



Contact: [Media@EdExcelencia.org](mailto:Media@EdExcelencia.org)

## **Trendsetting Institutions Earn the Seal of *Excelencia* for Going Beyond Enrollment to Intentionally Serve Latino, and All, Students**

### *Excelencia in Education Certifies 17 Colleges and Universities That Detail Efforts to Become Learning Environments Where Latino Students Thrive*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 1, 2024)** – *Excelencia* in Education announced today 17 colleges and universities have earned the prestigious [Seal of \*Excelencia\*](#) in 2024. The Seal is a national certification for institutions that strive to go beyond enrollment and more intentionally serve Latino students. This year marks the organization’s 20th year of service to accelerate Latino student success in higher education.

In 2018, *Excelencia* introduced the Seal of *Excelencia* to certify trendsetting colleges and universities for their efforts to become learning environments where Latino, and all, students thrive. The [Seal of \*Excelencia\* framework](#) represents a rigorous assessment of certified institutions’ intentionality and impact in improving outcomes such as retention, financial support, and degree completion for Latino students by aligning efforts across data, practice, and leadership. Seal certification remains valid for three years, after which institutions have the opportunity to recertify progress.

Higher education, business, philanthropy, and government leaders in *Excelencia*’s community of common cause convened in Washington, D.C., for the announcement of eight institutions that earned the Seal of *Excelencia* for the first time and nine that earned recertification. It was part of the organization’s National Policy Forum, focused on advancing policies to accelerate Latinos’ degree attainment and strengthen our country’s civic leadership and workforce. These 17 Seal-certified institutions exemplify the kinds of programs and practices that inform good policy.

“The colleges and universities that earn the Seal of *Excelencia* lead the charge in meeting our nation’s degree attainment goals,” said Deborah Santiago, co-founder and CEO of *Excelencia* in Education. “They demonstrate commitment to Latino student success through impact and ongoing self-assessment.”

This year’s cohort of newly certified and recertified institutions belongs to a community of 46 colleges and universities that have earned the Seal. Together, they represent less than 1% of all institutions but enroll 17% and graduate 19% of all Latino students nationwide.

The eight newly certified Seal of *Excelencia* institutions are:

- **California State University, East Bay (CA)**
- **California State University, San Bernardino (CA)**
- **California State University San Marcos (CA)**
- **Cerritos College (CA)**
- **Hartnell College (CA)**
- **Pima Community College (AZ)**
- **San Francisco State University (CA)**
- **Sul Ross State University (TX)**

The nine recertified Seal of *Excelencia* institutions are:

- **California State University, Fresno (CA)**
- **California State University, Fullerton (CA)**
- **Miami Dade College (FL)**
- **San Diego State University (CA)**
- **The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (TX)**
- **University of California, Merced (CA)**
- **University of California, Riverside (CA)**
- **University of Central Florida (FL)**
- **Wilbur Wright College (IL)**

“Today, we’re moving toward opportunity and success for more of our Latino students,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “That’s thanks to the leadership and staff at *Excelencia* in Education. For twenty years, you’ve shown that when we do the hard work, when we’re relentless in our care for the seed of an idea, we can and will grow success for Latino students in higher education. Congratulations to all of the honorees – I really cannot wait to see where we’ll go together next.”

Institutions in *Excelencia*’s national network of [Presidents for Latino Student Success \(P4LSS\)](#) have committed to becoming learning environments where Latino, and all, students thrive, and are eligible to apply for the Seal. To earn the Seal of *Excelencia*, they must demonstrate:

- An intentional, institutional focus on advancing Latino student success by aligning data and practice;
- Deliberate and ongoing assessment to identify and implement strategies that improve Latino student achievement;
- Leadership commitment to continue transforming into an environment where Latino students thrive; and,
- A long-term and unwavering commitment to intentionally SERVE Latino, and all, students.

“Students and families as well as leaders in philanthropy, business, and government look to colleges and universities that earned the Seal of *Excelencia* when making their institutional choices,” said Sarita Brown, co-founder and president of *Excelencia* in Education. “*Excelencia* is proud to partner with institutions ensuring America’s bright future by advancing the talents of the Latino community.”

Learn more about the institutions that earned the Seal of *Excelencia* certification and recertification this year: [EdExcelencia.org/seal/seal-excelencia-certified-institutions](https://EdExcelencia.org/seal/seal-excelencia-certified-institutions)

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### **About *Excelencia* in Education**

Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* in Education leads a national network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to tap the talents of the Latino community and address the U.S. economy's needs for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leaders. With this network, *Excelencia* accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, informing educational policies with a Latino lens, and advancing evidence-based practices. In 2024, *Excelencia* marks 20 years of commitment to Latino student success. For more information, visit: [EdExcelencia.org](https://EdExcelencia.org)