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## ***Excelencia* in Education Recognizes Programs Increasing Access to Excellence in Higher Education**

*Twelve Programs Earn Recognition as Examples of Excelencia Finalists for Evidence-Based Practices Making a Positive Impact on Student Success*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 6, 2025)** – *Excelencia* in Education announced today the finalists for the 2025 Examples of *Excelencia*, recognizing 12 programs that demonstrate intentionality and impact in improving Latino, and all, student success in higher education.

Examples of *Excelencia* is the only national, data-driven effort to recognize programs with evidence of effectiveness in increasing Latino student success amongst all served and, by doing so, facilitating access to excellence for all students. Since 2005, *Excelencia* has reviewed over 2,500 program submissions, recognized over 400 programs for their proven impact, and raised and awarded more than \$2.2 million to programs making a positive difference for students across the nation.

Latinos represent a post-traditional student body, often navigating multiple paths through higher education while balancing work, family, and other responsibilities. This year's finalists exemplify an intentional commitment to advancing Latino and other post-traditional students in higher education, offering evidence-based practices that can inform and guide student-centered efforts. These programs expand access to a quality college education by strengthening student transition and retention through innovative, sustainable, culturally responsive efforts. These practices include bridge programs, counseling and advising services, engaging families through bilingual outreach, and targeted mentoring and coaching that prepare students to graduate workforce-ready.

"*Excelencia* promotes what works for Latino, and all, students nationally because of our commitment to excellence in higher education that results in student success," said Deborah Santiago, co-founder and CEO of *Excelencia*. "The programs recognized as finalists this year are meeting the moment and ensuring access to quality education. We celebrate their efforts and encourage others to learn what is making a positive difference for students."

This year's finalists were recognized from submissions representing 13 states and the District of Columbia, and they span four levels: associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and

community-based organizations. Programmatic details about the finalists will be featured in *Excelencia's* [Growing What Works Database](#) — the nation's only online and searchable database designed for institutional leaders, funders, policymakers, and others seeking evidence-based practices that improve opportunities and outcomes for Latino, and all, students in higher education.

On September 29, *Excelencia* will announce the 2025 Examples of *Excelencia*, bringing national attention to the four programs that have earned this recognition among the 12 finalists. Programs will be recognized at *Celebración de Excelencia*, which is part of *Excelencia's* multi-day, invitational Fall Convening in Washington, D.C. The event is the meeting place for leaders from colleges, universities, evidence-based programs, philanthropy, policy, and business sharing a common cause to promote excellence and cultivate talent for America's future workforce and civic leadership.

Additionally, *Excelencia* in Education has recognized two Programs to Watch for their promising efforts already making a positive impact on student success as they continue to build their evidence of effectiveness.

**The 2025 Examples of *Excelencia* finalists are:**

**ASSOCIATE LEVEL:**

- GM ASEP, Cerritos College, Norwalk, CA
- College Access Latinx Initiative (CALI), Portland Community College, Portland, OR

**BACCALAUREATE LEVEL:**

- Algebra Recitation Program, Aurora University, Aurora, IL
- ÁNDALE Latino Research Training Program, California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA

**GRADUATE LEVEL:**

- Crossing Latinidades Humanities Research Initiative, University of Illinois, Chicago, Chicago, IL
- LAWtina, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
- The Bridge-to-Math-Doctorate Program, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX

**COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Avanza RGV: Accelerating Latino Prosperity through Education & Career Pathways, Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA), Mercedes, TX
- CREAR Futuros, Hispanic Federation, New York City, NY

- College Success Program, Latino Education Advancement Foundation (LEAF), San Jose, CA
- Signature Family Engagement Program (SFEP), Parent Institute for Quality Education, National City, CA
- Hermanitas and College Success Programs, MANA de San Diego, San Diego, CA

**The 2025 Examples of *Excelencia* Programs to Watch are:**

- Dual Language Liberal Arts Transfer Degree Pathway (DL LAT), North Shore Community College, Lynn, MA
- Arizona Strategic Success Network, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Learn more about the 2025 finalists for the Examples of *Excelencia*:

[EdExcelencia.org/what-works-examples-excelencia/examples-excelencia-finalists](https://EdExcelencia.org/what-works-examples-excelencia/examples-excelencia-finalists)

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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](https://EdExcelencia.org)