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***Excelencia* in Education Announces Four Examples of How to SERVE Latino Students While Serving All**

Higher Education Programs Receive National Recognition for Evidence-Based Impact with Latino Students

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 28, 2021) – *Excelencia* in Education, the nation’s premier authority on efforts accelerating Latino student success in higher education, announced today four evidence-based programs as the 2021 Examples of *Excelencia* at the organization’s annual *Celebración de Excelencia*.

The four stand out programs are models of culturally responsive, asset-based efforts with evidence of effectiveness in recruiting, retaining, graduating, and preparing Latino students for success in the workforce that others can learn from to more intentionally serve their students.

The four programs announced during the virtual broadcast held in Washington, DC are:

Ambiciones at Howard Community College (Columbia, MD). *Ambiciones* assists students and their families in navigating the college entrance process. Once enrolled, program staff provide tailored support services that include advising, financial aid support, and culturally specific programming. As a result, the most recent (FY2020) fall-to-fall retention rate for first-year/full-time participants was 79% compared to 58% for non-program participants. (Associate level)

Cardinal First at North Central College (Naperville, IL). *Cardinal First* (CF) is a cohort-based program welcoming 1st generation college students and their families that recognizes and celebrates their identity as an asset and intentionally connects them to faculty, resources, and experiences to promote academic and personal success. Average 1st-to-3rd year retention rates for Latino students in CF is 85% vs. 69% for all Latino students and 47% for Latino 1st-gen students not in CF. (Baccalaureate level)

Éxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training of UT Health San Antonio, Institute for Health Promotion Research (San Antonio, TX). *Éxito!* provides a culturally tailored curriculum for Latino students and health professionals to promote pursuit of a doctoral degree and cancer research career. Of alumni, 72% were employed full-time and over half work in a field related to cancer health. (Graduate level)

College Success Program at *Conexión Américas* (Nashville, TN). The College Success Program’s primary goal is to equip first-generation Latino college students to persist in and graduate from college ready to pursue their careers. The program’s college completion rate for Latino participants was 74% compared to 64% for a similar cohort of Latino students in the National Student Clearinghouse data for Tennessee. (Community-Based Organization level)

To learn more about the 2021 Examples of *Excelencia* visit:
<https://www.edexcelencia.org/2021-examples-excelencia>

[Examples of *Excelencia*](#) is the country's only national effort to identify, aggregate and promote evidence-based practices improving Latino student success in higher education. As higher education institutions continue to pivot during these unprecedented times, these programs are a powerful example of what can work for Latino students while serving all.

"These evidence-based practices prove that transformation in higher education with an explicit focus on the students we serve is possible," said Deborah Santiago, Co-founder and CEO, *Excelencia* in Education. "We need to invest in what works if we are committed to student success."

"*Excelencia* brings positive attention to people and programs making a positive impact for our Latino students," said Sarita Brown, Co-founder and President, *Excelencia* in Education. "Examples of *Excelencia* inspires leaders to implement innovations that can serve all students."

This year, *Excelencia* received 145 program submissions representing 23 states and Puerto Rico. The four 2021 Examples were among 21 finalists that are now featured online on *Excelencia's* [Growing What Works Database](#) – the only national online, searchable database for institutional leaders, funders, and policymakers interested in identifying what works for Latino students. Program descriptions of this year's finalists are in a compendium that can be viewed and downloaded here: [2021 What Works for Latino Students in Higher Education](#).

Every year, Examples of *Excelencia* begins with a national call for nominations encouraging individuals and programs to share initiatives accelerating Latino student success in higher education. *Excelencia* reviews all program profiles and identifies finalists using rigorous criteria. Finalists identified in each of four categories—associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and community-based organizations—are presented to a national selection committee composed of higher education leaders, grant makers, and stakeholders. The committee assesses the strength of innovative, intentional, culturally relevant, and effective high-impact practices tailored to Latino students and their communities to select the four Examples of *Excelencia*.

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About *Excelencia* in Education

Excelencia in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, conducting analysis to inform educational policies, and advancing institutional practices while collaborating with those committed and ready to meet the mission. Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* has established a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's needs for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leaders. For more information, visit: <http://www.EdExcelencia.org>.

About Examples of *Excelencia*

Examples of *Excelencia* expands on the legacy of work first began in 1999 by its two visionary leaders, Deborah Santiago and Sarita Brown. Since 2005, *Excelencia* in Education has received over 1,800 program submissions; recognized over 350 programs for their impact in accelerating Latino student success; and raised and awarded over \$2 million to the programs making a difference for Latino students to support their sustainability and expansion.

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