



Deborah A. Santiago

Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer

*Excelencia* in Education

**Deborah A. Santiago** is the Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of *Excelencia* in Education, America's premier authority on efforts accelerating Latino student success in higher education. As an innovator, thought leader, and educational visionary, she has led research and advanced evidence-based practices and strategies for more than 20 years. She has held leadership positions with education organizations around the

country, including the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the Los Angeles Alliance for Student Achievement.

She co-founded *Excelencia* in Education in 2004 to inform policy, compel action, and collaborate with those ready to accelerate student success with an unapologetic Latino lens. Among her many contributions, Deborah has addressed federal legislative issues in higher education at the Congressional Research Service and informed program and policy implementation at the U.S. Department of Education. She also improved awareness and education opportunities for Latinos with federal agencies as the Deputy Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Among Deborah's community efforts, she has provided program design and implementation for dropout prevention and parental engagement for the ASPIRA Association and translated data for community engagement at the Los Angeles Alliance for Student Achievement.

As CEO, Deborah leads *Excelencia's* operations and organization efforts. She also leads efforts to expand and leverage community-informed research in improving educational opportunities for students, working directly with education leaders, and informing campus practices as well as state and federal policies. Driven by a deep desire to advance asset based, student-centered understanding of the needs and opportunities for the Latino community, Deborah is a sought-after speaker about Hispanic Serving Institutions, college affordability, and equity in higher education. Her work has been cited in numerous publications, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist, and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

She serves on the Advisory Board of TheDream.US. and the technical panel for the Carnegie Classification led by the American Council on Education.