



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Programs That Boost College Success for Latino Students Are Honored as 2007 “Examples of *Excelencia*”**

#### ***Two Campuses in California and One in Texas Are Home to Winning Programs***

LOS ANGELES—October 9, 2007—Three programs at institutions of higher education—two in California and one in Texas—have been selected as “Examples of *Excelencia*” (examples of excellence) in a national campaign to identify and honor programs and departments boosting Latino college enrollment, performance and graduation.

The winning programs were announced by *Excelencia* in Education, the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that administers the program and works to accelerate higher education success for Latino students. The announcement was made at *Excelencia*’s Symposium, which is being held at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

From California, the Enlace Program at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose and the Compact for Success at San Diego State University were honored as winners, along with the Psychological Services for Spanish Speaking Populations (PSSSP) Certificate program at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas.

“Improving outcomes for Latino students in higher education is a national priority,” said Sarita Brown, president and founder of *Excelencia* in Education. “These programs are the pride of their institutions, and offer models that could be used to encourage similar efforts nationwide. The programs and the results they produce should be front-and-center in the national conversation about how to increase success for Latino students—a critical step toward bolstering the nation’s workforce and competitiveness.”

The 2007 Examples of *Excelencia*—sponsored by Sallie Mae Inc., and ACT, Inc.—is one of a number of programs offered by *Excelencia* in Education to link research, policy, and practice to serve Latino students and the institutions and programs where they participate, at a time when the overall college-age population in the U.S. is changing rapidly. By 2025, 22 percent of the U.S. college-age population will be Hispanic, a level already reached in four states: California, Florida, New York, and Texas. Meeting the country’s future human capital and workforce needs make it imperative to improve outcomes for Latino students.

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 90 programs from across the nation were reviewed. In addition to the three winning programs, 11 programs were semifinalists and seven other programs received an honorable mention.

"We applaud all of these programs for their important work in improving postsecondary access, educational preparation, academic achievement, and professional training among Latino students," said Cynthia Schmeiser, president and chief operating officer of ACT's Education Division. "Each one can be proud of its efforts to increase college readiness and success within the Latino community."

At the associate level, the **Enlace Program** at Evergreen Valley College collaborates with EVC's Community Advisory Board and Mentor Advisory Council to offer a culturally responsive approach to the educational needs of Latino students. Since 1983, Enlace has combined coursework, mentoring, and counseling to help Latino students successfully balance academic, family, and community responsibilities. More than 65 Latino community professionals participate as mentors. Overall, Enlace participants pass a variety of courses at much higher rates than Latino students not in the program. Enlace staff are now focused gathering Enlace student data on completions and graduation rates and expect soon to report higher levels of performance at this stage as well.

The baccalaureate level, **Compact for Success** is a unique partnership between SDSU and the Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) that breaks barriers to college access for Latino students by guaranteeing admission and financial aid to students who complete the program. Requirements include maintenance of a 3.0 GPA and passage of SDSU placement tests in English and mathematics. All Sweetwater students who enter the district by 9<sup>th</sup>-grade are eligible for the program. Since its initiation, SDSU has seen a 96 percent increase in the number of students admitted to SDSU from SUHSD and a 192 percent increase in the number of Sweetwater students who enrolled without the need for remediation.

The Psychology Department at Our Lady of the Lake University has historically focused on training skilled practitioners able to serve diverse client populations. This focus led to the creation of the **Psychological Services for Spanish Speaking Populations (PSSSP)**, an optional specialization for master's, Doctorates of Psychology (PsyD) in Counseling Psychology and post-graduate education and the graduate level 2007 Examples of *Excelencia*. The specialization includes courses on service delivery in Spanish and on cultural and Spanish-language immersion and a bilingual practicum. The PSSSP program has attracted new interest from Hispanic students and brought renewed emphasis to Spanish-language services among the faculty. Prior to PSSSP, 18 percent of students in the doctoral counseling program were Latino and now 42 percent are. Faculty and student scholarship about the use of Spanish in counseling has blossomed in refereed journals, papers and workshops at professional meetings a total of five doctoral dissertations on the PSSSP model.

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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* is building a network of results-oriented educators, including university and community-based professionals and policymakers, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and 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](http://www.EdExcelencia.org).