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ENSURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

HELPING OR HINDERING?

STATE POLICIES & LATINO
COLLEGE COMPLETION



FEBRUARY 25, 2015
SUMMARY FOR DISCUSSION

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This is an Executive Summary of an upcoming policy brief for discussion at a roundtable held February 25, 2015 on Capitol Hill. The final version of this policy brief will be released in March 2015.



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* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership. For more information, visit: www.EdExcelencia.org.

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OVERVIEW

Supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation, *Excelencia* in Education audited public policy in three states – California, Colorado and Texas – to consider their potential impact on closing equity gaps in college completion for Latinos. While the policies selected for study do not specifically target Latinos, analysis show certain policies and strategies can increase Latinos’ access and retention to degree completion.

The state audits build on findings in previous research on policies and practices that increase student retention to completion by examining them through a lens that focuses on the Latino student profile.

Excelencia in Education has worked with partners in California, Colorado, and Texas for several years as part of our national initiative, Ensuring America’s

Future by Increasing Latino College Completion. This audit of state policies that may help or hinder Latino college completion benefitted from input from the partners who lead efforts to improve state policy in postsecondary education to increase the degree attainment of Latinos and all others in their states. Please find information about these partners at the end of this summary.

CALIFORNIA	COLORADO	TEXAS
State Ranking	State Ranking	State Ranking
CA had the largest Latino population in the US	CO had the 8th largest Latino population in the US	TX had the 2nd largest Latino population in the US
Latino Population	Latino Population	Latino Population
K-12 Population – 51%	K-12 Population – 30%	K-12 Population – 48%
State Population – 38%	State Population – 21%	State Population – 38%
Median Age	Median Age	Median Age
Latino – 27	Latino – 26	Latino – 27
White – 44	White – 40	White – 41
Degree Attainment	Degree Attainment	Degree Attainment
Latino – 16%	Latino – 18%	Latino – 16%
Total – 38%	Total – 44%	Total – 32%

From *Latino College Completion: United States* www.edexcelencia.org/research/college-completion/united-states

To complete the audit, *Excelencia* in Education will hold a Capitol Hill Roundtable in Washington, DC on February 25, 2015. The following analysis will serve as the basis for the discussion with

Representative Jared Polis (CO), representatives of the state educational partners, national educational and Latino advocacy organizations and congressional staff.



CALIFORNIA

POLICIES THAT MAY HELP

In California, there are policies in place that span the higher education pipeline to help increase higher education access and completion for Latinos. These policies range from college advising at the high school level, funding to provide increased student services at the beginning of a student's higher education journey, transfer reform from 2-year to 4-year institutions, and in-state tuition for undocumented students.

- **College preparation activities** – School-based college readiness counseling ensures students receive individualized review of their education and career goals.
- **Student support services funds for community colleges** – Provide student orientation and education planning services, and require institutions to post a student success scorecard on progress in improving student completion rates.
- **Transfer reform** – Simplifies the transfer pathway between community colleges (where 68% of Latinos are enrolled) and colleges/universities.
- **In-state tuition for undocumented students** – Provides students an opportunity to continue their education at a more reasonable cost.

POLICIES THAT MAY HINDER

It is important to also provide information about public policies that serve as a hindrance to Latinos and their access to and success in higher education. These policies include a lack of a centralized database for higher education data, decreased state support of higher education, which results in increased college costs and reduced resources for institutions to meet with the increased enrollment numbers, and a perception that state institutions cannot be overt about providing services to Latino students.

- **Lack of a centralized postsecondary education database with ease of access for institutions and general public** – As Latino representation in higher education is increasing these data can inform policy to improve student outcomes.
- **Decreased state support of higher education** – Increased college costs and limited financial aid result in low-income students being hit the hardest.
- **“Master Plan” eligibility limits** – Student access has been reduced at a time when student applications are increasing, resulting in a buildup of students at institutions unable to enroll all eligible students due to lack of space and resources.
- **Lack of support for race conscious efforts** – Limitation of using race/ethnicity has led to a perception that institutions cannot be inclusive and intentional about serving Latino students.

POLICIES TO REEXAMINE

- Policies that improve the delivery of remedial education, where many Latinos are lost, such as those that help course redesign and accelerate progress through remedial education.
- Policies on A-G completion rates and their impact on Latino student preparation.
- Transfer legislation and the development of a clear pathway into the University of California that guarantees students a spot.

COLORADO



POLICIES THAT MAY HELP

In Colorado, there are policies in place that span the higher education pipeline, to help increase higher education access and completion for Latinos. These policies range from college preparation activities at the high school level, developing alternative methods of addressing remediation issues, providing in-state tuition for undocumented students and the development of performance measures for higher education for increased transparency to gauge how well students are being served.

- **College preparation activities** – Increased numbers of counselors at high schools with high dropout rates to improve their graduation rates and college enrollment.
- **Alternatives to remediation education** – Allow students to enroll in credit bearing courses while in remedial courses, resulting in increased progress towards degree.
- **In-state tuition for undocumented students** – Provides students an opportunity to continue their education at a more reasonable cost

POLICIES THAT MAY HINDER

While it is important to also provide information about public policies that serve as a hindrance to Latinos and their access to and success in higher education, Colorado's main issue is a scarcity of programs that have been developed to intentionally serve Latino students and their access and success in higher education.

- **Lack of Latino-specific programs** – Scarcity of programs developed to intentionally serve Latino students and their access and success in higher education.
- **Negotiated performance contracts** – Institutions enter into negotiated performance contracts with the state legislature or its appointed representative body in exchange for state funding, but decreases in overall funding may limit effectiveness.

POLICIES TO REEXAMINE

- Funding policies for institutions of higher education that do not recognize the added effort by institutions enrolling a large concentration of Latinos—Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).



TEXAS

POLICIES THAT MAY HELP

Within Texas, there are policies in place that span the higher education pipeline, to help increase higher education access and completion for Latinos. These policies range from the “Closing the Gaps” initiative, numerous P-16 programs that provide curriculum alignment and college advising, financial support for students attending public institutions in the state, and providing in-state tuition for undocumented students.

- **P-16 Curriculum Alignment** – Programs developed to assist students enrolling and completing a higher education credential via partnerships along P-16 pipeline.
- **In-state tuition for undocumented students** – Provides students an opportunity to continue their education at a more reasonable cost
- **TEXAS (Towards Excellence, Access and Success) Grant** – Financial support for students attending public institution in the state

POLICIES THAT MAY HINDER

It is important to also provide information about public policies that serve as a hindrance to Latinos and their access to and success in higher education. These policies include a less rigorous high school graduation plan, an percentage plan for higher education admissions, decreased state support of higher education, which results in increased college costs and reduced resources for institutions to meet with the increased enrollment numbers, and performance funding for higher education solely tied to graduation rates.

- **Reduced rigor in high school curriculum** – Less rigorous plan created for students interested in career and technical fields. Potentially negative impact on students should they change their minds and decide to pursue a postsecondary credential.
- **Decreased state funding of higher education** – Increased college costs due to tuition deregulation result in low-income students being hit the hardest.

POLICIES TO REEXAMINE

- **Closing the Gaps by 2015 Initiative** – Funding of programs designed to help attract and retain students, especially those who have been historically underserved to close the gaps in student participation, success, excellence and research.
- **Top 10 percent plan** – Race-neutral college admissions plan that has resulted in fewer students of color admitted to flagship institutions, outside of the top 10 percent.
- **Performance funding** (not yet passed) – Little discussion on how to fairly assess institutional performance for institutions that enroll high numbers of post-traditional students (first generation, low-income, older, employed full-time).

The Campaign for College Opportunity is focused on a single mission: to ensure that the next generation of California students has the chance to attend college and succeed in order to keep our workforce and economy strong.
(www.collegecampaign.org)



Educate Texas is a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas focused on a common goal: Improving the public education system so that every Texas student is prepared for success in school, in the workforce, and in life.
(www.edtx.org)



Metropolitan State University of Denver provides students with a transformative academic experience and serves the community as a courageous change agent and a gateway to opportunity. The University's broad access, affordable tuition, quality academic experience and excellent outcomes add up to a high-value education.
(www.msudenver.edu)



Colorado Coalition for the Educational Advancement of Latinos (CoCEAL) is a coalition of post-secondary and professional educators devoted to the educational success of the state's Latino/Hispanic population. (www.cocel.org)



Analysis and Roundtable are part of *Excelencia* in Education's national initiative, **Ensuring America's Future by Increasing Latino College Completion**. The initiative started in 2010 by linking *Excelencia*'s mission and actions with key policy interests of selected national foundations and political leaders who shared a commitment to Latino student success in higher education. In 2015, Ensuring America's Future is using national and state data and actions to emphasize the U.S. must increase Latino higher educational attainment levels to meet the country's civic and workforce needs.



For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the world for college degree attainment, Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million more degrees by 2020. Learn more by visiting www.edexcelencia.org/research/college-completion/united-states



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