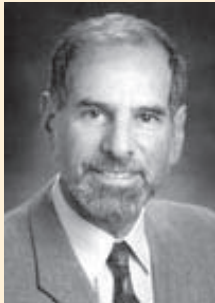


Assessing the Public Policy Context for Education in Texas, 1990 – 2005

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The most significant changes in the State's public policy on education issues in the last fifteen years have been led by four key factors:

- dramatic population growth of the state, especially Latino population growth in the 1990s;
- stable statewide plan and long-term commitment for increasing educational standards for K-12 public education since the early 1990s;
- a state-funded college scholarship program established in 1997 for low-income students who completed a recommended program of high school coursework; and a stable statewide plan and
- long-term commitment for strengthening Texas higher education which was adopted in 2000.

During the last fifteen years, The University of Texas at Austin simultaneously strengthened its efforts to enroll a student body that reflects the face of Texas--a Texas in which almost a majority of its citizens are Latino. UT-Austin's attention to its role as "the people's University" is demonstrated by its increased outreach and recruiting at high schools across the state that have large populations of Latino students, African American students, and low-income students. By thoughtfully and respectfully recruiting students from schools that traditionally had not sent many students to UT-Austin, the University (and the College of Natural Sciences and the Department of Mathematics, in particular) has been successful in increasing the numbers of Latino students who enroll and graduate with baccalaureate degrees in mathematics.

The University and the Department of Mathematics also paid careful attention to providing meaningful financial aid for eligible students, so that cost is not a prohibitive barrier for students and their families. Finally, the University and the College of Natural Sciences and the Mathematics Department maintain high academic standards, and are consistently ranked at the top levels by nationally- and internationally-recognized organizations. The twin goals of educational opportunity and educational excellence continue to be central to the work of the department.