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Colleges and Universities That Have Earned the Seal of *Excelencia* Lead Among the Nation's Top Institutions in Economic Mobility for Hispanic Students

*Excelencia in Education and Washington Monthly Partner to Highlight
Seal-Certified Institutions' Positive Impact*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 31, 2026) – The *Washington Monthly* released the second annual edition of the Best Colleges for Hispanic Students today, informed by *Excelencia* in Education's extensive data and knowledge of institutions intentionally serving Latino, and all, students. Institutions that have earned the Seal of *Excelencia* for demonstrating continuous improvement in student success lead the analysis, accounting for 34 of the top 100 two-year and four-year colleges and universities educating Latinos nationwide.

The Best Colleges for Hispanic Students release combines the accessibility focus of the *Monthly's* college rankings with the deep knowledge that *Excelencia* has built over more than 20 years of listening to, learning from, and working with colleges and universities. *Washington Monthly's* rankings focus on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), applying *Excelencia's* data on transfer and graduation rates of Latino students to provide unique insight into how leading institutions go beyond enrollment to facilitate access to excellence.

Excelencia gathers this information and more on institutional efforts and policies from the hundreds of institutions that apply for the Seal of *Excelencia*. The Seal is a student-centered, data-informed certification that holds colleges and universities accountable for showing momentum leading to continuous improvement in outcomes. Institutions earn this standard of excellence through an intentional alignment of data, evidence-based practices, and leadership. The ranking includes whether an institution has earned the Seal alongside measures of net price and percentage of Pell students.

"The Seal of *Excelencia* recognizes and drives excellence at institutions serving Latino students because intentional, mission-driven investment in serving this population ensures all of our students, communities, and country are served," said Deborah Santiago, *Excelencia* in Education Co-founder and CEO. "For students and families, the Seal is a clear signal that an institution creates the conditions needed for them to thrive before and beyond graduation. That's why Seal-certified institutions feature prominently in this year's Best Colleges for Hispanic Students."

"It is more important than ever to recognize and celebrate colleges that are doing right by their Hispanic students," said Kainoa Lowman, Editor at the *Washington Monthly*. "That's why the *Monthly* is proud to bring readers our second annual edition of the Best

Colleges for Hispanic Students, which combines the social mobility focus of the *Monthly's* college rankings with the deep knowledge that *Excelencia* in Education has built over decades of studying Hispanic performance in higher education. Considering the vital importance of the growing Hispanic student population to the overall health of America's contracting higher education system, the top schools in this ranking provide a model that other institutions should look to for lessons on how to serve that population well."

Nationally, 45 institutions have earned the Seal. Together, they model the transformation higher education needs to facilitate access to excellence for Latino, and all, students — and strengthen our nation's civic leadership and workforce.

Seal-certified institutions account for six of the top 10 four-year colleges for Hispanic students: The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at No. 2, California State University, Los Angeles at No. 4, The University of Texas at El Paso at No. 6, California State University, San Bernardino at No. 7, Dalton State College at No. 8, and Sul Ross State University at No. 9. In addition, Seal-certified institutions account for two of the top 10 two-year colleges: Miami Dade College at No. 5 and South Texas College at No. 6.

Colleges and universities that have earned the Seal lead the nation in closing degree attainment gaps, representing less than 1% of institutions yet graduating 17% of Latino, and 7% of all, students.

On October 27, *Excelencia* will announce the institutions that have earned the Seal of *Excelencia* in 2026 at its invitational Fall Convening in Washington, D.C. Seal-certified institutions span three progressive levels of certification — Certified, Recertified, and Intentionally Thriving Institutions (ITIs). ITIs have earned three-year certification for more than six years and invest in strategies and practices that prepare and connect Latino, and all, students to the workforce.

Explore the impact of the Seal of *Excelencia*:

EdExcelencia.org/seal-excelencia/seal-excelencia-certified-institutions

View the *Washington Monthly's* Best Colleges for Hispanic Students:

WashingtonMonthly.com/2026/08/30/americas-best-hispanic-serving-colleges/

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About *Excelencia* in Education

Excelencia in Education leads a national network of results-oriented educators and policymakers transforming higher education to tap the talents of the Latino community and address the U.S. economy's needs for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leaders. With this network, *Excelencia* ensures access to excellence by promoting student achievement, informing educational policies, and advancing evidence-based practices to more intentionally serve Latino, and all, students. For more information, visit: EdExcelencia.org

About the *Washington Monthly*

The *Washington Monthly* is a nonprofit print and digital outlet devoted to ahead-of-the-curve coverage of politics, government, and public affairs. Its College

Guide and Rankings, first published in 2005, has helped upend the conventional wisdom about what constitutes quality in higher education and received an Education Writers Association Award for data journalism.