



NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed: Not for release before June 18, 2008, 11 a.m. EDT

CONTACT: Robert Johnston, (202) 955-9450 ext. 313, rjohnston@communicationworks.com

Successful Practices at 12 Top-Ranked Hispanic-Serving Institutions Provide Lessons On What U.S. Colleges and Universities Can Do To Bolster Results for Latino Students

Emphasis on Academic Support, Use of Data in Decisionmaking, Revamped Community Outreach Are Significant Factors in Success with Latino Students, Study Says

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 18) – As Latino representation in higher education continues to increase across all states and institution types, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)—public or private nonprofit degree-granting colleges with 25 percent or more Hispanic undergraduate enrollment—provide a valuable laboratory to study practices that help improve Latino access, retention, and academic success.

A new report by the Washington, D.C.-based higher education policy group, *Excelencia in Education*, reveals that it is no accident that some institutions have high Latino enrollments and degree production.. These campuses have worked deliberately to implement broad-scale changes in everything from improving academic support and community relations to implementing new data systems that strengthen decisionmaking and enable campus leaders, faculty, and staff to better monitor what is happening with their Latino student population. This report and the case studies from which it is drawn were supported by Lumina Foundation for Education.

“What we see across the most successful institutions are comprehensive efforts to improve the quality of the academic experience and to meet student needs for a rapidly growing, non-traditional, and diverse Latino population,” said Deborah Santiago, Vice President for Research and Policy for *Excelencia in Education* and the author of the report. “The HSIs we examined made reinventing academic support for Latino students and all students a top priority.”

“What was particularly impressive was how these student-rich and resource-poor institutions have increased results for Latinos under increasingly tight economic constraints,” noted Sarita Brown, president of *Excelencia in Education*. “Leaders of these institutions have made great strides to ensure success while addressing diverse Latino enrollment patterns and pathways to degree completion. Their strategies need to be studied more extensively and copied more expansively nationwide.”

The report, *Modeling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Campus Practices that Work for Latino Students*, focuses on 12 institutions—six community colleges and six public universities—in three states that are among the nation’s leaders in Latino enrollment and degree completion. They include:

State	Community Colleges	Public Universities
California	El Camino College	California State University – Dominguez Hills
	East Los Angeles College	California State University – Los Angeles
New York	CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College	CUNY-Lehman College
	CUNY-LaGuardia Community College	CUNY-New York City College of Technology
Texas	El Paso County Community College	The University of Texas at El Paso
	South Texas College	The University of Texas – Pan American

See attached chart for rankings of institutions and for their data on enrollment in degrees awarded.

Emphasis on Academic Support

While institutions are involved in many areas that support their students' success, the practices of all 12 HSIs emphasized academic support. Particularly powerful were strategies introduced to strengthen developmental education, cohort support programs, and academic advising, the study says.

All the colleges offer courses that prepare students for college-level work, and some have created free summer or winter immersion programs to prepare incoming and returning students for placement exams in English, writing, and mathematics. All of the campuses have also invested considerable resources in examining student data and designing interventions to strengthen freshmen student performance. For example, El Camino College offers a First Year Experience program where student persistence and pass rates were 10 to 30 percent higher for enrolled students than for a comparative group that did not participate. South Texas College's Beacon Advisement Program provides a case management approach to student advising and has seen a fall-to-spring retention rate of 76 percent for students in the program compared to 69 percent for a comparative group that did not participate.

Bolstering Community Outreach

The colleges studied have developed partnerships with local school districts and businesses to help Latino students pursue college degrees. In addition, since so many Hispanic students begin their higher education at a community college, community outreach also includes programs that facilitate transfers from community college to public universities. 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 Learning Collaborative. 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 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.

Data Use

The institutions recognize the importance of using data to inform their support programs and institutional decisionmaking. They have established a culture of evidence and have democratized data use, sharing information on student success broadly with faculty, staff, students, and the community. By building awareness about the challenges all students (and especially Latino and other minority students) face, these institutions are able to gain insights from different subsets of their campuses to strengthen programs and services. For example, CUNY-New York City College of Technology participated in Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) as a way to collect, disaggregate, and use data to guide institutional practices and support for their students overall, and their minority students in particular.

Recommendations for Other Institutions

Excelencia in Education's observations of the 12 campuses, along with its work exploring institutional practices and state policy options to bolster Latino student success in several states, has led to the identification of several guiding practices that may be useful to other institutions experiencing growing Latino student enrollment and seeking to serve nontraditional students:

- **Create a culture of evidence** at the institution to encourage the use of disaggregated data to better understand how Latino and other students are performing and to guide campus decisions and initiatives.
- **Share data on Latino students with faculty, staff, and students** at least once a year so that they know how students are performing and can become more engaged in institutional efforts.
- **Use short-term measures of academic progress to guide improvements in curricula, instruction, and support services for Latino students.** Using short-term measures of academic progress engages faculty in the scholarship of student success and focuses their efforts to improve their own students' achievement and their institutions' capacity to serve students.
- **Encourage and support the sharing of disaggregated student data between community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions** to help establish better transfer pathways and to understand the barriers and facilitators for Latino college student success.
- **Provide a holistic approach to serving Latino students within the institution.** Incorporate leadership, research, academic programs, support services, and student life programs. Too often these programs and services operate independently and may be either duplicative or ineffective in reaching the students who need them the most to succeed.
- **Partner with other educational organizations in the community to align educational resources.** Engaging "feeder" high schools, community colleges, public universities, and community-based organizations already investing in students can increase Latino student preparation, access, and persistence to degree completion. Latino students tend to enroll in colleges in their own community, so there is a rich opportunity to align educational services in the K-16 pathway to better support students.
- **Seek external sources to develop and test innovative practices while adding proven practices to the institutional budget.** Many institutions with growing Latino enrollment face limited resources and a growing need to improve student achievement. Each of the institutions in this study actively sought and received additional federal, state, or private support to finance their student success activities. Once practices were developed, implemented, and evaluated, leaders added to their institutions' budgets the ones that proved most successful.
- **Apply lessons learned in improving services to Latinos to improve services for all students.** Institutional practices that demonstrate effectiveness in serving Hispanics are likely to serve other students well and can be institutionalized to improve overall student success.

Later this year, *Excelencia* in Education will release two more briefs that probe more deeply into HSI leadership strategies and success measures at these 12 institutions.

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* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers adding value to their individual efforts with the momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce. For more information, visit the organization's Web site, www.EdExcelencia.org.

Table 1. National ranking of 12 selected HSIs, by enrollment of, and degrees awarded to, Latinos in higher education, 2005-06

	Enrollment			Associate Degrees Awarded		
	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total
Community Colleges						
El Paso County Community College	1	22,690	85	1	1,020	83
East Los Angeles College	2	16,365	69	4	756	63
South Texas College*	3	15,409	95	2	969	94
El Camino College	22	7,244	30	39	294	25
CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College	38	5,530	30	15	482	24
CUNY-LaGuardia Community College	49	4,654	35	22	406	32
	Enrollment			Bachelor's Degrees Awarded		
Public Universities	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total
University of Texas Pan American	4	13,102	88	2	1,949	86
University of Texas at El Paso	5	12,108	76	3	1,630	75
California State University-Los Angeles	15	6,940	46	11	1,127	42
California State University-Dominguez Hills	62	3,205	35	30	689	35
CUNY-Lehman College	47	3,906	46	45	508	39
CUNY- New York City College of Technology**	65	3,045	25	217	99	21

*South Texas College now offers a bachelor's degree as well.

**NY City College of Technology's degree enrollment is 70% associate and 30% bachelor's degree.

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