For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the world for college degree attainment, Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million degrees by 2020.

To reach the degree attainment goal by 2020, Louisiana can: 1) close the equity gap in college completion; 2) increase the number of degrees conferred; and, 3) scale up programs and initiatives that work for Latino and other students. The following is a framework for tracking Latino degree attainment in Louisiana.

**Equity Gap in Degree Completion**

Closing the equity gap in college completion can be tracked by the 3 measures provided below. Alone, none of these measures capture the entire “story” of equity in degree completion. However, in combination, they provide a useful picture of the equity gap in degree attainment between Latino and white cohorts in Louisiana in a single year (2007-08) and the persistence of the gap over time (2006-08).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rates</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completions per 100 FTE Students</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completions Relative to the Population in Need</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation rates - Total graduation within 150% percent of program time for first-time, full-time freshman
Completions per 100 FTE students – Total undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded per 100 full-time equivalent students (incorporates part-time students)
Completions Relative to the Population in Need – Total undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded per 1,000 adults aged 18 to 44 relative to the adult population with no college degree

Degrees Conferred
Another metric to benchmark college completion is to track the progress of total degrees awarded over time. This measure may be the result of an increase in overall enrollment numbers rather than an increase in rates of completion. From 2005-06 to 2007-08,

- the number of Hispanics who earned an undergraduate degree in Louisiana increased about 21% from 2006-08, while all other race/ethnic groups increased 8%.
- among the 50 states, Louisiana ranked 31st for the increase in degrees conferred to Latinos over 3 years.

Examples of What Works for Latino Students
There are institutions that are showing success in enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students. The following are examples of institutional programs across the country with evidence of effectiveness in serving Latino students nominated for Examples of Excelencia.

Early College High School Initiative- El Paso Community College
The Early College High School (ECHS) Initiative at El Paso Community College (EPCC) provides students in this region the opportunity to complete an associate degree while attending high school. The premise of an ECHS is to provide an accelerated environment for motivated students who, along with their family, have made the commitment to pursue this higher goal. To date, 1,522 students are attending EPCC Early College High Schools. The student population at both EPCC and it’s ECHS’s is over 80% Latino. Of ECHS students, about 110 have completed their associate degree during their junior year and have begun taking courses towards their bachelor degree at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) while in high school. (http://www.epcc.edu)

UNIV 1301- Learning Framework – University of Texas- Pan American
Since Fall 2008, UTPA requires entering freshman students with an ACT score of 18 or less, or not in the top 25% of their high school graduating class, to enroll in the UNIV 1301-Learning Framework course during their first year of college. The course is designed to help students understand the principles of learning and motivation, and then apply them to their own university experience. Approximately 77% of entering freshman eventually take the course during their first year. The retention rate for first-time, full-time entering freshman at UTPA has increased by 12 percentage points since Fall 2000, the greatest increase of all institutions of higher education in Texas. (http://www.utpa.edu)

For more information on institutional programs improving Latino student success in higher education, access Excelencia in Education’s Growing What Works database at http://www.edexcelencia.org/examples

Ensuring America’s Future partners in Louisiana:
Southern Regional Education Board: www.sreb.org

For more information on these metrics, download Benchmarking Latino College Completion to Meet National Goals: 2010 to 2020 and Degrees Conferred to Latinos: 2006-2008 at www.EdExcelencia.org/research/EAF/Benchmarking