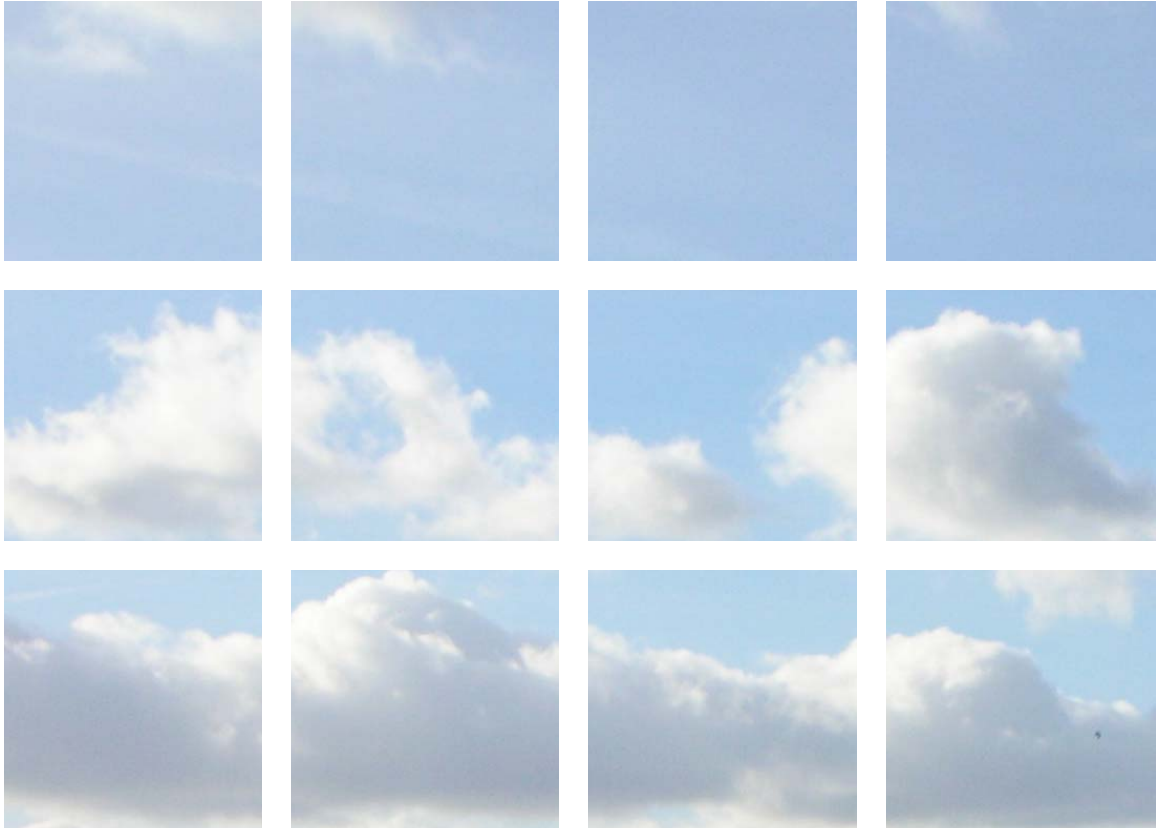


# MODELING

## HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (HSIs): CAMPUS PRACTICES THAT WORK FOR LATINO STUDENTS





Copyright © 2008 by *Excelencia* in Education. All rights reserved.

This brief was written by Deborah A. Santiago, Vice President for Policy and Research, *Excelencia* in Education

For more information on this publication contact:

**Excelencia in Education, Publications**  
1752 N Street NW, 6th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-778-8323  
Contact: [publications@EdExcelencia.org](mailto:publications@EdExcelencia.org)

A PDF version is also available on the web at: <http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/hsi/default.asp>



*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 and policy-makers, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce.

**JUNE 2008**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

FOREWORD . . . . .	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	2
OVERVIEW . . . . .	5
BACKGROUND . . . . .	6
INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP . . . . .	7
PROFILE OF 12 HSIs . . . . .	8
INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES TO IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF LATINO STUDENTS. . . . .	10
Community outreach . . . . .	10
Academic support . . . . .	10
Data use. . . . .	15
Faculty engagement. . . . .	17
Transfer path . . . . .	18
LESSONS LEARNED . . . . .	19
CONCLUSION . . . . .	20
EXCELENCIA IN EDUCATION'S HSI SERIES . . . . .	20
REFERENCES . . . . .	21

### TABLES

TABLE I. NATIONAL RANKING OF 12 SELECTED HSIs, BY ENROLLMENT OF, AND DEGREES AWARDED TO, LATINOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2005-06. . . . .	9
--	---

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

---

Deborah A. Santiago is the vice president for policy and research at *Excelencia* in Education and brings her extensive experience in education policy and research to the challenge of accelerating Latino student success. Some of her recent publications include *How Latino Students Pay for College: Patterns of Financial Aid in 2003-04* and *California Policy Options to Accelerate Latino Success in Higher Education*.

## FOREWORD

---

Ever since the 2000 census, the public, educators, policy makers, and business leaders have speculated about the implications of the profound demographic shift from the baby boomer generation to today's young people of high school and college-age—all the while becoming increasingly aware that many of these young people are Latino. To help shape the country's response to this potential source of human capital, *Excelencia* in Education was launched in 2004 with the aim of accelerating Latino student success in higher education. By linking research, policy, and practice, *Excelencia* works to inform policymakers and institutional leaders and to promote policies and practices that support higher educational achievement for Latino students and all students.

This is the third in *Excelencia's* series on Hispanic-Serving Institutions, an evolving group of institutions of higher education in America today. The first brief, *Inventing Hispanic-Serving Institutions: The Basics*, covered the creation of this category of institutions historically, as well as in federal statute and in educational practice. The second brief, *Choosing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): A Closer Look at Latino Students' College Choices*, highlighted the significant role Latino students play in converting existing colleges and universities into HSIs simply as a function of their college choices. This third brief, *Modeling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Campus Practices that Work for Latino Students*, profiles 12 academic institutions in California, New York, and Texas that are working to increase Latino student success.

The impact of institutional leadership in serving Latino students cannot be overestimated. As this brief makes clear, the challenges faced by institutional leaders who seek to better serve Latino students include many of the same faced by all college and university presidents—meeting greater expectations of the institution, the never ending pursuit of resources, and serving the learning enterprise. What is distinctive about the leadership of the 12 institutions described in this brief is the degree to which student success—all students' success—is their yardstick. These presidents have put improving Latino student success on their agendas and are directly involved in meeting the challenge. The results are a set of institutions with practices producing positive educational results for Latino students—practices that other educational leaders can adopt.

*Modeling HSIs* is designed to provide a closer view of effective leadership, institutional practices, and guiding principles supporting Latino student success. As the country prepares for the next census in 2010, *Excelencia* continues to work with campuses and educational policy leaders to discover tactics, strategies, and policies to improve Latino student success in higher education and thus serve the country's need for talented and well-educated citizens, workers, and leaders.

Sarita E. Brown  
President  
*Excelencia* in Education

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

This brief on modeling institutional leadership to address Latino student success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) was developed with the generous support of the Lumina Foundation for Education and was informed by a much larger case study, also supported by The Lumina Foundation. Sarita Brown, Sally Andrade, and Anne Prisco assisted in the research for the Latino Student Success Demonstration Project series that also informed this brief.

We are grateful to the institutional leaders—presidents, administrators, deans, and faculty—and students from the 12 institutions of higher education who contributed their time, insights, and expertise on student success to inform this study. The 12 HSI presidents reviewed a draft of this brief and provided feedback that strengthened the document. The author is solely responsible for any errors in content.

*The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of Lumina Foundation for Education, its officers or employees.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hispanic-Serving Institutions have the opportunity to be trendsetters in higher education. As Latino representation in higher education continues to increase across all states and institution types, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)—public or private nonprofit degree-granting colleges with enrollments of 25 percent or more Hispanic undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment—provide a valuable laboratory to study practices that help improve Latino access, retention, and academic success. In 2006, there were 252 HSIs located in 16 states educating almost half of all Hispanic undergraduates in the United States.

This brief—the third report *Excelencia* in Education has completed on HSIs—summarizes institutional practices from six community colleges and six public universities that rank among the top institutions nationwide in enrollment of Hispanics and degrees awarded to Hispanic students. Located in three states that educate large proportions of Latino students (California, New York, and Texas), the 12 campuses (see below) have focused increasingly on what it takes to improve student access, retention, and academic achievement of their students overall and of Latino students in particular. As a result, these HSIs challenge themselves to create an institutional paradigm that includes both serving Latino students to improve success while also measuring the institution’s ability to do so. In the process, these institutions have become trendsetters in higher education.

“serving” institutions must actively promote Latino students’ success, and not just their enrollment. Their work requires them to balance the very public expectations of access and quality with a perpetual struggle for sufficient resources to address student needs. They also balance their institutions’ service to a large student population that increasingly defies the traditional profile of students (such as enrolling full-time and living on campus) with accountability measures developed for traditional students. These leaders are not complacent about their current levels of student success and have been directly engaged in planning and implementation of efforts to measure and improve student success. As trendsetters, these HSI presidents follow no particular “rule book” for balancing access and quality but make it a priority to better serve their communities and have exerted a powerful influence on their campuses by setting the vision and tone encouraging positive and informed institutional change.

**Academic support.** While institutions are involved in many areas that support their students’ success, the practices of all 12 HSIs emphasized academic support. Particularly powerful were strategies introduced to strengthen developmental education, cohort support programs, and academic advising. All the colleges offer courses that prepare students for college-level work, and some have created free summer or winter immersion programs to prepare incoming and returning students for placement exams in English, writing, and mathematics. All of the

### PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

State	Community Colleges	Public Universities
CALIFORNIA	El Camino College	California State University — Dominguez Hills
	East Los Angeles College	California State University — Los Angeles
NEW YORK	CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College	CUNY-Lehman College
	CUNY-LaGuardia Community College	CUNY-New York College of Technology
TEXAS	El Paso County Community College	The University of Texas at El Paso
	South Texas College	The University of Texas — Pan American

At each of these campuses, which are student rich and resource poor, college officials have been forced to reconsider how they can better provide student support services, academic programs, and community outreach strategies to ensure success while addressing diverse Latino enrollment patterns and pathways to degree completion. Their efforts have led to improved strategies for Latino success that are described throughout this report and will be further examined in future reports.

**Institutional leadership.** HSIs are identified by Hispanic enrollment, not by mission to serve Hispanics. Nonetheless, leaders at the 12 HSIs in this brief agreed that Hispanic

campuses have also invested considerable resources in examining student data and designing interventions to strengthen freshmen student performance. For example, El Camino College offers a First Year Experience program where student persistence and pass rates are 10 to 30 percent higher than a comparative group that did not participate. South Texas College’s Beacon Advisement Program provides a case management approach to student advising and has seen a fall-to-spring retention rate of 76 percent compared to 69 percent for a comparative group that did not participate. Additional examples of academic support are provided in the brief.

**Community outreach.** Latino students are often enrolled in large, urban institutions, and the 12 institutions studied have effectively sought ways to engage the surrounding Latino communities to create an atmosphere that supports academic success for Latino students before and after they arrive on campus. Colleges have developed partnerships with local school districts and businesses to help Latino students pursue college degrees. In addition, since so many Hispanic students begin their higher education at a community college, community outreach also includes programs that facilitate transfers from community college to public universities. One of the strongest models of collaboration between K-12 feeder schools, a community college, and a university partner is that of the El Paso Learning Collaborative. El Paso Community College and the University of Texas at El Paso are working to align their curriculum and to ease transitions so that students do not get lost, and for the past decade have used resources from the National Science Foundation to provide summer programs and tuition support for students transferring to programs in science, engineering, and mathematics.

**Data use.** The institutions in this brief recognize the importance of using data to inform their support programs and institutional decisionmaking. The institutions have established a culture of evidence and have democratized data use, sharing information on student success broadly with faculty, staff, students, and the community. By building awareness about the challenges all students (and especially Latino and other students) face, these institutions are able to gain insights from different subsets of their campuses to strengthen programs and services. For example, CUNY-New York City College of Technology participated in Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) as a way to collect, disaggregate, and use data to guide institutional practices and support for their students overall, and their minority students in particular.

*Excelencia* in Education's observations of the 12 campuses, along with its work exploring institutional practices and state policy options to bolster Latino student success in several states, has led to the identification of several guiding practices that may be useful to other institutions experiencing growing Latino student enrollment and seeking to serve nontraditional students:

- **Create a culture of evidence** at the institution to encourage the use of disaggregated data to better understand how Latino and other students are performing and to guide campus decisions and initiatives.
- **Share data on Latino students with faculty, staff, and students** at least once a year so that they know how students are performing and can become more engaged in institutional efforts.

- **Use short-term measures of academic progress to guide improvements in curricula, instruction, and support services for Latino students.** Using short-term measures of academic progress engages faculty in the scholarship of student success and focuses their efforts to improve their own students' achievement and the institutions' capacity to serve students.
- **Encourage and support the sharing of disaggregated student data between community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions** to help establish better transfer pathways and to understand the barriers and facilitators for Latino college student success.
- **Provide a holistic approach to serving Latino students within the institution.** Incorporate leadership, research, academic programs, support services, and student life programs. Too often these programs and services operate independently and may be either duplicative or ineffective in reaching the students who need them the most to succeed.
- **Partner with other educational organizations in the community to align educational resources.** Engaging "feeder" high schools, community colleges, public universities, and community-based organizations already investing in students can increase Latino student preparation, access, and persistence to degree completion. Latino students tend to enroll in colleges in their own community, so there is a rich opportunity to align educational services in the K-16 pathway to better support students.
- **Seek external sources to develop and test innovative practices while adding proven practices to the institutional budget.** Many institutions with growing Latino enrollment face limited resources and a growing need to improve student achievement. Each of the institutions in this study actively sought and received additional federal, state, or private support to finance their student success activities. Once practices were developed, implemented, and evaluated, leaders added to their institution's budgets the ones that proved most successful.
- **Apply lessons learned in improving services to Latinos to improve services for all students.** Institutional practices that demonstrate effectiveness in serving Hispanics are likely to serve other students well and can be institutionalized to improve overall student success.

This year, *Excelencia* in Education will release two more briefs that probe more deeply into HSI leadership strategies and success measures at these 12 institutions.

## OVERVIEW

Hispanics<sup>1</sup> are the youngest and fastest growing population in the United States enrolling in college. However, as a group, Hispanics also have the lowest educational attainment levels in the nation. Given the workforce needs of the United States and the projected growth of the country's Latino population, it is vital that Latino students enroll in higher education. However, the low rates of degree attainment by Latino college students show it is essential to not only enroll Latinos, but also to improve Latino student postsecondary achievement. Understanding how to accelerate Latino student achievement in college is the key to closing the educational attainment gap and preparing a competitive workforce.

Fundamental to exploring “what works” for Latino students is to understand what it means to “serve” Latino students. Therefore it is important to examine what institutions of higher education with large numbers of Hispanics are doing to increase access and success for these students. To better understand how to serve Latino students and improve degree attainment, *Excelencia* in Education engaged 12 colleges in California, New York, and Texas that enroll large percentages of Latino students and are identified as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). While these institutions face many challenges, leaders from these institutions are directly addressing service to Latino students and are committed to sharing with others the lessons they have learned about what works for Latino students at their campuses.

For the 12 institutions in this brief, Latino students' enrollment patterns and diverse pathways to degree completion challenge institutions to reconsider their traditional provision of student support services, academic programs, community

**To be an HSI is to be at the forefront of change in higher education because of the shift in demographics. We have an opportunity to be trendsetters in areas we're not historically known for.**

– Diana Natalicio, President, The University of Texas at El Paso

**We seek to affirm and academically validate all that our students bring to the university and then engage them successfully with all that the broader world has to offer.**

– Blandina Cardenas, President, The University of Texas Pan American

outreach, and measures of success. By embracing this challenge, the 12 HSIs serve as laboratories of what is working for Latino students and have designed institutional practices that can serve as models for other institutions and leaders who anticipate serving an increasing number of Latino students.

This issue brief, is the third in a series on HSIs. The first brief in the series, *Inventing HSIs: The Basics*, provides a general profile of HSIs and an overview

of the history behind the creation of the HSI category of institutions. The second brief in the series, *Choosing HSIs: A Closer Look at Latino Students' College Choices*, examines Latino students' concentration at HSIs and their priorities in choosing these institutions. This third brief explores the institutional practices of 12 public HSIs—six public universities and six community colleges—and extends the research developed through a series of demonstration projects and a case study examining Latino student success at these institutions.

This issue brief builds on the findings from the Latino Student Success Demonstration Project and focuses specifically on institutional leadership and practices to accelerate success for Latino students. It begins with some background information on the 12 HSIs examined and continues with an overview of institutional leadership at these institutions. The next section shares institutional practices created to improve the academic achievement of Latino students in such areas as community outreach, academic support, data use, faculty engagement, and transfer path. The final section of the brief provides lessons learned from these institutions on serving Latino students that can inform the practices of institutional leaders at other institutions.

<sup>1</sup> For this brief, Latino and Hispanic are used interchangeably.

## BACKGROUND

In 2006, Latinos represented 11 percent of students enrolled in higher education (NCES, 2007). Almost half of all Hispanic undergraduate students were concentrated in only 8 percent of institutions of higher education (252 institutions) identified as HSIs (Santiago, 2007). HSIs are defined by their student enrollment—not their mission—as accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with 25 percent or more total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment (Higher Education Act, as amended in 1998).

“HSIs” is a relatively new category for institutions. It was created in the mid-1980s to identify existing institutions with a high concentration of Hispanic students enrolled on their campuses. While these institutions were not created with an explicit mission to serve Hispanics, the college choices of Hispanic students to enroll at these institutions have reinforced the importance of these institutions in educating Hispanic students.

The category of HSIs was created on the theory that a critical mass of individuals from a group—in this case Latinos— influences organizational change at institutions of higher education to address this mass. Because of the concentration of Latinos enrolled at their campuses, it is generally assumed that HSIs are overtly focused on improving the educational achievement of their Latino students. While this cannot be assumed of all institutions that meet the criteria of HSIs, examining the institutional practices at selected HSIs provides

an opportunity to see what institutions enrolling almost half of all Latino undergraduates are doing to serve these students.

***For us, success is a broad goal.  
It's helping students meet their  
individual dreams/goals.***

*Thomas Fallo, President, El Camino College*

Creating new programs and practices to serve a changing and growing student population requires additional resources that public institutions are often challenged to find. However, one benefit of being identified as an HSI is eligibility to compete for specific federal grants targeting minority-serving institutions (such as HSIs). Policymakers seeking to strengthen the skills and capacities of the future U.S. workforce have funded HSIs as institutions with the potential to reach Hispanic students and to improve the quality of their education. For example, all of the HSIs in this study received the help of one or more federal Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (Title V) grants from the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen the quality of their institution and to better serve their Latino students. Other grants that funded these institutional practices were provided by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This external support has been critical in the institutions' ability to reinvent their programs and practices to serve Latino students.

The 12 HSIs in this brief represent three states with large Latino communities. While different in many ways, the institutions also have numerous similarities, not the least of which is their dynamic leadership during a time of institutional and demographic change in their community.



A fundamental assumption behind the creation of the HSI category is that a critical mass of students (i.e., 25 percent or more) triggers an organizational change of the institution. However, the higher education sector is not particularly receptive to change. From a review of the 12 institutions in this brief, it was evident that institutional leaders faced a daunting task. They had to balance the traditional role of a college with service to a large student population that increasingly defied the traditional profile (and thus needs) of students. They also had to balance the very public expectations of access and quality with service to their community and increasing measures of accountability. And they engaged in a perpetual struggle for sufficient resources to address student needs and to lead their institution well.

Presidents set the vision and priorities for an institution and oversee the implementation of these priorities. The 12 presidents' direct engagement in critical thinking about how to best serve their Latino students set the tone for the institutional leadership and practices that support Latino student success at these HSIs. However, it was also evident these leaders of HSIs had no "rule book" for balancing access and quality while also making it a priority to service their local areas. This is where their leadership was critical, and serves as a model for other institutional leaders. As trendsetters, these institutions were proactive in encouraging positive and informed institutional change.

The institutional leaders of the 12 HSIs had years of experience in multiple settings in higher education—from selective to open admission institutions and from the classroom to administration—and they used those experiences to inform their vision and strategies for supporting community and student success on their campuses. They shared their vision of an institutional culture

***We are a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and because so many in our community are Hispanic, we take that charge very seriously.***

*Richard Rhodes, President, El Paso County Community College*

Many public institutions of higher education serve students from diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds, and HSIs are no exception. The leaders of the 12 HSIs articulated the need to achieve a balance in serving all students, but they rejected the premise that institutions cannot target specific groups for services to aid their educational progress. Uniformly, the campus leaders argued that being intentional in better serving one group of students did not diminish the

***Institutions should give Latino students all the opportunities they need to be successful and help lower the barriers they face to succeed. And we must ensure they receive quality services.***

*Ricardo Fernandez, President, City University of New York—Lehman College*

institution's ability to serve all students well. The institution leaders were also conscious that, in their efforts to serve all students, it was necessary to be aware of and to target services to Latino students so their needs and strengths did not get lost. Several leaders mentioned the lessons learned about what works for Latino students on their campuses prompted administrators and faculty to consider the use of new and more effective services with other student populations. For example, smaller programs with evidence of effectiveness were scaled up to serve other students more effectively.

***We are serving all students. Reaching out to do something for specific groups to enhance their opportunity for success does not put other students down. For example, as a result of the investment we are making to serve Latinos, we have developed practices that we can now provide to all students so that all benefit.***

*James Lyons, former President, California State University—Dominguez Hills*

where Latino students are welcomed as an asset to the institution, not a liability, and where a supportive environment promotes Latino student success. The leaders set the tone for institutional commitment and accountability for student success, and their mission to serve all students was reflected throughout the institution.

In many ways, it would have been simpler for institutional leaders to follow the traditional approach of serving students in higher education even if it did not serve their students well. However, the institutional leaders' commitment to addressing the needs of their current students required significant investment and coordination in data collection, review, and analysis, as well as a willingness to use all this work to inform change in a concerted effort to improve student success.

Institutions that serve all their students well do an effective job of disaggregating their data to understand the strengths and needs of their students, and then they actively pursue policies and practices to retain their students and help them succeed.

The summary of what works at these institutions is highlighted later in the brief. It shows both proactive leadership for student success and offers examples of what other institutions can

***We are an HSI in the truest sense because we have the largest concentration of Mexican Americans in the U.S. in our service area. We aim to be “serving” because we are a focal point of the community. Because we have a reputation for being “Hispanic-friendly,” we have the ability to serve.***

*Ernesto Moreno, President, East Los Angeles College*

do to serve Latino students on their campuses. The leaders at these HSIs were not complacent about their current levels of student success, by any traditional or nontraditional measure. These HSIs challenged themselves to create an institutional paradigm to improve student success and at the same time measure the success of the institution’s improvement programs. As a result, these institutions have become trendsetters in higher education.

## PROFILE OF 12 HSIS

The 12 institutions in this brief (see text box) represented the top U.S. institutions enrolling and awarding degrees to Hispanic students. Each college has a unique history, distinctive service areas, and diverse institutional practices. However, these institutions also have similarities. For example, the majority of students at these campuses were female, commuted, worked at least part time, and received state or federal financial aid to pay for college. These are important characteristics to consider when reviewing institutional practices to improve Latino student success.

The following sections and tables include data on enrollment, attendance patterns, degrees awarded, and graduation and transfer rates for these institutions in 2005-06.

***My job is to develop a culture that believes every student can excel at the highest level and to create opportunities for them to succeed at those levels.***

*James Rosser, President, California State University—Los Angeles*

***I would like to see the day where serving Hispanic students is mainstream, not limited to a specifically designated institution.***

*Shirley A. Reed, President, South Texas College District*

### Enrollment and degrees awarded

In 2005-06, each of the community colleges and four of the six public universities in the brief ranked in the top 50 nationally of institutions with the largest Hispanic enrollment (Table 1). In fact, this brief includes the top three community colleges and two of the top five public universities that enroll the largest number of Hispanics in the nation. Together, the Latino student enrollment of the 12 institutions ranged from 25 to 95 percent of all undergraduates on campus.

The 12 HSIs not only ranked in the top nationally for their enrollment of Latino students, they also ranked in the top nationally in annual degrees awarded to Latino students. For example, three community

## PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

State	Community Colleges	Public Universities
CALIFORNIA	El Camino College	California State University — Dominguez Hills
	East Los Angeles College	California State University — Los Angeles
NEW YORK	CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College	CUNY-Lehman College
	CUNY-LaGuardia Community College	CUNY-New York College of Technology
TEXAS	El Paso County Community College	The University of Texas at El Paso
	South Texas College	The University of Texas — Pan American

colleges ranked among the top five community colleges in the nation awarding associate degrees to Latinos (Table 1). Further, two of the public universities ranked among the top five U.S. colleges awarding bachelor's degrees to Latinos. Latinos earning degrees at the institutions ranged widely from 21 percent to 94 percent of total graduates.

This snapshot profile of the HSIs considered in this brief sets the context for the institutional practices developed to improve student success at each campus.

**TABLE 1. National ranking of 12 selected HSIs, by enrollment of, and degrees awarded to, Latinos in higher education, 2005-06**

	Enrollment			Associate Degrees Awarded		
<b>COMMUNITY COLLEGES</b>	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total
El Paso County Community College	1	22,690	85	1	1,020	83
East Los Angeles College	2	16,365	69	4	756	63
South Texas College*	3	15,409	95	2	969	94
El Camino College	22	7,244	30	39	294	25
CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College	38	5,530	30	15	482	24
CUNY—LaGuardia Community College	49	4,654	35	22	406	32
	Enrollment			Bachelor Degrees Awarded		
<b>PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES</b>	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total	National Ranking	Number of Latino Students	Latinos as Percentage of Total
University of Texas Pan American	4	13,102	88	2	1,949	86
University of Texas at El Paso	5	12,108	76	3	1,630	75
California State University-Los Angeles	15	6,940	46	11	1,127	42
California State University—Dominguez Hills	62	3,205	35	30	689	35
CUNY-Lehman College	47	3,906	46	45	508	39
CUNY- New York City College of Technology**	65	3,045	25	217	99	21

\*South Texas College now offers a bachelor's degree as well

\*\*NY City College of Technology's degree enrollment is 70% associate and 30% bachelor

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institutional Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2005-06



Some HSIs are leading the way in higher education on behalf of their Latino and other students by crafting institutional practices to address their institutions' commitment to both access and quality. While the institutional leaders acknowledged their success rates were not at the level they desired, each leader was actively developing and investing resources in new institutional practices to better serve their students. The institutional practices were based on data, research, evaluation, creativity, and a willingness to "try something" rather than accept the current levels of student success.

Institutional practices reviewed at these HSIs addressed five main areas to improve Latino student success: community outreach, academic support, data use, faculty development, and transfer paths. Some institutional activities were designed to serve all students and some programs were specifically created to address the needs of Latino students. Their activities included (1) developing seminars to provide students with the information and skills they need to persist in higher education, (2) using data to better track student performance by group, (3) reconceptualizing student advising, and (4) using technology to facilitate student transfers to other institutions. Such initiatives may already exist in well-funded institutions, but limited resources have stymied their development at many colleges serving Latino students.

## Community outreach

Many Latino students in higher education are enrolled at institutions located in large urban Latino communities. Institutional programs that strengthen community outreach and partnership support Latino students and engage additional resources to improve student success. Each of the HSIs in this brief are actively engaged with their surrounding Latino community. They serve as models for higher education/community partnerships that create an atmosphere of educational success for Latino and other students.

**We have a responsibility to recognize the community we serve, to be inclusive, and to be responsive.**

*Fred Beufait, former President,  
City University of New York—New York  
City College of Technology*

**Latino students often need more remediation than other students, but graduate and transfer at the same rates as others. They are able to use remediation to their benefit and make up their differences.**

*Antonio Perez, President, Borough of  
Manhattan Community College*

For example, CUNY-Lehman College created ENLACE, a program that strengthens partnerships between the college, local school districts, and businesses to encourage Latino students to enter and complete college. Similarly, The University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College joined with school districts in El Paso County to form the El Paso Collaborative for Academic

Excellence. This integrated K-16 initiative includes business, industry, and civic organizations and focuses on improving the educational achievement of all El Paso students so that they aspire to attend college and are well prepared to pursue college degrees and successful careers. South Texas College (STC) used the state-funded First Generation Grant to target three area high schools with a 10 percent or greater gap in higher education participation between Latino students and other students. The goal was to reach out to these students and encourage college participation.

Both East Los Angeles College (ELAC) and El Paso Community College (EPCC) developed college preparation programs in an effort to share resources, align expectations of college readiness, and expose potential college students in the community to a college experience. ELAC established the Escalante Math Program in honor of the widely acclaimed Latino high school mathematics teacher, Jaime Escalante. The

Escalante program offered year-round classes for middle and high school students in the neighboring community to strengthen their math and college preparatory skills. EPCC created the College Readiness Consortium to link the community college with feeder high schools to increase the college awareness and academic preparation of potential students and shorten the timeframe for students to succeed.

## Academic support

While institutions are involved in many areas that support their students' success, the practices of all 12 HSIs emphasized academic support. Within academic support, the HSIs invested particularly in three critical program areas to promote Latino student success: developmental education, cohort support programs, and academic advising.

## Developmental education

Each college delivered a significant number of courses that prepared students for college-level work. At five of the six community colleges, the majority of entering students enrolled in remedial/developmental programs. In four of the six public universities between 35 and 70 percent of entering students required remediation. Courses for remediation generally do not award degree credit for completion, and they add to the time necessary to complete a program of study and receive a degree. The possibility of attaining a degree becomes ever more daunting and remote for some students, and providing remedial work places an enormous strain on institutional resources. Nonetheless, remediation is a vital and positive resource for many college students, especially Latino students who are frequently the first in their family to enroll in a

college and may have attended high schools with insufficient resources to provide a rigorous college preparation education.

Both Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) and LaGuardia Community College offer new students an opportunity to enroll in free [summer immersion programs](#) to prepare for placement exams in reading, writing, and mathematics. LaGuardia offered similar opportunities in the winter and recently expanded both programs to include not only incoming students but also returning students who continue to need developmental support. El Paso Community College created the [Developmental Education Initiative](#) to evaluate current practices and analyze data to find ways to reduce the time students spent on remedial coursework (see text box).

## DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

### Developmental Education Initiative [El Paso Community College]

The Developmental Education Initiative (DEI) helps prospective and enrolled students to develop and improve their basic academic skills. The initiative established faculty committees from each of the developmental education disciplines (reading, writing, and math) with the goal of reducing the time students spent on remedial coursework. The committees evaluated current practices and analyzed data on how students flow through the developmental education sequences of courses, how many enter at each level, how many go on to the next level, how many complete the top level and go on to college-level coursework, and how many complete college-level coursework.

To assist its program participants, the DEI program provides services that support both academic and personal student success. These services have been well received by the institution as a whole. The DEI program has been the catalyst for EPCC's recent Learning Communities initiative. Further, the college has also revised its New Student Orientation process to include promotion of DEI services as a strong recommendation to students prior to initial testing.

The Developmental Education Initiative (DEI) at El Paso Community College has had a tremendous impact on the placement and other testing processes of the institution.

- From spring 2004 through April 2006, the program served 830 individuals.
- Eighty-seven percent of program participants improved their scores on the college placement test, so that they advanced one or more levels on Developmental Education course requirements. Some students placed out of Developmental Education altogether.
- The math committee realigned the developmental math sequence, reducing coursework to three levels instead of four, reducing the time required to complete the sequence when students place into the lowest level, and ensuring that the outcomes of the last level are aligned with those of the first college-level math course.

Given the success of the program's Pre-Testing Orientations, computer assisted instruction, and tutoring interventions, the college is considering expanding services to all campuses and offering greater program access to all entering and prospective students, as well as to students who are already enrolled but wish to improve their test scores.

## Cohort support programs

Institutional leaders were particularly aware of the challenges faced by many first-time students in their first year of college. Latino students at several campuses achieved high first-year persistence rates, and all of the campuses invested considerable resources in examining student data and designing interventions to strengthen freshmen student performance. For example, UTEP developed a strategy to improve student retention by enhancing its Entering Student Program. To improve academic success of new students, the program provided a first-year seminar, learning communities, tutoring, and developmental classes. As a result of the program, the rate of first-time freshmen who persisted increased to 87 percent that year. In addition, in the original student cohort of first-time full-time freshman, the number of students who persisted into their second year was 8 percent to 10 percent higher among those who had successfully completed the seminar than among the rest of

the group. Based upon the success of the program, UTEP made a commitment to expand the program.

The First-Year Experience (FYE) program at El Camino College provides a learning community with a network of learning services to support Latino students (see text box). LaGuardia Community College, with a one-year persistence rate of 62 percent for all full-time, first-time freshmen and a somewhat higher average of approximately 70 percent for its Hispanic students, developed advising and mentoring programs and a First Year Academic Learning Community. This First Year Academy provides courses and support services for new and continuing students during their first year. It also includes sessions on developing an ePortfolio (an electronic journal for students), critical thinking workshops, leadership and diversity training, academic advising and course selection, and a common reading assignment for all freshmen.

## ACADEMIC COHORT SUPPORT PROGRAM

### First Year Experience Program: [El Camino College]

The First Year Experience Program (FYE) was designed to assist new students in transitioning from high school to college and in attaining their educational goals. This comprehensive program linked academic and student support services, learning community courses, and interpersonal and collegial experiences to promote student retention, transfer, and graduation. FYE provides services to over 3,900 students. Academic and student services include first year learning communities (cohorts); linked developmental and transfer classes; supplemental instruction; peer and faculty mentors; intensive orientations; hands-on instruction using El Camino College technology; intensive academic, financial aid, and career counseling; freshmen interest groups (FIGs); and community service learning.

FYE works with faculty and staff members to develop and improve teaching and learning strategies, communication, and collaboration campus-wide to address the needs of first year, Latino, and other minority students. Over 1000 faculty and staff participated in FYE-sponsored faculty/staff development conferences, workshops, and seminars. Faculty and staff exchanged teaching and learning strategies, shared research, and explored innovative ways to educate our new traditional students.

The FYE program also initiated several new technologies that are now in use at El Camino College. These include MyECC (first ECC email for students), an on-line orientation, and on-line counseling. As a result, the program tripled the number of students, class offerings, and faculty involved in FYE.

- Student persistence and pass rates for First Year Experience (FYE) students are 10 percent to 30 percent higher than for the comparative group (first year students who did not participate).
- FYE students' progression through an English course sequence outperformed their comparison group at every level, including developmental classes.
- FYE students do much better in retention, pass/success rates, and completion of course sequences for English classes at all levels.
- Students participating in Supplemental Instruction have a 20 percent to 40 percent higher success rate for classes that are traditionally difficult to pass.

Several of the participating institutions developed learning communities and holistic approaches that combine academic programs with other institutional services to support their Latino students' success. For example, the CUNY-New York City College of Technology developed The Improving Retention Through Career-Based Learning Communities Project to create career-based learning communities for entering students and to infuse career content into the basic skills courses. The project also included advising, registration and career counseling, and academic support systems for entry-level courses, as well as training for full-time faculty in interactive instructional strategies. Thanks in part this project, data showed that a greater proportion of participating students returned to the institution and were retained into their second semester.

The University of Texas Pan American (UTPA) created The Learning Frameworks (UNIV. 1301) course as a graduation

requirement for entering students with fewer than 30 completed semester hours in order to assist with transitional issues students confront. The Learning Frameworks course provided four units: foundations of learning and motivation; motivational, behavioral, and learning strategies; study habit strategies; and campus resources. UTPA offered 76 Learning Frameworks sections in the 2005-06 academic year, and overall statistics demonstrated a 92 percent retention rate for students who took the course, compared to 88 percent for those who did not.

Beyond first year experience and learning communities, some of the HSIs also developed institutional practices that integrated academic support programs with culturally appropriate student support services. For example, faculty at CSU-Dominguez Hills developed Latinas Juntas and Nosotras to engage and encourage Hispanic female students to persist and to complete their college education (see text box).

## COHORT SUPPORT PROGRAM

### ***Latinas Juntas/Nosotras*** [California State University, Dominguez Hills]

Latinas are the least likely of any group of women in the United States to complete a bachelor's degree. Latina college students are often confronted with unique challenges and conflicts that impede academic and personal success. Two psychologists on faculty at CSU-DH who provide counseling to the college student population were alarmed at the low retention rate among Latina students. They saw a lack of support and of mentors for these students, who often experience alienation on campus. In response to these pressures, the two faculty members developed *Latinas Juntas* ("Latina women together").

This is a daylong program designed to enrich the lives of Latina students and to encourage them to pursue goals, stay in school, and understand that they can overcome obstacles and create positive options. *Latinas Juntas* brings together Latina students, faculty, and staff to provide an atmosphere of dialogue and mentoring through small and large group exercises that focus on:

- Challenging students to take personal responsibility for their education;
- Exploring the role of culture and family in their academic careers;
- Actively engaging students in personal and interpersonal development;
- Promoting self-awareness;
- Acknowledging and celebrating the diversity of the Latina community; and,
- Establishing a supportive network between Latina students, faculty, and staff.

The success of *Latinas Juntas* was the basis for the creation of *Nosotras* ("Us"), a weekly support group for Latina students at CSUDH to discuss issues that are meaningful to participating students.

## Academic advising

Academic advising is a critical institutional practice to improve student success. Each of the 12 HSIs invested resources to improve academic advising programs with Latino students. For example, both South Texas College and Borough of Manhattan Community College examined their data to determine that they had one-year persistence rates between 60-65 percent for all first-time, full-time freshmen,

including Hispanics. In an effort to increase these persistence rates, each campus developed academic advising programs targeting freshmen. Key components of South Texas College's Beacon Advisement Program included activities to promote early engagement of students in campus activities, assist them to feel part of a community, and track student performance to detect problems early (see text box).

## ACADEMIC ADVISING

### **Beacon Advisement Program: Case Management Approach to Student Advising [South Texas College]**

The purpose of the South Texas College (STC) Beacon Advisement Program is to increase the rate of student success by encouraging students to establish a relationship of “open dialogue” with a certified case manager to address personal and academic barriers they may encounter throughout their collegiate career.

The program began in 2005 with 21 certified case-managers from the Office of Counseling and Advising serving First-Time-in-College (FTIC) students with personal guidance as they transitioned from high school to college. Students are assigned an academic advisor upon completion of STC's Mandatory Orientation Program. The FTIC students also participate in three mandatory advising sessions during the semester. The first session is held before the first day of class to facilitate registration. The second session is held within the first six weeks of the semester to focus on class attendance and corollary services to reinforce successful student profiles. The third session consists of an academic follow-up where advisors help students register early for the next academic semester.

In 2006, STC decided to expand the program to all STC students. The Dean of Student Support Services, along with STC instructional leaders, led a collaborative effort to certify more than 300 staff and faculty members in case-management services. STC also extended the program's services to include financial aid training to ensure students are completing their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in a timely manner as well as maintaining eligibility by reviewing course completion and progress towards a degree or certificate.

There were noticeable increases in the retention rates, course grades, and successful completion rates of the 479 FTIC students that received case-management services.

- 65 percent of the students receiving services successfully completed their courses, compared to 59 percent of students who had not received such services.
- 71 percent of students receiving case-management services earned grades of C or better, compared to 64 percent of the students receiving traditional advising services.
- Students receiving case-management services had a fall-to-spring retention rate of 76 percent, compared to 69 percent for students that did not receive case-management services during the same period.

Since the services have been expanded to include all STC students, a significant increase is expected in student success rates overall.

In another example of academic advising, the Borough of Manhattan Community College's Title V-Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program was designed to focus

on Hispanic liberal arts majors. Trained faculty advisors were assigned to student cohorts of liberal arts majors to improve academic performance (see text box).



## ACADEMIC ADVISING

### Title V-Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Program [CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College]

The Title V (HSI) Program began in 2004 to improve the academic advisement process for the liberal arts population. The primary goals were to improve student success by providing a new academic advisement model aimed at making students more dynamic decision makers and develop an electronic advisement system to improve the delivery of guidance and support. This developmental model was necessary for liberal arts students at BMCC because they made up the largest segment of the student population and had the highest attrition rates. From its inception, the initiatives were aimed at providing liberal arts students with academic advisement in order to improve student success and increase retention.

The Title V project changed the culture and the way liberal arts academic advisement was carried out in the college by expanding the recruitment of students, increasing the number of faculty participants, and creating a support system for the faculty who joined the program. An important part of the program has been to recruit, train, and support liberal arts faculty with developmental advising training held bi-annually since spring 2005.

The program has expanded to include a new faculty mentoring initiative which draws on furthering the training of selected faculty advisors and is now fully operational. The Faculty Mentoring program's main goal is to develop a community of faculty mentors who assist each other by providing leadership among the advisors. Among the evidence of effectiveness is the following:

- To date, six faculty cohorts have been recruited and trained; a total of 100 liberal arts faculty now serve as advisors.
- Over 1,700 liberal arts majors have been recruited to participate (approximately 36 percent of liberal arts majors with fewer than 30 credits).
- The one-semester and two-semester persistence rates of Title V students are better than those of comparable non-participating liberal arts majors and career majors.
- The one- and two-semester persistence rates among Title V Latino students are higher than Latino liberal arts majors not participating in Title V.
- Well over one-third of the students recruited into Title V are Latino (39 percent), which is slightly higher than their representation in the eligible population (36 percent).

### Data use

Because the current climate of higher education accountability is focused on evaluation of institutional effectiveness and assessment of student outcomes, colleges are being challenged to collect and report on aspects of institutional performance beyond enrollment that they may not have collected before.

Collecting data and using data are not synonymous. An essential part of data use for institutional decision making requires building a “culture of evidence,” in which administrators, faculty, and staff feel confident about the data collected, have access to current data, refer to data to identify issues, and are willing to collaborate to find useful ways to address the issues (Dowd, 2005). Campus teams acknowledged the dual challenge; first of

***Data can be threatening. We're creating a culture where people, if they get the data and are not happy about it, feel confident enough to change their practices. So, rather than using data to punish or shame others, we use data to inform action.***

*Gail Mellow, President, LaGuardia Community College*

overcoming campus perceptions that data collection is nothing more than the basis to point out weaknesses or failures and second, of developing the understanding that data collection and analysis are valuable tools to guide and strengthen institutional practices.

By their efforts to develop a culture of evidence, the colleges have become more accustomed to and proficient in using data as part of campus discussions about ways to improve their program and institutional performance. Each college was engaged in some form of institutional diagnosis to determine how to improve both overall student academic achievement and efforts that increased Latino student success. Campus team members said that creating a culture of evidence helped faculty and staff to

value and use data more frequently for decision-making, institutional planning, and conflict resolution. These data enabled campuses to gain insights about different aspects of students' academic experiences, from the likelihood of student success based on demographic and descriptive variables to the evaluation of student performance in specific classes.

For example, South Texas College adopted a Continuous Quality Improvement Program that called for campus-wide and departmental performance evaluations based upon the use of benchmarks and annual data. The president of El Paso County Community College (EPCC) held district-wide forums to share the data on the college-readiness of incoming

students. The president also included faculty and staff in assessing what needed to be done to develop an action plan to better prepare high school students for college. In other examples of data use, LaGuardia Community College produces a midyear report and dedicates time for faculty and other campus professionals to examine the data and deliberate collectively, reaching shared interpretations within the framework of the campus strategic plan. City Tech participated in Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) as a way to collect, disaggregate, and use data to guide institutional practices and support for their students overall, and for their minority students in particular (see text box).

## DATA USE

### **Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) [CUNY – New York City College of Technology]**

As a continuation of City Tech's commitment to serving minority students and using data to make informed decisions, the college participated in the Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) project. As a member of the BEAMS project, City Tech participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement. After reviewing campus results, they designed freshmen learning communities for undeclared majors. This community program included intensive advising, career counseling, and mentoring because the NSE data showed that over half of freshmen had never spoken to an advisor and nearly one-third of all City Tech students had never talked to a faculty member or advisor about career goals. Students needed help navigating their first year, and undeclared majors were particularly at risk because they had no major department "home" to which they could go for answers. The BEAMS project served to inform the college community about issues facing all City Tech students, nearly 90 percent of whom are minority students. Highlights of Latino student success at City Tech include:

- Increased overall enrollment of Latino students. In fall 2007, 29 percent of all City Tech students were Latino vs. 26 percent in fall 2002. In fall 2007, 32 percent of all first-time freshmen were Latino vs. 25 percent in fall 2002.
- Increased number and percentage of Latino students enrolled in baccalaureate-level programs. In fall 2007 there were 763 Latino students (29 percent) enrolled in baccalaureate-level programs vs. 588 Latino students (27 percent) in fall 2002.
- Increased number and percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to Latino students. In 2006-2007, 126 Latino students earned a bachelor's degree (26 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded) compared to 72 in 2002-2003 (21 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded).

## Faculty engagement

The faculty is a critical component of institutional leadership. It is crucial to have faculty who are committed to student learning, who reflect in composition the student body, and who have high expectations and are willing to engage in the success of Latino students. Leaders encouraged the active recruitment of faculty who have the same commitment and vision that the institution has: that excellence and diversity go hand-in-hand. Every college emphasized how important the faculty is in creating the learning environment for student success at their campuses. While students strive to meet the high standards that faculty set, the faculty at the colleges are working to understand how the demographics of their colleges are changing.

It is critical to engage faculty in formulating and participating in changes in institutional practice to serve Latino and other students. For example, El Camino College offered the Pronunciation of Names course as part of its professional development programs and activities to teach faculty how to pronounce non-English student names correctly (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, etc.) and make it much easier for instruc-

tors to call on students. While the purpose of the course is to encourage student engagement and enhance classroom participation, this course also makes faculty aware of the demographic shifts in the student body.

California State University-Dominguez Hills developed the Enhancing Critical Literacy Project, which focused on increasing the literacy of upper-division transfer Latino and other students at the institution. The project combined faculty development with curriculum development and an assessment of student learning in order to improve students' writing abilities. The project also offered an enhanced writing center to provide tutorial services as well as access to computers to help improve writing.

La Guardia Community College's ePortfolio allows faculty to explore ways to engage students more effectively in classroom discussions. For many students, the ePortfolio course represents an introduction to technology that will serve them well in other academic or career endeavors. As importantly, the program allows the students' identity to be revealed in the context of their educational experiences (see text box).

## FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

### ePortfolio [CUNY-LaGuardia Community College]

LaGuardia's ePortfolio initiative links innovative pedagogy with digital technology and new thinking about assessment. It is led by academic faculty, working in collaboration with staff from Academic Affairs, Information Technology, and Enrollment Management and Student Development, and is coordinated by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

In its pilot phase, the initiative engaged 22 faculty members from across the college in a yearlong process of development and classroom testing of ePortfolio processes to provide information and insight for the College as a whole. Using a provisional ePortfolio system, faculty tested the use of ePortfolios in key areas identified by the college's assessment plan, with a particular emphasis on possibilities in the freshman year courses. Members of the pilot project developed curriculum tools, reported on their experiences, and helped the project staff revise and adapt the ePortfolio process.

The Academy program continues to introduce students to ePortfolio in their first semester at LaGuardia. And the Fundamentals of Professional Advancement course grew dramatically in Spring 2006, adding both depth and scope to students' ePortfolio work. A range of other ePortfolio-related efforts moved forward: an ePortfolio Leadership Colloquium provided opportunities for faculty to deepen their own work and engage in advanced discussion around ePortfolio; rubrics were completed for Oral Communication and Information Literacy; ePortfolio was built into the requirements for the Human Services Program and the Fine Arts Program; and the Accounting and Managerial Studies Department worked with the assessment sub-committee to pilot-test the assessment of longitudinal bodies of student work collected through ePortfolio.

- By its fourth implementation year, the ePortfolio project had more than doubled in size, with more than 5,000 students building ePortfolios in the 2005-2006 school year.
- Data analysis showed that the ePortfolio helped students deepen their engagement with key learning goals, such as critical thinking, writing, and synthesis of new knowledge.

## Transfer path

Since almost half of Latino students begin their higher education at a community college, it is important to understand their diverse transfer paths to public universities, as well as how these experiences may result in a smaller number of them completing the bachelor's degree.

Research shows that a lack of institutional commitment and capacity often results in a lack of coordination across programs, weak connections between K-12 schools and community colleges, and inconsistent collaborations between community college and public universities (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, & Timar, 2004). The college leaders were keenly aware of problems involved in creating and maintaining cross-institutional support for transfer effectiveness and in monitoring the academic achievement of Latino transfer students. For example, changes in senior administrators on either campus can slow the dialogue and progress on joint initiatives. Further, more than one campus team talked about the difficulties of obtaining university data from receiving institutions about the achievement of their community college transfer students. A California team noted the challenge of integrating transfer credits from a community college that operates on a semester system, with the university which operates on a quarter-system. Participants in the CUNY system reported ongoing problems with course equivalency in spite of existing articulation agreements.

Several of the community college presidents also noted that their partnerships with receiving universities included tensions in competing for enrollment. At times, institutions are competing for the same students in their community. Pressure from state policymakers to increase enrollments, particularly of Latino students, and the growing cost differential between community college and university tuition add tension to these transfer pathway discussions.

Despite these limitations, the institutional leaders at the 12 HSI worked to strengthen their role in clearing student pathways to public universities. In terms of effective strategies, the HSI institutional leaders emphasized the impor-

tance of strong and sustained leadership, along with faculty and staff commitment, and a K-16 conceptual framework.

One of the strongest models of collaboration between K-12 feeder schools, a community college, and a university partner is that of the El Paso County Community College (EPCC) and The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The two campuses have institutionalized a number of the above practices and continue to explore others to align their curriculum and to ease transitions so that students don't get lost or fall through the cracks. For example, for nearly a decade, UTEP used funding from the National Science Foundation's [Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation](#) to provide summer programs and tuition support for EPCC students transferring to programs in science, engineering, and mathematics. In addition, aware that the difference in community college tuition and university tuition posed a significant barrier to transfer students pursuing the baccalaureate, UTEP sought support from businesses and foundations to institute a scholarship program for top EPCC transfer students in other majors.

El Camino College also offered the [Puente Project](#), with a mission to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in public universities, earn their bachelor's degree, and return to the community as mentors and leaders. At El Camino, Puente is open to all students, although it was originally created for and still serves a large percentage of Latino students. Program participants take an accelerated English sequence that emphasizes Chicano literature, meet regularly with a Puente counselor, are paired with a mentor, and take field trips to public universities. East Los Angeles College created a [Transfer Committee](#) composed of faculty, administrators, and staff that met biweekly to discuss how the institution could help students overcome difficulties and ensure that they continue on to a baccalaureate-granting institution with minimal disruption of their transfer paths. One of the committee's ideas was to coordinate faculty to share information on student financial aid. As a result, the president reported that the campus doubled the number of students getting financial aid and did so in a timely fashion.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The following guiding principles were shaped by the institutional practices described in this brief and offer all institutions of higher education the means to design new institutional practices to better serve Latino students:

- **Provide a holistic approach to serving Latino students within the institution.** Incorporate leadership, research, academic programs, support services, and student life programs. Too often these programs and services operate independently and may be duplicative or ineffective in reaching the students who need them most in order to succeed.
- **Partner with other educational organizations in the community to align educational resources.** Engaging “feeder” high schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations already investing in students can increase Latino student access and to improve their preparation for transition to a baccalaureate-granting institution. Latino students tend to enroll in colleges in their own community, so there is a rich opportunity to align educational services in the K-16 pathway to better support students.
- **Seek external sources to develop and test innovative practices while adding proven practices to the institutional budget.** Many institutions face limited resources and a growing need to support services to improve student achievement. Each of the institutions in the case study actively sought and received additional federal, state, and private support to finance their student success activities. Once practices were developed and tested, many leaders in this study then added the proven, successful practices to their institution’s budgets.
- **Use short-term measures of academic progress to guide improvements in curricula, instruction, and support services for Latino students.** Faculty engagement is critical to student success. Using short-term measures of academic

**These lessons and promising practices from our institution and others will ensure that CSU Dominguez Hills will continue to enhance our success for all students and become a role model for the nation in educating a diverse student body for a multicultural, global world.**

Mildred Garcia, President, California State University, Dominguez Hills

progress engages faculty in the scholarship of student success and engages their efforts to improve their own students’ achievement and the institutions’ capacity to serve students.

With time, institutional resources, population, and priorities change. Institutional practices that were effective may no longer yield the same level of success today. Institutions must continually identify the needs of their current student bodies in order to develop activities to better serve these students. To support these new measures and institutional practices, a review of the 12 HSIs showed institutions need to take the following steps:

- **Create a culture of evidence** at the institution to encourage the use of disaggregated data to better understand how Latino and other students are performing and to guide campus decisions and initiatives.
- **Disaggregate and use data** of students and institutional services to identify areas of need, target limited resources, and emphasize educational success for Latino students.
- **On an annual basis, create institutional profiles by race/ethnicity and gender** to analyze student access, retention, and completion to gauge both student group performance and institutional effectiveness.
- **Share Latino student data with faculty, staff, and students** at least once a year so that they know how students are performing and can become engaged in improvement efforts.
- **Apply lessons learned in improving services** to Latino college students to improve services for all students.
- **Encourage and support disaggregated student data sharing between community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions** to help create better transfer pathways and to understand the barriers and facilitators for Latino college students.

## CONCLUSION

---

The leadership at these HSIs created a vision, culture, and commitment at their institutions to balance access and quality while also meeting the needs of their surrounding community. As part of this vision, the institutional leaders were open to reinventing institutional practices and tailoring them to the characteristics of current students. They put in place the means to engage faculty/staff, reassess current practices, use data to guide decision making, and take an assertive role in identifying institutional practices that show evidence of serving Latino students.

Self-reflection, adaptation, and continuous improvement are necessary if institutions of higher education are to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. It is complicated to sort out the traditions of higher education to determine which are the core practices that serve the learning enterprise and advance knowledge, and which practices are merely the habits of individuals and institutions. At the same time, higher edu-

cation must confront the question of who is well served by current practices and policies and who is not. As the Latino population in the United States continues to grow, access and success in higher education for this group are paramount for the economic competitiveness of the nation.

Some HSIs have become laboratories of institutional practices and leadership working to ensure Latino student success. Always focused on providing a quality education to all students, these institutions reach out to the Hispanic community and either develop or adapt practices to increase the educational success of their nontraditional students. In doing this, the institutions in this brief embrace the students who choose to enroll at their campuses and take a proactive and leadership role in supporting student success. By integrating their commitments to students, community, access to quality, and student success, these 12 HSIs and their leaders are the newest trendsetters in higher education.

## EXCELENCIA IN EDUCATION'S HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION (HSI) SERIES

---

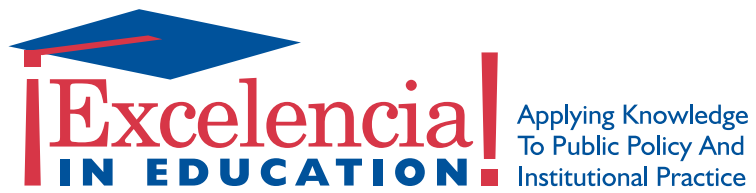
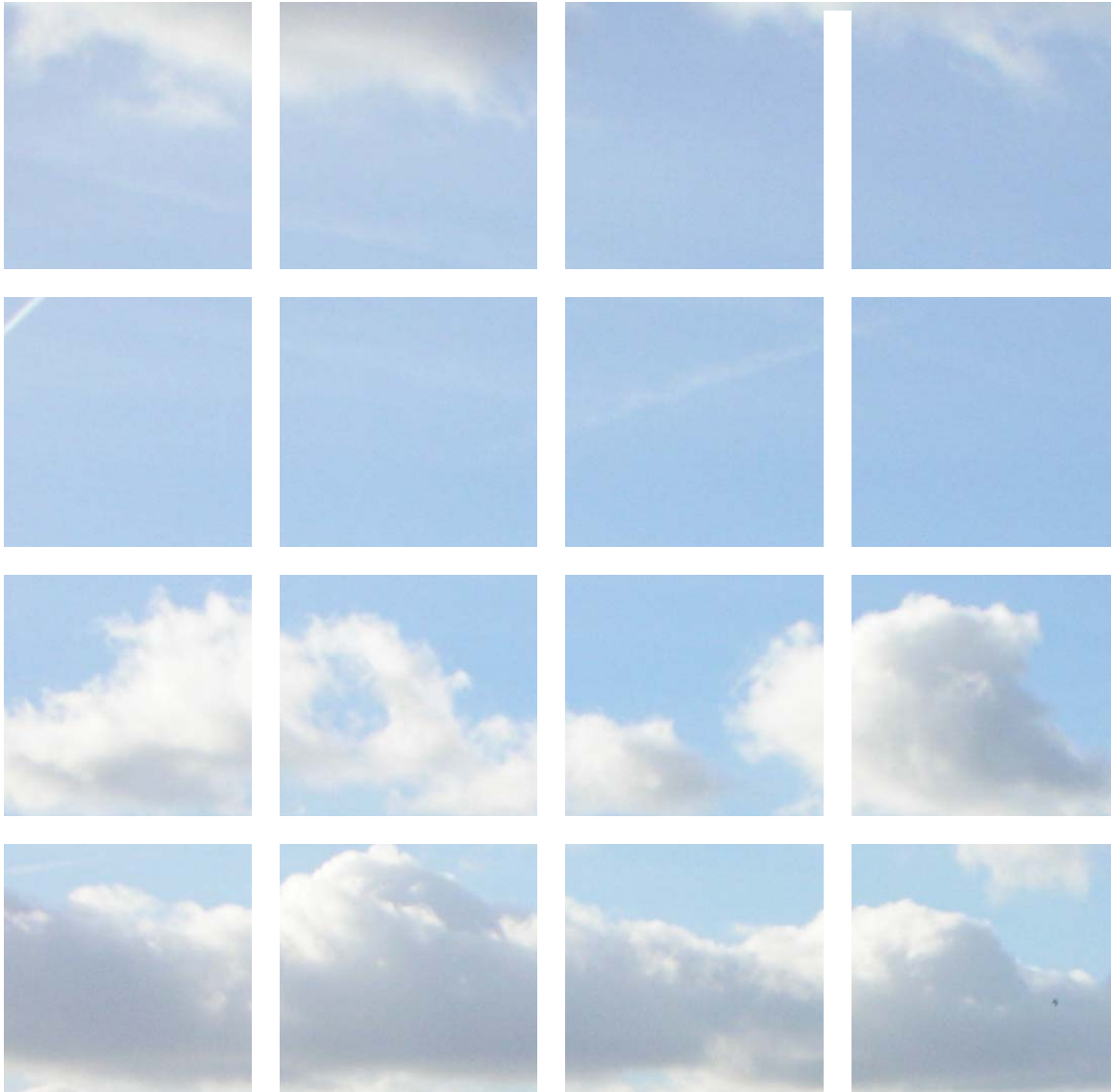
1. *Inventing Hispanic-Serving Institutions: The Basics* (March 2006), covers the creation of this category of institutions historically, as well as in federal statute and in educational practice.
2. *Choosing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): A Closer Look at Latino Students' College Choices* (August 2007), highlights the significant role Latino students play in converting existing colleges and institutions into HSIs simply as a function of their college choices.
3. *Modeling Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): Campus Practices that Work for Latino Students* (June 2008), presents institutional practices, challenges, and complexities that academic leaders face in order to support Latino student success.
4. *Perspectives on Leadership at Hispanic-Serving Institutions* — forthcoming (fall, 2008). This brief summarizes the views and activities of institution presidents to ensure Hispanic student success at their campuses.
5. *Refining Measures of Success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions* — forthcoming (winter, 2008). This brief explores measures of institutional success—beyond traditional graduation rates— that capture the institutions' investment in the success of nontraditional students.

*Excelencia* in Education's website provides the briefs in this HSI series as well as lists of HSIs, emerging HSIs, and HSIs with graduate programs. To access these publications, please visit, <http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/hsi/default.asp>.

## REFERENCES

---

- Dowd, A.C. (2005). *Data don't drive: Building a practitioner-driven culture of inquiry to assess community college performance*. Bloomington, IN: Lumina Foundation for Education.
- Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended in 1998. Title V, Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/20/ch28.html>; 1998 Amendments: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea98/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). 2006. *Institutional Postsecondary Education Data Survey (IPEDS)*. Enrollment Survey, 2005-06. (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>)
- U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). 2007. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2007*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Santiago, D. (2007a). *Voces (Voices): A Profile of Today's Latino College Students*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.
- Santiago, D. (2007b). *Choosing Hispanic-Serving Institutions: A Closer Look at Latino Student College Choices*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.
- Santiago, D. (2006). *Inventing Hispanic-Serving Institutions: The Basics*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.
- Santiago, D.; Cunningham, A. (2005). *How Latino Students Pay for College: Patterns of Financial Aid in 2003-04*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education and Institute for Higher Education Policy.
- Santiago, D.; Andrade, S., and Brown, S. (2004). *Latino Student Success at Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Findings from a Demonstration Project*. Washington, D.C.: *Excelencia* in Education.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2006). Current Population Survey, 2006. Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Internet Release date: March 15, 2007.



1752 N Street NW, 6th Floor • Washington, DC 20036

[www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org)