



EXAMPLES OF *iExcelencia!*

2006 Compendium

**Profiles of selected programs that
work for Latino students in
higher education**

The compendium was compiled by Deborah A. Santiago, Vice President for Policy and Research, *Excelencia* in Education, with generous contributions from Teresita Martinez Vergne and Estela Lopez.

The program summaries in this compendium were edited from information submitted by the nominated programs.

Information about the Examples of *Excelencia* initiative and a PDF version of this compendium are available on the web at www.EdExcelencia.org/examples/default.asp



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, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce. For more information please visit www.EdExcelencia.org.

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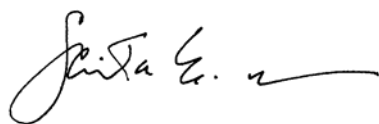
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FOREWORD

By 2025, 22 percent of the U.S. college-age population will be Latino, a level already reached in four states: California, Florida, New York, and Texas. Meeting the country's future human capital and workforce needs make it imperative to improve outcomes for Latino students today. As public attention is focused on current achievement gaps, educators and policymakers search for what they can do to improve education outcomes for Latino students. Finding this information is difficult.

Excelencia in Education responds to this challenge through research, analysis, and pragmatic initiatives that advance practices and policies that support Latino student achievement in colleges and universities. Premier in this effort is Examples of *Excelencia*, a national initiative that systematically identifies and honors programs and departments that boost Latino enrollment, performance and graduation.

The 2006 Examples of *Excelencia* awards went to **Achieving a College Education Program** at Maricopa County Community College in Arizona (associate level) and **Model Institutions for Excellence** at The University of Texas at El Paso in Texas (baccalaureate level). This 2006 Examples of *Excelencia* Compendium of Profiles provides a description of the practices used by these programs and the results they have achieved. This compendium also includes the same information for 13 additional programs identified as semi-finalists during the 2006 review. All the programs profiled in this compendium are at the forefront of meeting the challenge of improving higher educational achievement for Latino students.



Sarita E. Brown
President
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OVERVIEW

More than 40 programs were nominated for the 2006 Examples of *Excelencia* in three categories: Associate, Baccalaureate and Graduate levels. While the number of nominations in the Graduate category was not sufficient to select an Example of *Excelencia* in this category for 2006, there was wide representation in the associate and baccalaureate categories.

This compendium provides a summary of the 15 semi-finalist programs for 2006 making a positive difference in the educational achievement of Latino students in higher education. While not exhaustive, these summaries provide some insight into what these successful programs do and the key characteristics that make them work for Latino students.

These successful Examples of *Excelencia* demonstrated the following characteristics, which we present as key to Latino student success:

- Ensure there is institutional commitment and leadership to serve Latino students.
- Invest in the long-term viability of the activities to ensure meaningful impact.
- Allocate resources so that activities are sustainable by the institution.
- Share an understanding of their purpose and intended outcomes with staff.
- Have clear goals and objectives that delineate what they plan to achieve.
- Use multiple strategies to support students along the pathway, such as tutoring and mentoring services by peers, family involvement in program orientation, participation in living/learning communities and other key activities.
- Collect data and conduct evaluations to improve the activities.
- Use research-based strategies to recruit, retain, and propel Latino students to graduate from college.
- Have developed successful partnerships between institutions and sectors to provide access.
- See Latino students as an asset.

The compendium begins with a summary of the selection process for identifying the selected program list of semi-finalists and methodology used. Following this section is a brief overview of the program services offered by the semi-finalists. The compendium then provides one-page summaries of the 15 semi-finalist programs that include a brief description, goals, outcomes, and key personnel for each program. To find out more about each of the programs, please contact the key personnel listed at the bottom of each program summary.

SELECTION PROCESS

Recognizing the importance of evidence-based evaluation, Examples of *Excelencia* followed a two-step selection process:

1. Identified semi-finalists through analysis of internal information provided and external public data sources to assess the nomination's impact on Latino achievement in higher education
2. Appointed the 2006 selection committee to review and select. The committee was comprised of the following national experts:
 - **Margarita Benitez**, Senior Associate, Institute for Higher Education Policy and Chair, *Excelencia's* EXITO (Excellent Ideas Transform Outcomes) Taskforce
 - **Jacqueline E. King**, Director, Center for Policy Analysis, American Council on Education
 - **Bruce Vandal**, Director, Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development Institute, Education Commission of the States
 - **Maria Vallejo**, Lake Worth Campus Provost, Palm Beach Community College and Past Chair, National Community College Hispanic Council
 - **Arturo Vargas** (or his designate), Executive Director National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

METHODOLOGY

Recognizing the importance of evidence-based evaluation, *Excelencia* staff developed a multi-step process to review nominated programs. A panel of nationally recognized experts reviewed the portfolios submitted by the nominated programs and considered the following criteria:

- Record of high graduation rates for Latino students;
- Leadership that demonstrates a commitment to accelerating Latino student achievement by measuring their progress, confronting obstacles to their achievement, and implementing strategies to attain specific goals;
- Magnitude of the identified need for the services the program offers;
- Rationale behind the program component that addresses that need;
- Application of the concepts that are central to the program; and,
- Qualitative or quantitative evidence of the impact of the program services.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM SERVICES

The following outlines by category (associate and baccalaureate) the significant program services that work for Latino students offered by this year's selected programs.

Associate Level

- Offer a concurrent high school/college enrollment scholarship program.
- Take enrollment services directly into high school campuses to encourage students to seek college degrees.
- Provide course focused on the Latino culture and ethnicities and help students enhance their academic achievement.
- Provide a bilingual on-campus resource to Latino students coordinated with outreach and support services.
- Assist students in academic difficulty through an intensive counseling/ classroom intervention program.

Baccalaureate Level

- Increase the quality and quantity of under-represented minorities who earn baccalaureate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.
- Recruit, retain and promote college completion of Latino students.
- Assist students to thrive academically and personally through supplemental education in chemistry, calculus, and biology.
- Help parents to develop an involvement plan to help their children to prepare for college.
- Help to retain students from migrant workers families from their first to third semester of college.
- Improve successful transfer of students from a two-year public college to a four-year private institution.
- Empower marginalized Latino communities through a comprehensive pre-school through graduate and professional education pipeline.
- Increase students' opportunities for academic success by helping to transition them to the university environment.
- Prepare students to be journalists covering Latino issues and capable of reporting in either English or Spanish.
- Encourage first-generation and economically-disadvantaged Latino students and their families to master the maze necessary to enter college.

2006 Example of *Excelencia* – Associate Level

Achieving a College Education (ACE) Programs Maricopa County Community College District (AZ)

Brief Description

The Maricopa Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program is a collaboration of area universities, high schools, "at risk" students, and their parents. According to a study sponsored by the Ford Foundation in 1999, nine essential elements make the ACE program a success with students and parents: 1) the creation of student cohort groups, 2) a focus on at-risk students, 3) high academic standards, 4) a non-threatening environment 5) continuous contact with students, 6) family involvement, 7) strong collaboration between institutions, 8) long overlap of transition points, and 9) scholarships and financial aid information. The ACE cycle takes two years and integrates the nine essential elements.

During the summer between sophomore and junior year, a student takes college classes totaling six credit hours. During the fall and spring semesters a student takes one Saturday class totaling three credit hours. The cycle repeats again starting the summer between the junior and senior year of high school. Students participate in the program as a cohort. Students and their families participate in an orientation and a series of ongoing activities and events, such as financial aid and career workshops, designed to keep them informed and connected throughout the two years.

Goals

ACE's three goals are 1) to increase the number of students graduating from high school, 2) to increase the number of students continuing on to college, and 3) to increase the number of students earning a degree or certificate.

Outcomes

From its inception almost 20 years ago through 2005, ACE has served 6,133 students. As of 2002, 88-96% of participants have graduated from high school, and 83% of ACE graduates enrolled in college. ACE graduates also outperform the general college student population. The average ACE college grade point average (GPA) is 3.1 while the general student population average GPA is 2.81. In addition, 344 ACE students have earned one or more certificates or degrees to date – 124 certificates, 165 Associate degrees, 151 Bachelor degrees, 2 Masters degrees, and 1 professional degree.

Key Personnel

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Associate Level – Semi-finalist

College Connection Program

Austin Community College (TX)

Brief Description

Austin Community College (ACC)'s mission is to serve underrepresented populations. When challenged to implement Texas' *Closing the Gaps* higher education plan, ACC developed a model program, College Connection, to encourage students to seek degrees in higher education. College Connection is a unique, specialized outreach program taking ACC enrollment services directly into high school campuses.

Goals

The program's primary goal is to create the expectation of postsecondary education by proactively placing college services squarely in front of all ACC service-area high school seniors. College Connection provides students direct one-on-one assistance to complete the ACC admission application, assessment, orientation, and advising requirements. It also provides individual assistance with financial aid application, career planning, student life information, and ACC campus tours. Every graduating senior in the participating College Connection high schools receives an ACC acceptance letter along with his/her high school diploma.

Outcomes

College Connection has dramatically increased student and school district participation in each year of operation. This is especially true for Hispanic students, which make up about 40% of those seeking admission to ACC. Begun as a cure for one high school's low college-going rate serving 350 students, College Connection now serves eight school districts with 28 high schools and 9152 students.

Key Personnel

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Associate Level – Semi-finalist

Fiesta Oak Cliff: Cultural Studies 2370 **Mountain View College (TX)**

Brief Description

“Fiesta Oak Cliff: Cultural Studies 2370” is a transfer community college course that was offered for the first time in spring 2001, exclusively at Mountain View College. The course focuses on the cultures and ethnicities of Oak Cliff, a large, predominantly Latino community in southwest Dallas. The course accelerates Latino students' academic achievement by teaching basic techniques of active reading, academic writing in English, and critical thinking, along with research skills in the social and behavioral sciences, which are needed to succeed at both the community college level, where the students taking the course are enrolled, and the university, where the students are expected to transfer.

Goals

“Fiesta Oak Cliff: Cultural Studies 2370” meets the three critical needs of access, persistence, and retention of Latino students who enter Mountain View College. To address these three needs, the course emphasizes the involvement of key family members as an integral component in the student's success and the completion of a two-year Associate degree. It incorporates research in the social sciences to class activities, builds on skills in organization, group planning and teamwork, and develops critical thinking.

Outcomes

Since fall 2004, "Fiesta Oak Cliff: Cultural Studies 2370" has enrolled 251 students. Rates of retention for these students were significantly higher than for those not enrolled in the course: 71% vs. 54.6%. Rates of success (earning the grade of A, B, or C) and graduation rates were high as well. Two years ago, staff were able to track 33 out of 96 students who had gone to four-year and graduate programs.

Key Personnel

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Associate Level – Semi-finalist

Office of Hispanic Outreach and Support Services Bluegrass Community and Technical College (KY)

Brief Description

Since the mid-1990s, the Hispanic/Latino population of central Kentucky has grown over 254%, and educational institutions at all levels have had to adjust their services and programs to meet the needs of all students served. Bluegrass Community and Technical College epitomizes the Kentucky Community and Technical College motto “Higher Education Begins Here / *La Educación Superior Empieza Aquí.*” In spring 2005, Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) opened its Office of Hispanic Outreach and Services to serve on a daily basis the needs of the Latino student population with more focused recruitment, community involvement, advising, counseling, mentoring and other student services and programs, and has led the KCTCS system in offering services and outreach by educating system and other college administrators, faculty and staff on the needs, cultural differences and perceptions of the Hispanic community. Among its most notable achievements are: College Experience Camp and College Experience Days and Tours, Kentucky Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform Partners, Bluegrass Cup Soccer Tournament, Enlace Hispanic Student Association, Unity Ambassadors, Hispanic Outreach Academic Mentoring Program, Access and Opportunity Summit on the Educational Challenges of Hispanic Community, 1st Annual Latino Student College Fair and Leadership Conference.

Goals

The office of Hispanic Outreach and Services in the Department of Multicultural Affairs strives to provide access to high quality educational opportunities for students, to promote student success during and after their enrollment in BCTC programs, and to create an atmosphere of acceptance and cultural celebration by linking all communities and peoples.

Outcomes

Latino student enrollment in the area has increased 119% since 2000. At BCTC, enrollment increased 7% from fall 2004 to fall 2005. Over 1000 students have been reached with recruitment and college awareness activities like high school recruitment visits, state-wide Latino student college fair, and community involvement. Students have transferred to the University of Kentucky, Northern Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University, as well as out-of-state schools like Florida Southern University. Current and former students have been involved in community organizations such as the Migrant Network Coalition and the Lexington Hispanic Association as well as Kentucky's Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

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Associate Level – Semi-finalist

Strategies for Success San Antonio College (TX)

Brief Description

San Antonio College's "Strategies for Success" (Strategies) program is an intensive counseling/classroom intervention designed to assist students in academic difficulty. The program includes eight weeks of classroom instruction in personal responsibility, learning styles, study skills, life skills, critical thinking skills, motivation and concentration, goal setting, research skills, career exploration, and managing personal issues.

Goals

Each semester at SAC, approximately 3,000 students are placed on some type of scholastic probation, and may lose their financial aid or be asked to withdraw if they are unable to raise their grade point average (GPA). The goal of Strategies for Success is to reverse this trend.

Outcomes

By the end of Fall 2005, Strategies for Success participants had grown to 632 students a semester, and the program had served a 2001-2005 total of 4,974 students, 65% of whom, or 3233, were Hispanic. Hispanic Strategies completers showed an increase of .404 in their average GPA, from 1.441 to 1.845, from Fall 2001 through Fall 2005. The semester-to-semester retention for this high-risk group from 2001 to 2005 was over 60%, compared to the 45% semester-to-semester retention rate for all scholastic withdrawal students before Strategies was initiated. Completers of Strategies for Success have shown substantial improvement in all areas assessed by the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) every semester of the program.

Key Personnel

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2006 Example of *Excelencia* – Baccalaureate Level

Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE)

University of Texas at El Paso (TX)

Brief Description

UTEP's Models Institutions for Excellence (MIE) "pathways to success" model supports six interconnected activities that focus on student achievement and faculty development: Circles of Learning for Entering Students (CircLES), Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE), Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETaL), Course, Curriculum, and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI), Research Experience for Undergraduate Students (REU), and the Academic Center for Engineers and Scientists (ACES).

Goals

The program's goal is to increase participation and success of underrepresented minority students, especially Latinos, obtaining degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields at UTEP.

Outcomes

Since the CircLES program was implemented in 1998, first year retention rates have been steady at about 80 percent, a 12% increase over the 1997 cohort that did not participate in the pilot CircLES effort. Increases in first semester grade point average (GPA) have also been registered -- 2.7 for CircLES participants compared to 2.0 for the non-CircLES group. The graduation rate has decreased from 6.8 years in 1997-1998 to only 5.1 years for the last academic year. For the 1999-2000 academic year, 219 STEM degrees were awarded to Latino students (289 overall) and for 2004-2005 academic year, 374 STEM degrees were awarded to Latino students (440 overall). WiSE has awarded 330 stipends, 74% of them to Latinas. Of the 330 recipients, 329 were retained in either science or engineering disciplines and 51 have successfully completed their degree. Passing rates have increased from 47% in 1999 to 65% for pre-calculus and from 50% to 80% for general chemistry. Since its inception in 1995, REU has supported a total of 303 students, over 200 of them Latinos/as, and provided them the opportunity to actively participate in research under the guidance of a faculty member in their intended field of study. Over 90% of program participants have earned their Bachelors degree, about 4% are still enrolled, and only about 5% have withdrawn. Of those who have earned their Bachelors degrees, 48% are enrolled in a graduate program or have earned a graduate degree.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

Academic Achievers Program (AAP)

University of Houston and Austin High School (TX)

Brief Description

The Academic Achievers Program (AAP) is part of the Center for Mexican American Studies' efforts to increase the number of Latino students who graduate from college. The AAP at the University of Houston (UH) provides a \$10,000 four-year scholarship and mandatory tutoring, counseling, skills development, and leadership training. Participants must sign a contract agreeing to be full time students, maintain a 2.7 grade point average, and attend all activities. AAP students at Austin High School are required to enroll in college preparatory classes, maintain a 3.0 grade point average, and attend mandatory tutoring, counseling, SAT and other skills workshops, and leadership activities.

Goals

The long term goal of AAP is to continue propelling students towards high school graduation, college enrollment, and college graduation through scholarship awards and research based practices such as tutoring, mentoring, and leadership training.

Outcomes

AAP was evaluated in 2003 and 2005 by the University of Houston's Office of Institutional Research. The results show that although AAP students enter UH with lower SAT scores than other Latino students, over time AAP students earn higher grade point averages, move quicker toward graduation, and graduate at higher rates. The average graduation rate of AAP students is 77%. This is higher than other Latino students (36%), higher than UH as a whole (39%), higher than the state (48%), and higher than the nation (60%). At present, there are 76 students in AAP at UH and 37 in AAP at Austin High School. The number of students served is limited by available resources.

Key Personnel

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Special Programs Counselor

Academic Achievers Program

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program University of California – Davis (CA)

Brief Description

The Biology Undergraduate Scholars Program (BUSP) is a large-scale, professional development program for underrepresented minority (URM) students in life sciences majors. The program takes a holistic approach to assisting students to thrive academically and personally through supplemental education in chemistry, calculus, and biology; through sound academic and personal advising by experienced professional staff and faculty advisors; and, through practical experience in the discipline afforded by internships in research laboratories.

Goals

The program was initiated with the goal of increasing the performance and persistence of URM students in biology majors at the University of California -- Davis (UCD). Over time, BUSP goals have evolved to include preparing students to pursue post-baccalaureate programs, such as doctoral studies and/or human and veterinary medicine studies.

Outcomes

2003 BUSP entrants (the group with the most accurate and complete figures) outperformed their non-BUSP classmates in chemistry, biology, and calculus. Another measure of program success is post-baccalaureate achievement of program participants. Recent BUSP Latino graduates are enrolled in life sciences PhD programs at prestigious institutions.

Since its inception in 1988, BUSP has provided academic enrichment activities to over 1,000 students, of whom 46% are Latino. Of the 151 BUSP student participants in 2005-2006, 52 (34%) are Latino. Up to 50 freshmen are admitted annually.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

College Academy for Parents (CAP) University of Arizona (AZ)

Brief Description

The College Academy for Parents (CAP) was designed to help K-6 parents formulate a strategy to prepare their children for a university education. To achieve this goal, university staff and faculty collaborate with school district personnel to facilitate 12 workshops held in the evenings over a 15-week period at a local middle school. Children in grades 7-12 are invited to attend the workshops with their parents, while certified district staff care for two-to-four-year-old children to facilitate parent attendance. In addition, CAP brings the families to the University of Arizona campus for two hands-on academic showcases, one in math and science, and another in language, arts, and culture.

Goals

The mission of the Office of Early Academic Outreach at the University of Arizona, where CAP is located, is to increase the number of ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation college-bound students who are eligible to enter a degree program at a university. Since 2004, the University of Arizona and the Sunnyside Unified School District have partnered to promote this goal.

Outcomes

In the first two years, CAP served 143 parents and 153 K-5 students from 111 families. The total number of children of these families in or soon entering the K-12 system was 190. This year, the program has registered and hopes to retain 119 families in the program, including 163 parents, 167 K-6 students and 95 additional students who are either in grades 7-12 or who will soon enter the K-12 system.

Pre- and post-program interviews with parents (conducted by the University of Arizona's Center for the Study of Higher Education); weekly workshop feedback; and a retrospective questionnaire at the end of the program found statistically significant increases or improvements in nine areas related to parent involvement in their children's education.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)

New Mexico State University (NM)

Brief Description

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) is a federally funded program designed to serve the educational needs of migrant/seasonal farm workers from all ethnic/racial backgrounds and age groups. Program participants are U.S. Citizens and permanent residents who are admitted as full-time freshmen and housed in educational clusters (living/learning communities) at New Mexico State University (NMSU). The salient features of CAMP are ongoing guidance, customized training workshops, and developmental growth opportunities for students from all six academic colleges within NMSU.

Goals

The program aim is to retain incoming students from their first to third semester (beginning the sophomore year of college) thereby creating the impetus for their persistence to the completion of baccalaureate degrees.

Outcomes

To date, 91 students have participated in CAMP since 2002, and 100% are of Latino descent. The average freshman retention rate over a four-year period is 80%, higher than the NMSU's freshman retention rate. When asked whether they would have attended NMSU had it not been for the assistance of CAMP, 85-90% of program students said they would not have entertained the prospect of attending college.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

Connections Program

Woodbury University and Los Angeles Valley College (CA)

Brief Description

Funded by a cooperative Title V Grant, Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) and Woodbury University, both Hispanic Serving Institutions, have developed strategies to improve student transfer from LAVC, a two-year public institution, to Woodbury University, a four-year private institution. Recognizing their common service area, similar students, and complementary goals and objectives, the two institutions have created a three-pronged approach to improving transfer that consists of three components: Intercampus Processes to streamline transfer with online, student-accessible systems; Intercampus Programs to improve the academic success, retention, transfer, and graduation of students at both schools; Connections Centers where information and services for transfer-oriented students and transferees will be centralized on each campus.

Goals

The long term goals of the Connections Program include increasing LAVC's success and retention rates and Woodbury's graduation rates, and increasing transfer rates for LAVC students to Woodbury University.

Outcomes

Students in the Connections Program at LAVC have spring to fall retention rates 16% higher than control groups. They also have 10% more As, Bs, Cs, or Passes than controls. The transfer rate from LAVC to Woodbury has increased 60% in two years, at a time when Woodbury's overall transfer rate only went up 12%. Finally, the retention rate at Woodbury for these students is 88%, compared to 72% for matched controls.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

ENgaging LATino Communities in Education (ENLACE) **University of New Mexico School of Law (NM)**

Brief Description

ENgaging LATino Communities in Education (ENLACE) is a grassroots initiative dedicated to empowering marginalized Hispanic/Latino communities through a comprehensive pre-school through graduate/professional educational pipeline. ENLACE sustains and increases learning opportunities and the degree of engagement among constituents at every level of education, beginning in early elementary school and culminating with college- and graduate-level education.

Goals

ENLACE endeavors to reduce the Hispanic dropout rates in grades P-12 by helping to create state-wide systemic change throughout a P-20 educational pipeline and, therefore, contributes to increasing the number of Hispanic students successfully graduating from institutions of higher education. In collaboration with the state department of education, higher education dept, as well as many legislators, as well as Governor Bill Richardson. ENLACE also sets out to institutionalize culturally rooted best practices in classrooms across New Mexico. Other long-term goals involve policy work to mobilize Hispanic/Latino communities to continue advocating for improvements in educational opportunities for their youths and importing cultural competence into the school culture through parental input.

Outcomes

In 2004-2005, ENLACE touched, and positively impacted, the lives of 9,433 Hispanic/Latino parents, 12,408 Hispanic/Latino K-12 students (directly) and 85,350 that have participated in ENLACE via student contacts with various parts of the program , 414 post-secondary Hispanic/Latino students (undergraduate and professional school students), and 97 Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino teachers throughout New Mexico. The effectiveness of ENLACE is also visible through an internal comparison of students at different points in their educational trajectory. Specifically, comparing students' performance in grades 6-9 show significant overall improvements in students' school performance, as measured through comparisons in grade-point averages (GPAs) at these two points, data also collected is student attendance rates that showed a 97% increase in attendance, more Latino students involved and talking Advance Placement courses, drop in discipline referrals, and more Latino applications of Undergraduates to graduate, law and medical schools, those students who went through ENLACE as young students.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

Entering Student Program (ESP) University of Texas at El Paso (TX)

Brief Description

The Entering Student Program (ESP) is designed to assist the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) student population (72% Latino/a, 54% first generation college students, 98% commuters, 81% employed) with transitioning into the university environment. The program consists of academic components -- CircLES, learning communities, and the University 1301 first-year seminar -- that are especially critical to the success of UTEP's first year students. Students establish connections with the university community, develop skills necessary for academic success, gain familiarity with campus resources, develop leadership and teamwork skills, access and apply information, and become independent learners.

Goals

The immediate and constant goal of the ESP is to increase the success and retention of first-year students. An additional goal is to help foster an important paradigm shift at UTEP from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning.

Outcomes

In fall 2005 alone, 1687 full-time, first-time freshmen enrolled in University 1301 sections; 1500 students participated in one or more components of CircLES; 546 students enrolled in non-CircLES learning communities; 90 students trained and worked as peer leaders; and approximately 45 instructors attended an ESP workshop.

Students participating in CircLES have increased their grade point averages (GPAs) from 2.06 to 2.88 (1997-2003). The number of years to graduate has decreased from 6.6 to 5.1 (1997-2004). Retention has increased from 55% to 70% (two-year rate 1997-2002) and from 46% to 65% (three-year rate 1997-2001). One-year retention rates for science majors have increased from 71% to 80% (1991-2003) and for engineering majors from 67% to 74% (1997-2003).

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

Multilingual Journalism Program CUNY- Lehman College (NY)

Brief Description

Latino students in the Multilingual Journalism and Mass Communication Programs take core courses in Ethnic Media and Marketing as well as journalistic writing courses in both English and Spanish. The students can also study journalistic writing at Sacred Heart University of Puerto Rico through a special online bilingual journalism program agreement. The program has international articulation agreements with universities in Chile, Venezuela, and Spain to provide internship opportunities for students to gain experience in Spanish-speaking countries. All students participate in internships at Univisión, El Diario-La Prensa, WPIX, etc. and at public access channels such as Bronxnet. They publish in print and in electronic format The Bronx Journal, a multilingual newspaper published monthly in English with over ten foreign language supplements.

Goals

The Multilingual Journalism Program was created to meet the needs of multicultural and multilingual journalists in a globalized world. It was built upon the strengths of the student population that Lehman College serves: a first- and second-generation immigrant population from all parts of the world who maintain their language and cultures while incorporating elements of the surrounding U.S. culture.

Outcomes

The Multilingual Journalism and Mass Communication Program has graduated hundreds of students over the last five years. At least 50% of these students are Latinos/as. Graduates have secured positions in media and are currently working at The Daily News, MSNBC, Bloomberg News, Telemundo, Newsday, and Dow-Jones. Some have participated in political campaigns, working with Latino populations, primarily in the NY metropolitan area. Others have pursued graduate degrees in other journalism programs.

Key Personnel

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Baccalaureate Level – Semi-Finalist

System-wide Pre-Collegiate Development Program University of Colorado (CO)

Brief Description

The Pre-Collegiate Development Program (PCDP) is designed to motivate first-generation Latino students (grades 6-12) to pursue postsecondary education. The program focuses on academics, but addresses other variables that influence college enrollment, for example, student and parent aspirations and access to information about college and financial aid application processes.

Goals

The primary goal of the program is to adequately prepare first-generation and minority students for a professional career and further expose them to their academic interests. As a first step, PCDP ensures that these students successfully complete their high school education on time and possess the academic and social skills necessary to enroll at their choice post-secondary institution.

Outcomes

PCDP is both a high school and middle school program. Currently, there are more than 1,300 students participating in the high school program who come from 45 Colorado Front Range high schools. Latinos make up 78% of the program's enrollment. The middle school program assists more than 700 students from 34 middle schools that are "feeders" to the program's target high schools.

PCDP has placed 95% of the program's graduating seniors into higher education from 1988 to 2005. Further, 94% of these students pursued their post-secondary careers at four-year institutions, with the remaining 6% attending two-year institutions. Their graduation rate from the University of Colorado is about 82% in six years.

Key Personnel

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