

## Excelencia in Education Receives Grant from Wal-Mart

by [Delia Greth](#) - Friday, 17 October 2008, 05:31 PM

### WAL-MART FOUNDATION SOWS SEEDS FOR GROWING WHAT WORKS

A \$1.49 million grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation is providing the seed money for *Excelencia* in Education's new national initiative-- Growing What Works--designed to increase the higher education success rate of Latinos in the United States.

With funding supplied by the Wal-Mart Foundation, *Excelencia* in Education will catalog powerful institutional practices and strategies to improve educational outcomes for Latinos throughout the country. Beginning in the first quarter of 2009, eligible colleges and universities will be able to apply for competitive "Wal-Mart SEMILLAS" grants to replicate these proven programs on their campuses. The acronym SEMILLAS (Spanish for "seeds") stands for **Seeding Educational Models that Impact and Leverage Latino Academic Success**.

"Many Latinos entering college in this country represent the first-generation in their families to achieve this goal," said Michelle Gilliard, senior director, workforce development and education for the Wal-Mart Foundation. "The Wal-Mart Foundation's investment in *Excelencia's* Growing What Works programs will plant the seeds for other initiatives that will support these students as they navigate their way through the higher education system."

"Fewer than 10 percent of Latinos between the ages of 25 and 29 hold bachelor's degrees, according to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau," points out Richard W. Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education and an Honorary Board Member of *Excelencia* in Education. "The Wal-Mart Foundation's support of Growing What Works will allow *Excelencia* in Education to extend its work of promoting promising, innovative

practices to ensure high-quality educational experiences for Latino students and all students."

Premiere among these efforts is the [Examples of \*Excelencia\*](#) initiative which annually recognizes working models, programs and departments that boost Latino enrollment, performance and graduation in higher education. Since 2005, Examples of *Excelencia* has identified more than 150 programs achieving better academic results with Latino students. The annual nomination process and recognition program now serves as a focal point for educators and policymakers seeking what works for Latino students in higher education, and information about these Examples of *Excelencia* can be accessed through the organization's website, [www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org).

Institutions of higher learning interested in pursuing a Wal-Mart SEMILLAS grant should visit the website of *Excelencia* in Education, [www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org), in early 2009 for information about application procedures.