



## Wal-Mart Foundation Sows Seeds For Growing What Works

Washington, DC, October 8, 2008 – Growing What Works, a new national initiative from *Excelencia* in Education today announced a \$1.49 million grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation. The grant will be used by the Growing What Works initiative to provide the start-up funding for programs 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 program 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. “That figure means there are more than 3.5 million young Latinos who are poorly prepared to meet with success in today's workplace. 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.”

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 an outline of application procedures.

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***About Excelencia in Education***

Launched in Washington, D.C. in 2004, *Excelencia* in Education, a 501(c) (3) organization, 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. Begun with support from the Ford Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education, *Excelencia* quickly went to work with educators and policymakers to answer research questions about degree attainment, develop comprehensive strategies to strengthen support for Latino students, share ideas and information and recognize promising practices to accelerate Latino success in higher education.

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).

***About Philanthropy at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.***

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT) and the Wal-Mart Foundation are proud to support the charitable causes that are important to customers and associates in their own neighborhoods. Through its philanthropic programs and partnerships, the Wal-Mart Foundation supports initiatives focused on enhancing opportunities in education, job skills training, sustainability and health. In 2007, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and the Wal-Mart Foundation gave \$296 million to communities across the United States. To learn more, visit [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

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