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Philanthropists Invest in *Excelencia* in Education with Landmark Multimillion-Dollar Grant

New Investment Supports Excelencia's Core Strategies to Accelerate Latino Student Success

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 16, 2021) – *Excelencia* in Education, the nation's premier authority on accelerating Latino student success in higher education, received a multimillion-dollar grant by philanthropists MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett [announced](#) yesterday. *Excelencia's* selection was based on "a data-driven approach to identifying organizations with strong leadership teams and results." The \$10 million gift is the largest in the organization's 17-year history.

As evidence of *Excelencia's* strong leadership network of common cause, 13 of the 29 colleges and universities that also received investments are part of *Excelencia's* Presidents for Latino Student Success. They are:

- Amarillo College
- California State University, Channel Islands [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- California State University, Fullerton
- California State University, Northridge
- El Paso Community College [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- Florida International University [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- Long Beach City College [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- San Antonio College
- University of California, Merced
- University of Central Florida
- University of Illinois Chicago [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- University of Texas at San Antonio [Seal of *Excelencia* certified]
- University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley

In addition to supporting our network, this new investment provides vital funding for *Excelencia* to double down on its leadership strategy in three core areas:

1. Conducting research using a Latino lens to inform and compel action.
2. Promoting what works for Latino student success through evidence-based practices.
3. Catalyzing institutional transformation to intentionally serve Latino students.

Coming out of the pandemic, which has disproportionately negatively impacted the Latino community, and in response to national calls for racial equity in education, *Excelencia* underscores the sense of urgency to act. Now is the time to increase the number of doctors, engineers, educators, community leaders, and other professionals that must come from the young and growing Latino population to meet the nation's future needs.

"*Excelencia* is Ensuring America's Future and engaging institutions whose leaders are ready to transform to intentionally SERVE Latino students," said Sarita Brown, *Excelencia* Co-founder and President. "We are energized to receive a gift of this magnitude, honored to be among other committed higher education leaders, and ready to leverage this investment to build the necessary funding to propel our work at this critical time in our nation's recovery."

"We must shift from demography and geography to intentionality and impact and elevate what an institution can and must do to make sure their Latino students thrive." said Deborah Santiago, *Excelencia's* Co-founder and CEO. "This investment is a down payment on the momentum we are building strategically to transform higher education to serve our students."

Since its founding in 2004, *Excelencia* assumed a leadership role by producing action-oriented [research](#) on critical issues and opportunities to engage, enroll and graduate Latino students in higher education. Its national network, [Presidents for Latino Student Success](#), includes diverse college and university presidents and chancellors who commit to making their institutions learning environments where Latino students thrive. These institutions represent 4% of all U.S. colleges and universities, yet enroll 24% of all Latino students. More importantly, they graduate 35% of all Latino graduates nationwide.

Recognizing the need for higher education to be more effective in 2019, the organization introduced the [Seal of *Excelencia*](#), to certify institutions that demonstrate alignment across the three core areas of data, practice, and leadership to intentionally serve Latino students. To date, 14 institutions from across the nation have earned the Seal of *Excelencia*. The next cohort of institutions to earn the Seal of *Excelencia* will be announced in October 2021.

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:

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/>