



NEWS RELEASE

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Programs that Strengthen Latino Students Success Are Honored as 2008 Examples of *Excelencia*

Excelencia in Education to Recognize Programs and Departments for Their Strides in Strengthening Latino Student Success

Houston, Texas—Sept. 23, 2008—Three programs at institutions of higher education—one in California, Arizona, and Texas—have been selected as Examples of *Excelencia* (examples of excellence) in a national initiative to identify and honor programs and departments boosting Latino college enrollment, performance and graduation.

The winning programs will be announced by *Excelencia* in Education, the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that administers the initiative and works to accelerate higher educational success for Latino students. The announcement will be made at the *Celebracion de Excelencia* recognition program, being held at the Hilton Americas Hotel in Houston, Texas.

The 2008 Examples of *Excelencia* are:

- The Bilingual Nursing Fellows Program at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona;
- The Bachelor of Architecture Program at Woodbury University in Burbank, California ; and
- The Intellectual Entrepreneurship Pre-Graduate School Internship Program in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas.

“These programs are true examples of excellence and will provide a model for others to follow,” said Sarita Brown, president and founder of *Excelencia* in Education. “They equip students with the skills they need to succeed in an increasingly demanding workplace and offer institutions and policymakers powerful ideas and strategies to tap this generation of Latino college going students.”

Examples of *Excelencia* is one part of the overall effort by *Excelencia* in Education to support and engage campus leaders and policymakers in accelerating higher educational success of the U.S. diverse Latino populations and thus grow this country’s human capital.

Each year, *Excelencia* asks higher education stakeholders to nominate programs or departments that are making a significant impact for Latino students at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels. Nominees are vetted in a multi-step review and selection process led by *Excelencia* and a group of national experts who comprise the Examples of *Excelencia* selection committee.

This year, more than 70 programs from across the nation were reviewed. In addition to the three programs being recognized as the 2008 Examples of *Excelencia*, , 11 programs and departments were semifinalists and 14 others received an honorable mention.

“These programs have worked diligently to create strategies to improve higher educational achievement for Latino students,” said Henry Cisneros, Executive Chairman of CityView and an *Excelencia* Honorary Board Member. “It is particularly important to identify and expand such programs as the Latino proportion of the U.S. population grows. Today’s Latino college students will be America’s future workforce and leadership.”

At the associate level, the **Bilingual Nursing Fellows Program (BNFP)** at South Mountain Community College recognized the nationwide need for bilingual nurses and developed an innovative curriculum and system of support services to guide students through the nursing program with the ability to practice their profession in English and Spanish. BNFP uses a cohort model for its classes, closely monitors student progress, and coaches students in areas that need improvement. Latinos comprise 97 percent of the participating students and 90 percent of graduates work in hospitals whose patients are majority Latino. The BNFP offers its students the means to become effective nurses who can meet the needs of the Latino community.

At the baccalaureate level, **Bachelor of Architecture Program** at Woodbury University provides a global academic experience for its students, more than 40 percent of whom are Latino. By integrating international study programs in Europe, Asia and Latin America, one of the program’s main focuses is embracing the cultural and academic diversity of its students. First-year retention rates for Latinos in BArch surpass the university average by almost 5% and 90% of Latino students graduate within five years. Graduates receive the rare National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accreditation and many Latino architecture graduates from Woodbury have been admitted to prestigious graduate programs.

The **Intellectual Entrepreneurship Pre-Graduate School Internship Program** at The University of Texas at Austin offers undergraduate students a unique internship experience that encourages graduate study and career development that complement their personal passions and commitments to community. The program aims to increase diversity in graduate education by bringing underrepresented minorities and first-generation college students into the graduate school pipeline. Since 2003, the program has seen a dramatic increase in interns. Latino students make up the largest group of interns in the program, more than half of whom subsequently enroll in graduate school.

Following the announcement of the Examples of *Excelencia*, this fall *Excelencia* in Education will release the 2008 edition of *What Works for Latino Students: Examples of Excelencia Compendium*. The publication will describe in detail how the 2008 recognized programs achieve positive results and will suggest ways their strategies may be adapted for use in other communities.

For more information about the Examples of *Excelencia* initiative, please visit www.EdExcelencia.org. You may also view a video of the 2007 Examples of *Excelencia* at the Capitol Hill Showcase at http://www.edexcelencia.org/programs/examples/2007/showcase_video.asp

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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 501(c)(3) organization, *Excelencia* links

policy, practice and research to inform and compel a growing network of results-oriented educators, community-based professionals and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce.