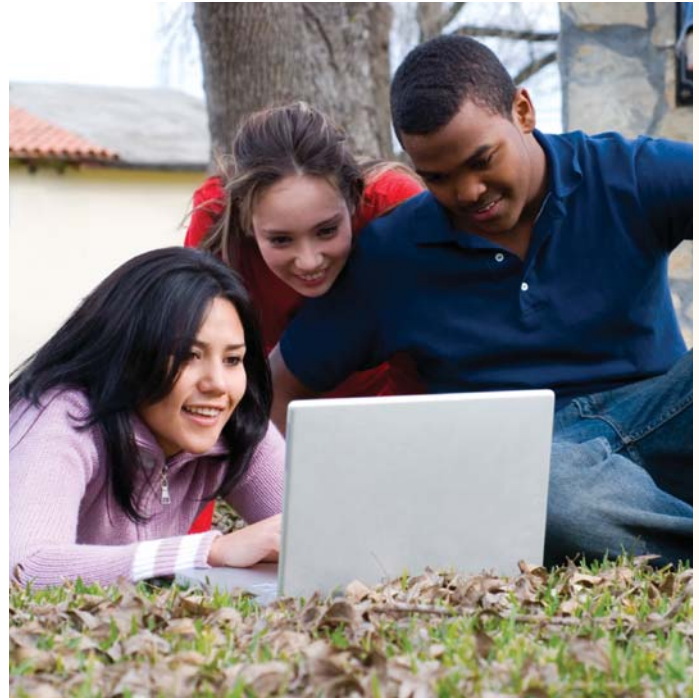


THE GAP IS CLEAR-BUT THE TOOLS ARE HERE

The Texas legislature took bold steps to address the lack of access to higher education in South Texas when it created the South Texas/Border Initiative. Today, the institutions in South Texas are among the fastest growing institutions in the country, are serving their regions, and are offering educational opportunities that are improving the social and economic well-being of their communities and of Texas. Educational, business, and community leaders in Texas also took bold steps to address the educational needs of their state for economic competitiveness when they developed measurable goals in *Closing the Gaps by 2015: The Texas Higher Education Plan*. By setting explicit and disaggregated goals for participation and success in higher education, and then measuring progress towards these goals on an annual basis, Texas has set a critical roadmap to increase educational attainment and maintain its economic competitiveness in the nation. Other states aspiring to meet similar workforce and community goals might draw lessons from Texas' approach to aligning resources and cataloging institutional practices to attain its human capital goals of educating its citizenry.

How a state aligns resources and catalogs institutional practices to attain its human capital goals of educating its citizenry is vital, and can be illuminating to other states aspiring to meet similar community and workforce goals. To meet the workforce and economic competitiveness goals of Texas, the state has established ambitious yet measurable and meaningful goals to attain by 2015. However, the latest progress reports show that Texas is falling behind its targets and is in danger of not meeting its ambitious goals. The largest gap that remains to be closed is the participation and success of Hispanics in Texas. The numbers required to meet educational and population parity are daunting.

Texas has the tools to meet *Closing the Gaps* goals for Hispanic participation and success and must stay the course. However, at the current rate of progress (2008 review), Texas will not meet its stated goals for Hispanic participation and success by 2015. Simply measuring progress without making direct and specific investments in the communities with the lowest educational attainment will not help meet Texas' goals. For institutions to meet or exceed *Closing the Gaps* goals for Hispanic participation and success in higher education, Texas should create a more aggressive plan of action—a Hispanic Initiative.



KEY STEPS FOR A MEANINGFUL HISPANIC INITIATIVE

The state should support a meaningful initiative specifically aimed at Hispanics that is inclusive of all the goals and strategies of the *Closing the Gaps Plan*, and perhaps other mandated statewide plans such as the *Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategy Plan*. *Intentionality matters*. This initiative would build from the strengths of investments and practices at institutions like those on the U.S./Mexico border to design a cohesive and intentional strategy that acknowledges the need to accelerate Hispanic participation and success beyond current investments and activities.

From the findings of *LULAC v. Richards* to *Hopwood v. Texas*³, the message of financial support, college opportunity, and academic success for Hispanics in Texas has been lukewarm. Taking the lead from the border institutions, it is important to be explicit in setting and disaggregating targets that identify Hispanics as a critical group for action and to implement programs and strategies to better serve these communities. These actions change the perception that Hispanics are an afterthought in educational support. These actions also send a message to the Hispanic community that

³ *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) challenged the use of affirmative action in the admissions policy at The University of Texas School of Law.

they are included in the broader goals of the state and show that the state and other public institutions are willing to invest as required to achieve the success the state needs. Some potential strategies include the following:

CREATE A STATEWIDE ACCELERATION PLAN SPECIFICALLY FOR HISPANIC PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS. Just as the eight border institutions have developed acceleration plans for their institutions focused on Hispanic students, so too can Texas. As the most recent *Closing the Gaps* progress update shows, measuring the current levels of participation and of success are not sufficient to ensure that the goals set will be reached. A more proactive and even more specific plan to accelerate attainment of both goals could be based on the successes and strategies of those institutions that are enrolling and graduating the largest number of Hispanics in the state. Once explicit statewide strategies are outlined, elected officials, college presidents and trustees, business leaders, and others could convene to discuss the specific activities and investments required could build support for a statewide acceleration plan.

INCREASE SUPPORT TO BORDER INSTITUTIONS. These border institutions have taken responsibility for educating the communities in their service area, and they have made a compelling case for the returns to their community that result from investing in their efforts. As a result, these institutions have received support from such varied funders as the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, and Lumina Foundation for Education to develop and implement institutional practices that further improve Latino student success.

This is the time for the state to provide these institutions with significant additional support, given (1) the history of limited financial support to border institutions, as evidenced by the South Texas/Border Initiative, (2) the acknowledgment that these institutions serve the educational needs of a significant segment of the Texas community, and (3) the fact that the communities they serve are expected to increase substantially in the next 10 years. Increasing support to these institutions through a meaningful Hispanic Initiative also creates an opportunity to balance two imperatives: first, efficient use of public funds, which elected officials are responsible for ensuring and, second, effectiveness in enrolling and graduating critical numbers of students necessary to meet the state's educational and workforce preparation goals.

REPLICATE OR EXPAND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES THAT ARE WORKING FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS. The community colleges and public universities on the U.S./Mexico border have become effective laboratories evaluating what works to enroll and

graduate the nontraditional and Hispanic population of Texas. Practices there that have proven effective in serving Hispanic students—from reconstituting developmental education, to re-designing academic advising and the creating additional work-study on campus to keep students engaged—can be expanded or replicated in other public institutions to accelerate participation and success of Hispanic students.

EXPAND NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID. Higher education is a foundation for economic mobility. Financial aid for low-income students provides a critical opportunity for citizens to improve their economic future and support the economic competitiveness of the state. Given the low-income of many Hispanics in Texas and the high poverty rates along the U.S./Mexico border specifically, it is vitally important to provide financial aid to increase the educational opportunities of those who may not be the best prepared academically, but who will see a large value-added to their skills and abilities through higher education. This is key to achieving the preparation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps*.

ENGAGE OTHER REGIONS OF THE STATE. The border institutions have established institutional investments and practices (1) to increase their overall contributions to the state's participation and success goals, and (2) to serve the Hispanic community specifically. However, the largest growth in the state's population is projected to occur in urban areas, such as Dallas and Houston, and along the border with Mexico. The work of the border institutions alone will not be sufficient to meet the participation and success goals in *Closing the Gaps*. Texas will have to increase the scale of its efforts at the border and beyond.

A statewide Hispanic Initiative must engage other regions in Texas. For example, the large and fast-growing Hispanic populations in Dallas and Houston are not participating in higher education on par with their demographic representation. How can the practices and investments showing success on the border translate to these other regions? Are there ways to instigate partnerships or replicate institutional practices? Addressing these questions can accelerate progress towards *Closing the Gap* goals of Hispanic participation and success.

The impact of Texas' efforts will not only benefit Texans; they have the potential to influence the entire country. As Texas identifies a bold plan to accelerate Hispanic participation and success in higher education and marshals the attention and resources necessary to reach their goals, so too can the nation. The nation is watching.

APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

PARTICIPATION

Table 1. National Ranking of Selected Texas Border Institutions, by Enrollment of Latinos in Higher Education, Fall 2005

Community Colleges	National Ranking
El Paso County Community College	1
South Texas College*	3
Laredo Community College	15
Public Universities	National Ranking
University of Texas Pan American	4
University of Texas at El Paso	5
University of Texas Brownsville/ Texas Southmost College**	6
Texas A & M International University	50

*South Texas College now offers a bachelor's degree

** Texas Southmost College does not report enrollment separately from The University of Texas at Brownsville

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institutional Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2005-06

Table 2. State Ranking of Selected Texas Border Institutions, by Enrollment of Hispanics in Higher Education, 2005

Public Institution	State Ranking	Hispanic Enrollment
El Paso County Community College District	1	20,772
South Texas College	2	15,409
University of Texas-Pan American	3	14,771
The University of Texas at El Paso	4	13,945
The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College	5	13,879
Laredo Community College	10	7,683
Texas A&M International University	25	3,839

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005

Table 3: Closing the Gaps — Target 1: Fall Enrollment — Overall, and percentage growth, for all public institutions in Texas and selected border institutions, for 2000 and 2005

Target 1: Fall Enrollment — Overall	Actual 2000	Actual 2005	Percent Growth (2000-2005)
8 border institutions	77,638	104,932	35%
All public institutions	875,231	1,065,217	22%
Border institutions as percentage of all public institutions	9%	10%	

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Closing the Gaps, 2007

Table 4. National Ranking of Selected Texas Border Institutions, by Degrees Awarded to Hispanics in Higher Education, 2005

Texas Public Institutions		National Ranking
Community Colleges		Associate Degrees Awarded
El Paso County Community College District		2
South Texas College		3
Laredo Community College		5
Texas Southmost College		6
Public Universities		Bachelor's Degrees Awarded
The University of Texas-Pan American		3
The University of Texas at El Paso		10
The University of Texas at Brownsville		30
Texas A & M International University		33

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006

Table 5. State Ranking of Selected Texas Border Institutions, by Total Degrees or Certificates Awarded to Hispanics in Higher Education, 2005

Texas Public Institutions	State Ranking	Awards to Hispanics
El Paso County Community College District	1	1,753
The University of Texas-Pan American	2	1,713
South Texas College	3	1,674
The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College	4	1,591
The University of Texas at El Paso	6	1,292
Laredo Community College	11	733
Texas A&M International University	17	590

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007

Table 6. State Ranking of Selected Texas Border Institutions, by Institution Type and Degrees Awarded to Hispanics in Higher Education, 2005

Texas Public Institutions		Associate Degrees Awarded	
Community Colleges	State Ranking	Number to Hispanic Students	
El Paso Community College	1	1,461	
South Texas College	2	1,204	
Texas Southmost College	3	722	
Laredo Community College	5	521	
Public Universities		Bachelor's Degrees Awarded	
State Ranking	Number to Hispanic Students		
The University of Texas-Pan American	1	1,713	
The University of Texas at El Paso	3	1,292	
The University of Texas at Brownsville	9	620	
Texas A & M International University	10	590	

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007

Table 7. Closing the Gaps — Target I: Associate, Certificates, Bachelor's — Overall for Selected Border Institutions and Public Institutions of Higher Education in Texas

Target I: Certificates, Associate and Bachelor's degrees — Overall	Actual 2000	Actual 2005	Percent Growth (2000-2005)
8 Border Institutions	7,195	10,697	49%
All Public TX Institutions	96,601	126,470	31%
Border institutions as percentage of total awards	7%	9%	

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2007

AFFORDABILITY

Table 8. Public Institutions' Average Resident Tuition and Fees and Expenses in Texas for Public Universities and Selected Border Institutions, 2006 and Percent Increase from 2003

Public institutions	Tuition & fees	Percentage Increase	Average Expenses	Percentage Increase
All Texas public universities	\$ 5,449	32 %	\$ 16,818	16 %
Four border public universities	\$ 3,892	22 %	\$ 15,335	10 %
All Texas community colleges	\$ 1,428	16 %	\$ 11,348	9 %
Four border community colleges	\$ 1,941	5 %*	\$ 10,894	4 %

*While Texas Southmost College increased tuition and fees 41% from 2003 to 2006, Laredo Community College decreased tuition and fees 28% during that same time.

Source: TG School Fact Sheets, 2003 to 2006

Table 9. Grant and Loan Amounts Awarded to All Students and to Hispanic Students in Texas for All Public and Selected Border Institutions for 2006, and Increases from 2003

Institutions	Grants — 2006		Grants 2003-06	Loans — 2006		Loans 2003-06
	All Students	Hispanic Students	Percentage Increase (Hispanics)	All Students	Hispanic Students	Percentage Increase (Hispanics)
All Texas public universities	\$ 3,820	\$ 4,175	12 %	\$ 7,322	\$ 6,310	19 %
Four border public universities	\$ 4,072	\$ 4,107	10 %	\$ 5,254	\$ 5,160	28 %
All public community colleges	\$ 2,483	\$ 2,550	4 %	\$ 3,489	\$ 3,192	20 %
Four border community colleges	\$ 2,818	\$ 2,829	3 %	\$ 2,626	\$ 2,588	13 %

Source: TG School Fact Sheets, 2003 to 2006

APPENDIX 2: DEGREES IN CRITICAL AREAS OF NEED

Degrees in Critical Areas of Need: National Ranking

- ★ In 2005, two border institutions ranked among the top 25 institutions in awarding bachelor's degrees in physical sciences to Hispanics.
- ★ The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) ranked third among institutions in the nation in awarding bachelor's degrees in engineering to Hispanics in 2005.
- ★ In 2005, all four public universities on the Texas border ranked nationally in the top 20 of institutions awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics in mathematics/statistics. The University of Texas at Brownsville ranked second nationally and Texas A&M International University ranked sixth.
- ★ Two Texas border institutions ranked in the top 10 of institutions nationally in awarding bachelor's degrees to Hispanics in biology in 2005.
- ★ Both the University of Texas-Pan American and UTEP ranked in the top 10 of institutions in the nation in awarding master's degrees to Hispanics in 2005.

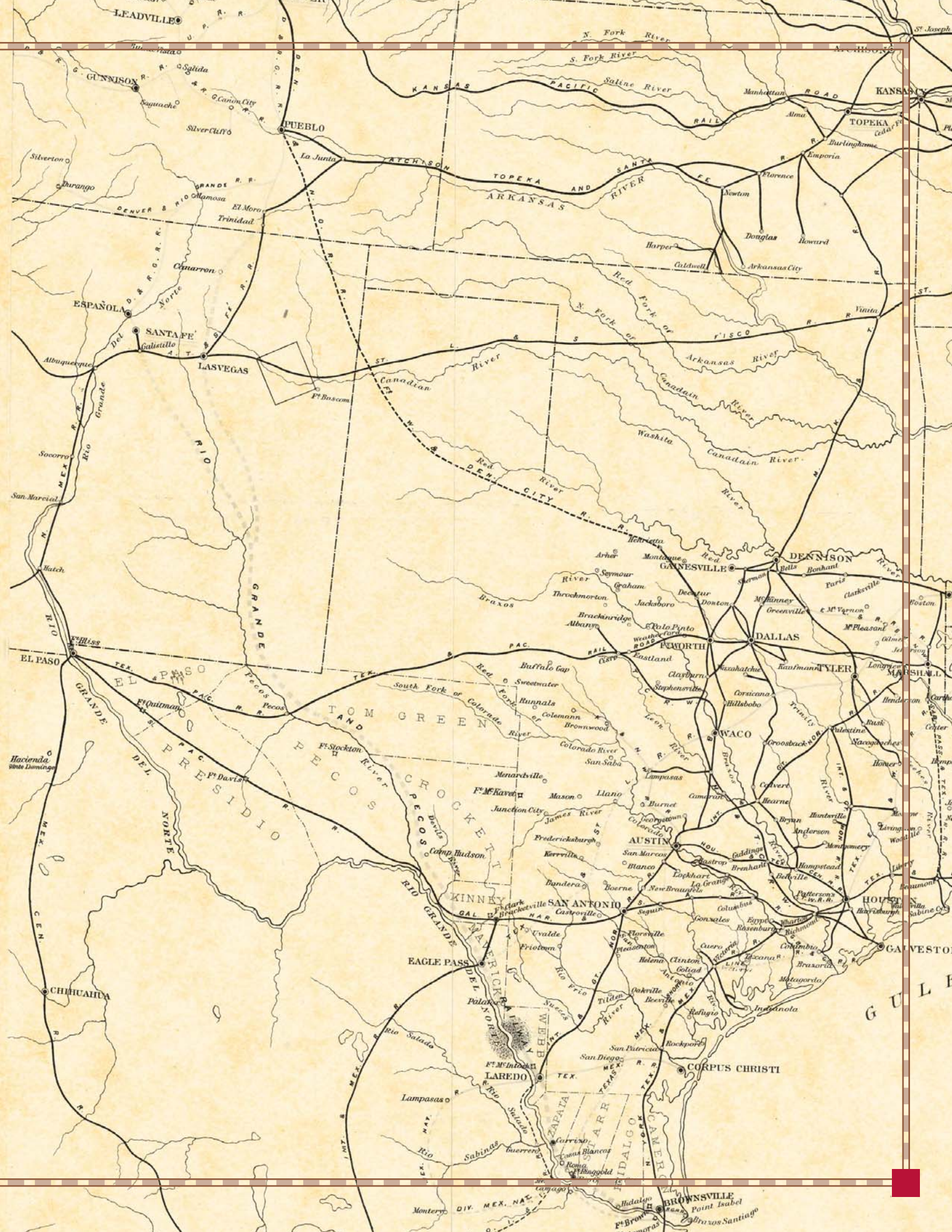
Degrees in Critical Areas of Need: Texas Ranking

According to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 2005 data (2007),

- ★ The University of Texas at El Paso ranked seventh among institutions in awarding engineering degrees or certificates.
- ★ All four public universities on the border were in the top 25 of institutions in awarding degrees in mathematics. The University of Texas at Brownsville was ranked sixth in the state.
- ★ South Texas College was ranked sixth and three other border institutions were in the top 25 of institutions in awarding health/nursing degrees.
- ★ The University of Texas-Pan American ranked second in the state for awarding teacher certification (950 awards).

REFERENCES

- Census Bureau. U.S. Department of Commerce, Population Estimates, retrieved July 19, 2007, from http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/2006_nat_res.html.
- Flack, T. (2003). Presentation on South Texas Border Initiatives before the House Border and International Affairs Committee. March 6, 2003.
- Governor's Business Council. (2007). *Leading the Way: An Action Plan for Making Texas Higher Education Globally Competitive*. February 2007. Available at: <http://texashighereducation.org/files/Leading-the-Way.pdf>. Retrieved on March 20, 2008.
- House Committee on Higher Education. (2002). Texas House of Representatives. Interim report to the 78th Texas Legislature. November 2002.
- Hussar, W.J., and Bailey, T.M. (2006). *Projections of Education Statistics to 2015* (NCES 2006-084). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Legislative Joint Committee on Higher Education in South Texas. (1988). Report to the 71st Legislature. December 19, 1988.
- Martinez, O. 1994. *Human Interaction in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands*. Essay for Border Studies, a humanities exhibit organized by Texas Humanities Resource Center, Austin, Texas. Available at: <http://www.humanities-interactive.org/borderstudies/text/essay.htm>. Retrieved on August 10, 2008.
- Murdock, S.H., White, S. Hoque, M.N., Pecotte, B., You, X., and Balkan, J. (2002). *The Texas Challenge in the Twenty-First Century: Implications of Population Change for the Future of Texas*. The Center for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research and Education, Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University System. December 2002.
- Perryman Group. (2007). *A Tale of Two States-And One Million Jobs!! An Analysis of the Economic Benefits of Achieving the Future Goals of the "Closing the Gaps" Initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board*. March 2007.
- Snyder, T.D., Dillow, S.A., and Hoffman, C.M. (2008). *Digest of Education Statistics 2007* (NCES 2008-022). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2007). *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2007 Progress Report*. Austin: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Division of Planning and Accountability. July 2007.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2000). *Closing the Gaps by 2015: The Texas Higher Education Plan*. Available at: <http://www.the.cb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/0379.PDF>. Retrieved August 2007.
- TG School Fact Sheets (2004). *Volume 2: Four-Year Public, Four-Year Private, and Medical Schools, Fiscal Year 2003*. Available at http://www.tgslc.org/factsheets/schools/PDF_Version.cfm. Retrieved February 2008.
- TG School Fact Sheets (2007). *Volume 2: Four-Year Public, Four-Year Private, and Medical Schools, Fiscal Year 2006*. Available at http://www.tgslc.org/factsheets/schools/PDF_Version.cfm. Retrieved February 2008.
- TG School Fact Sheets (2004). *Volume 3: Two-Year Public and Two-Year Private Schools, Fiscal Year 2003*. Available at http://www.tgslc.org/factsheets/schools/PDF_Version.cfm. Retrieved February 2008.
- TG School Fact Sheets (2007). *Volume 3: Two-Year Public and Two-Year Private Schools, Fiscal Year 2006*. Available at http://www.tgslc.org/factsheets/schools/PDF_Version.cfm. Retrieved February 2008.
- U.S. Department of Education. 2006. National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2005 Completions dataset.





1752 N Street NW, 6th Floor • Washington, DC 20036

www.EdExcelencia.org