



WHAT WORKS FOR LATINO
STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
COMPENDIUM

2020



EXCELENCIA IN EDUCATION ACCELERATES LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION BY LINKING RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE.

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS DEMONSTRATE THEIR BELIEF IN
THE ABILITIES AND TALENTS OF LATINO STUDENTS TO SUCCEED
IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY SUPPORTING
THE 2020 EXAMPLES OF *EXCELENCIA*

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FOREWORD

We founded *Excelencia* in Education in 2004 with a mission of accelerating Latino student success in higher education. Today, in the middle of a health pandemic and continued epidemic of systemic inequalities, with our country in turmoil, this mission is as pertinent and compelling as when we began.

While all communities need to increase college degree completion, Latinos must accelerate degree completion to close equity gaps in degree attainment. To accelerate degree completion, colleges and universities need to implement evidence-based programs and strategies to increase the flow of Latino talent to and through their institutions and into the workforce and civic leadership. Using this approach engages America's fast-growing Latino student population—even in this time of uncertainty that has disproportionately affected our communities of color.

Through Examples of *Excelencia*—the only national effort to bring attention to evidence-based efforts that work for Latinos in higher education—we have recognized more than 300 programs over the last 15 years and invested close to \$2 million through our own fundraising to support and catalyze their successful efforts so that more Latino students can thrive and succeed. Institutional programs, such as those we recognize in Examples, are core to the institutional transformation we know is needed to ensure colleges, universities, and communities are places where Latino and other post-traditional students can thrive.

The 2020 Examples of *Excelencia* are now part of the *Excelencia* community—a national network of Latino student success advocates transforming institutions to more intentionally serve students and fulfill the social contract for their success. This compendium serves as a guide to connect educational leaders who are creating, leading, and building programs to better serve Latino students across the country.

We hope you will continue to share what is working and learn from others who are intentionally **SERVING** Latinos. Together we will ensure America's future is strong.



Sarita E. Brown
President



Deborah A. Santiago
CEO

WHAT THIS YEAR'S FINALISTS TELL US

This year's recognized programs serve Latino students effectively. We identified five common themes across their efforts to improve Latino student success.

1. Academic advising

Intrusive academic advising across primary, secondary, and postsecondary education allows Latino and other students to receive tailored academic guidance ensuring academic success. Moreover, academic advising during secondary education is crucial in accelerating pathways towards post-secondary education and college graduation. This is particularly impactful for Latino students who are predominantly first-generation college students.

2. Career readiness

Programming that encompasses career-building for Latino students is crucial as our nation looks to build a highly-skilled, competitive workforce with strong civic leadership. While programming efforts toward college completion are necessary, Latino students must also be given tools to become competent employees and leaders in their respective professional fields as they gear towards college completion. This year's programs provide career counseling, professional development opportunities, postbaccalaureate preparation, and experiential learning opportunities for students.

3. Mentoring

Whether done through peers, faculty, program alumni, or others, mentorship offers Latino students a trusted individual who can help them successfully navigate higher education. Through mentorship, Latino students have a direct line of access to an individual who can help solve questions around the higher education experience, and in turn, ensure a sense of support and belonging. This is especially important as students encounter challenges during their college experience and beyond.

4. Financial aid assistance

For Latino students, college affordability is one of the most important deciding factors behind college attendance. Financial aid assistance, specifically, can make college affordable for Latino students, and in turn, allow for higher education to become a reality. The programs outlined in this year's compendium provide a variety of financial aid assistance for students including scholarship support, tuition assistance, and paid experiential learning opportunities.

5. Culturally responsive

Culturally responsive programming allows for Latino students to bring their authentic selves as they navigate higher education. By providing an environment that is welcoming, supportive, and understanding, Latino students are allowed to express their strengths and needs as they navigate the challenges of the college experience. This year's programs cite culturally relevant pedagogy in their everyday work with Latino students including bilingual, familial programming, community accessibility in services offered, and strengthening the bilingual abilities of students firsthand to better communicate in servicing their communities.

SHARING WHAT WORKS

Excelencia in Education remains committed to bringing attention to programs that serve Latino students in higher education. Since 2005, *Excelencia* has identified over 300 evidence-based programs increasing Latino student success through Examples of *Excelencia*. The following describes the annual campaign process for Examples of *Excelencia*:

- Every year, Examples of *Excelencia* begins with a national call for nominations encouraging individuals to share initiatives accelerating Latino student success in higher education. This year we received 226 nominations from 30 states, including DC, and Puerto Rico.
- Nominated programs are asked to submit their program profiles and *Excelencia* staff reviews and selects a set of finalists—20 this year.
- The profiles of finalists are then forwarded to our national selection committee representing leaders with diverse backgrounds in education, public policy, philanthropy, and the workforce. The committee selects one Example of *Excelencia* in each of four categories: associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and community-based organizations.

The programs featured in our annual compendium, *What Works for Latinos in Higher Education*, demonstrate intentional, innovative, and effective practices serving Latino and other post-traditional students. These programs are sustained by evidence of effectiveness and provide constructive practices and program design for others looking to intentionally serve Latino students in colleges and communities throughout the country.

As such, this year's recognized programs are national exemplars advancing Latino student success that can be leveraged. With the belief that good policy is informed by good practice, *Excelencia* brings national attention to these program's efforts through a national audience of funders, policymakers, and partner organizations. As the fastest growing ethnic population in the country, it is crucial to sustain current programmatic efforts making a positive impact on Latino student success.

To learn more about these and other evidence-based practices that effectively serve Latino students, visit our Growing What Works Database—the only national online, searchable database to promote effective institutional practices for Latino students: <https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database>.

2020 EXAMPLES OF EXCELENCIA SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Each year, *Excelencia* convenes a group of knowledgeable partners from community, education, and philanthropy to review and select the four Examples of *Excelencia* from finalist programs identified. *Excelencia* is grateful to the following members of the 2020 Examples of *Excelencia* selection committee:

SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MEMBER	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
José Cabrales	Program Director of Student Success	American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
Alex Chough	Vice President for Government Relations	National Council for Community & Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
Chris Coxon	Managing Director	Educate Texas
Audrey Dow	Senior Vice President	The Campaign for College Opportunity
Jeannie Kim-Han	Associate Vice Chancellor, Grants & Economic Development	Riverside Community College District
Patrick Lane	Vice President for Policy Analysis and Research	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
Estela López	Senior Associate	<i>Excelencia</i> in Education
Leticia López	Program Manager of Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Initiatives	San Diego Mesa College
Tia McNair	Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Student Success	Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
Rafael Pasillas	Director of Consulting Programs	The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL)
Rebecca Villareal	Director of Education Grantmaking	Ascendium Education Group

HOW WE EVALUATE PROGRAMS FOR LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

Throughout this compendium we share information on the programs selected as finalists for 2020 and additional programs recognized as Programs to Watch. Programs selected as finalists had effective profiles based on the following components:

MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is meeting a defined need related to serving Latino students.
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals are related to program practices and are realistic, attainable, and measurable.
NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need or challenges students face is articulated. • Program has shown growth over time to better serve students.
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices are aligned to the need and goals. • Practices show indicators of cultural competency and employ elements that are proven effective in serving Latino students.
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding model is sustainable and diversified. • Indicated that there were plans for future funding.
LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated leadership and staff with clear roles that support Latino student success.
EVIDENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics are aligned with stated goals. • Outcomes show progress/achievement in reaching goals to support Latino students in given areas. • Data show baselines and comparisons between cohorts and others. • Data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity to highlight the status of Latino students.

2020 EXAMPLES OF EXCELENCIA

ASSOCIATE CATEGORY

EXAMPLE:

Mi Casa Es Su Casa

Lone Star College-North Harris — Houston, TX

FINALISTS:

AlamoADVISE

Alamo Colleges District — San Antonio, TX

Ambiciones

Howard Community College — Columbia, MD

San Antonio College Honors Academy Program

San Antonio College — San Antonio, TX

School of Science STEM Research Institute

Miami Dade College — Miami, FL

The Math Tutorial Lab

Santa Barbara City College — Santa Barbara, CA

BACCALAUREATE CATEGORY

EXAMPLE:

Arizona's Science, Engineering and Math Scholars (ASEMS) Program

University of Arizona — Tucson, AZ

FINALISTS:

Access College & Excel (ACE) Scholar Program

The University of Texas at San Antonio — San Antonio, TX

Center for Educational Partnerships

California State University, Fullerton — Fullerton, CA

Compact Scholars Program

San Diego State University — San Diego, CA

Personalized Achievement Contract (PACT) Program

Mercy College — Dobbs Ferry, NY

UAlbany Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

University at Albany, State University of New York — Albany, NY

2020 EXAMPLES OF EXCELENCIA

GRADUATE CATEGORY

EXAMPLE:

Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI)

Boston College School of Social Work — Chestnut Hill, MA

FINALISTS:

Masters in School Psychology

The University of Texas at San Antonio — San Antonio, TX

Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC)

University of California, Irvine — Irvine, CA

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION CATEGORY

EXAMPLE:

Scholar Program

Generation Hope — Washington, DC

FINALISTS:

College Success Program

Hyde Square Task Force, Inc. — Jamaica Plain, MA

GRADCafé

Project GRAD Houston — Houston, TX

Noble College Access and Success Program

Noble Network of Charter Schools — Chicago, IL

UTA University Crossroads

The University of Texas at Arlington — Dallas, TX

Mi Casa Es Su Casa

Lone Star College-North Harris
Houston, TX

Summary: Mi Casa Es Su Casa connects Hispanic community college students to the local campus community, acclimates them to the rigors of academic life, helps them succeed for the duration of their college career, and prepares them to achieve in college and beyond.

Description: Established in 2016, Mi Casa Es Su Casa was designed to meet the needs of a growing Hispanic student population at Lone Star College. From Fall 2012 to Fall 2016, Hispanic enrollment rose 15%; comprising 50% of all enrolled students.

Mi Casa's goal is to increase the persistence, graduation, and transfer rate of Hispanic students on campus.

Practices: To meet its goal, Mi Casa provides the following 3 initiatives:

- 1) iMALLs (Information Technology Enhanced Multidisciplinary Academic Learning Lounges) - a collection of collaborative and active learning environments that increase student engagement while enhancing students' academic, cognitive, and non-cognitive soft skills. In the 2018-2019 academic year, iMALLs served 8,610 students.
- 2) CAST (Center for Academic Success and Transition) provides tutoring, career counseling, and transfer/graduation support services. 60% of participating students earned a "C" or above in their co-requisite math classes compared to only 38% of non-participating students.
- 3) MATCH (Meaningfully Aligned Targeted Courses for Hispanic Students) helps ensure students are receiving best-fit instruction based on proven methods and needs. In the 2018-2019 academic year, MATCH curriculum and professional development activities served 4,032 students. In Fall 2019, 72% of participating students specifically enrolled in Puente classes (part of MATCH curriculum) earned a "C" or above in their classes compared to only 65% of non-participating students.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased fall-to-fall persistence:** In Fall 2019, **68%** of Latino program participants persisted in fall from first to second year compared to the institutional average of **50%** and overall program average of **60%**.
- **Increased 3-year transfer:** Of Mi Casa's Fall 2016 cohort, **12%** of Latino program participants transferred within 3 years compared to the institutional average of **6%**.
- **Increased 3-year graduation:** Of Mi Casa's Fall 2016 cohort, **20%** of Latino program participants graduated within 3 years compared to the institutional average of **7%** and overall program average of **17%**.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/mi-casa-es-su-casa>

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AlamoADVISE

Alamo Colleges District

San Antonio, TX

Summary: AlamoADVISE provides community college students, a significant number who are Latino, with a personalized academic/career pathway toward graduation through the support of a certified advisor.

Description: Established in 2014, AlamoADVISE was designed in response to several challenges encountered by Alamo College District students: a 21% transfer rate, completion time of 4.6 years, and average of 92 credit hours at degree completion.

AlamoADVISE's goal is to close academic and completion gaps for underrepresented students.

Practices: Through an intrusive, intentional case management model, AlamoADVISE caseloads all students with a certified advisor who helps students formalize an academic plan, create a mission statement, and requires students to meet with them at 15, 30, and 45-hour touchpoints. These designated touchpoints allow the advisor to monitor progress, identify challenges, and design strategies to help students maintain momentum to achieve the goals of completion and transfer/employment. Advisors are trained in holistic advising to support individual student needs, including developing individual success plans and implementing strategies to support Latino students.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased student credential completion:** In academic year 2017-2018, **26%** of program participants graduated within 4 years in comparison to only **9%** of program participants in 2005-2006.
- **Decreased student credential completion time:** Time to degree completion decreased from **4.6** to **3.9** years. In 2018, there was also a reduction in excessive semester credit hours from **92** to **82** hours, and a decrease to **67.5** hours for Native students.
- **Increased student transfer cost savings:** Transfer Advising Guides (TAGs) are used by advisors to ensure applicability of courses for transfer. To date, 1,276 TAGs have been built with an **average savings of \$8,802** at public and **\$52,767** at private universities for students.
- **Advisor caseload of 99%:** A caseload rate of at least **99%** has been attained each semester across all 5 colleges in the Alamo Colleges District. Equity data confirms that the current percentage of Latino students assigned to an advisor matches the of Latino students enrolled in the Alamo Colleges District.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/alamoadvise>

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Ambiciones

Howard Community College
Columbia, MD

Summary: Ambiciones provides pathways to college completion for Latino students by helping high school students and their families navigate the Howard Community College (HCC) entrance process.

Description: Established in 2015, Ambiciones was designed to meet the growing Latino student enrollment at HCC.

Ambiciones aims to increase the retention rates of first-year students and overall graduation/transfer rates.



Practices: Ambiciones primarily works in five county high schools with significant Latino populations to create a supportive, seamless pipeline for high school seniors and families applying to HCC. The program provides college presentations to Howard County Public Schools, meets individually with families, hosts an on-campus senior family night entirely in Spanish, and triages incoming HCC students over the summer. In partnership with Howard County Public Schools, Ambiciones provides JumpStart, a dual enrollment program that covers full tuition, books, and fees for low-income, Latino high school students to complete up to 60 credits towards a college degree. Program outreach includes Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and undocumented students. Once students enroll at HCC, Ambiciones provides intrusive advising that ensures at least 75% of program participants earn a 2.00 GPA each term to maintain good academic standing. In addition, Ambiciones provides programming and events on campus to build community among Latino students and raise awareness about the Latino student population.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased first-year retention:** Ambiciones participants had a fall 2018 to fall 2019 retention rate of **64%** compared to **63%** for non-participating, first-time HCC Latino students, and **51%** of all HCC Latino students. From fall 2018 to spring 2019, program participants persisted at a rate of **83%** compared to **79%** for non-participating, first-time HCC Latino students, and **67%** for all HCC Latino students.
- **Increased graduation and transfer rates:** In fiscal year 2019, **16** students completed an associate degree and/or a certificate, with **2** students transferring to a four-year institution.
- **Increased academic standing:** In fall 2018, **67%** of program participants were in Good Academic Standing (term GPA of 2.0 or above) compared to **56%** of non-participating, first-time HCC Latino students, and **63%** of all HCC Latino students.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/ambiciones>

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San Antonio College Honors Academy Program

San Antonio College
San Antonio, TX

Summary: The San Antonio College Honors Academy Program provides underserved community college students—a majority of whom are Latino—honors-designated core courses, comprehensive academic services, one-on-one guidance by dedicated professors/advisors, scholarship and transfer support.

Description: Established in 2012, the Academy was founded to replace the former honors program that served just a few dozen students. In 2012, the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund awarded a 3-year grant to support a new focus on recruiting a larger, more diverse population of students, particularly those in neighboring inner-city, at-risk Title I/III schools which are 60-90% Latino.

The Honors Academy Program seeks to increase the number of underserved students who receive an associate degree and transfer to a four-year university.

Practices: The Academy offers specialized honors curriculum centered on identity, communication, teamwork, marketable skills, critical thinking, and research. Participants receive intrusive advising/mentoring that emphasizes clear pathways to graduation/transfer and are offered workshops on transfer admissions, career choice, stress/time management, scholarships, and internships. Aside from taking honors-designated core subject courses to earn honors course equivalencies, students can complete semester-long experiential learning opportunities. Participants have access to an Honors Center with study space, 20 computers, a printer, lounge area, kitchenette, and faculty offices for advising and engagement. The Academy also offers a Strategies for Success course emphasizing time management, grit, fluid intelligence, and goal setting for participants whose GPA falls below 3.25.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased 3-year graduation:** Of the Academy's Fall 2016 cohort, **42%** of program participants graduated in 3 years compared to only **28%** of non-program participants. Of the Academy's Fall 2015 cohort, **49%** of program participants graduated in 3 years compared to only **29%** of non-program participants.
- **Increased 6-year transfer:** Of the Academy's Fall 2013 cohort, **46%** of program participants transferred within 6 years compared to the institutional average of **30%**. Of the Academy's Fall 2012 cohort, **73%** of program participants transferred within 6 years compared to the institutional average of **30%**.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/san-antonio-college-honors-academy-program>

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School of Science STEM Research Institute

Miami Dade College

Miami, FL

Summary: The School of Science STEM Research Institute provides Hispanic and other underrepresented community college STEM students high-quality, early research experiences to help them acquire knowledge and skills important to their academic success and competitiveness in the STEM workforce of the 21st century.



Description: Established in 2012, the Institute began as a pilot of undergraduate research. Aware that activities promoting deeper exposure to STEM have marked impacts on student success and retention, the Institute aimed to bring undergraduate research to the primarily Hispanic population of students at Miami Dade College (MDC).

The Institute seeks to increase persistence in STEM and attainment of STEM degrees among underrepresented students.

Practices: The School of Science STEM Research Institute requires students to complete 240 hours of research, attend professional skills workshops, and provide various deliverables. Participants typically engage in 10 to 12 weeks of paid, high level, quality research experiences with faculty mentors and peers in interdisciplinary teams during the summer or as part of a year-round project. Program participants may choose to receive mentorship from MDC faculty or faculty at one of MDC's partner Research I universities to carry out individual research projects.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased fall-to-fall persistence:** In the past three years, **94%** of program participants have persisted annually fall-to-fall compared to **78%** of non-participant STEM students.
- **Increased 3-year graduation:** In the past three years, **68%** of participants graduated within 3 years compared to only **28%** of non-participant STEM majors and **22%** of non-STEM students at MDC. As of 2019, participants took an average of **2.8 years** to graduate with an associate degree compared to **3.1 years** for non-participant STEM students.
- **Increased GPA:** As of 2019, students accomplished an average **3.6 GPA** compared to the average **3.2 GPA** of non-participant STEM students.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/school-science-stem-research-institute>

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The Math Tutorial Lab

Santa Barbara City College
Santa Barbara, CA

Summary: The Math Tutorial Lab provides underrepresented community college students individual, culturally relevant tutoring for all math and statistics courses through faculty and peer tutors to help students achieve their academic goals.

Description: Redesigned in 2017, The Math Tutorial Lab was designed to meet the needs of students following the implementation of CA Assembly Bill (AB) 705. AB 705 is a California law that enforces the elimination of placement exams and remedial college level classes by encouraging colleges to provide support that helps students successfully complete transfer-level coursework in English and math.

The Lab seeks to bridge the equity STEM gap that exists between Santa Barbara Community College Latinx students and their peers.

Practices: The Math Tutorial Lab offers a welcoming, safe, and responsive physical and study space for students to receive tutoring in math and statistics. Tutors and faculty of color who serve in the Lab are intentionally recruited to reflect campus student demographics and receive ongoing cultural training to create a sense of belonging for students of color in STEM. Tutors are available before and after class to provide student accessibility and are available to all students who participate in math courses on campus.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased passing rates:** As of Fall 2019, Latino program participants passed **23%** more of their math courses at the end of the semester when compared to Latino non-participants. In contrast, only **19%** more of non-Latino participants passed their math courses at the end of the semester when compared to non-participants.
- **Increased tutoring touchpoints:** From Fall 2016 to 2019, the Lab experienced an increase in student logins per semester from 5,942 logins to 11,002. **66%** of Latino program participants who had 5 or more visits to the Lab passed their math courses at the end of the semester compared to only **43%** for Latino non-program participants.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/math-tutorial-lab>

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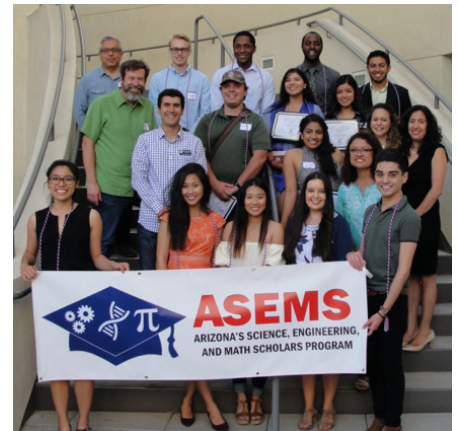
Arizona's Science, Engineering and Math Scholars (ASEMS) Program

University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

Summary: Arizona's Science, Engineering and Math Scholars (ASEMS) Program provides support services toward graduation for underrepresented, majority Latino, undergraduate STEM majors.

Description: Established in 2011, ASEMS was first designed as a pilot program to increase persistence and graduation rates of first-generation and low-income STEM students. ASEMS' goals are to retain promising STEM students from underserved backgrounds, support students in forming a scientist or engineer identity through early STEM career exploration, develop students' communication skills and confidence needed to build a professional STEM network, and teach students how to be academically and professionally competitive in STEM fields.

Practices: ASEMS offers participants academic and personal support through student support specialists, peer and faculty mentors who provide one-on-one meetings and cohort-based research courses. Mentors individualize academic mentoring, career advising, and tutoring to meet Latino students at their academic point of development, recognize their unique circumstances and validate their cultural backgrounds, creating a sense of belonging and resiliency. ASEMS provides participants early research experience by offering their research readiness course which introduces students to research, coaches them to compete for 25 research positions, and includes shadowing experiences. Diverse professionals, faculty, and graduate students serve as guest speakers and mentors.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased first year retention:** Over the past four cohorts, participants have accomplished a combined one-year freshman retention rate of **92%** compared to **82%** for all University of Arizona (UA) STEM freshmen. Latino participants have accomplished a one-year freshman retention rate of **92%** compared to **80%** for all UA Latino STEM freshmen.
- **Increased STEM retention:** Of Fall 2015 first-time, Latino freshmen, **93%** were retained to their fourth year and **81%** remained in STEM majors.
- **STEM Identity Formation:** After taking the Research Readiness course, **87%** of students indicated it was likely or extremely likely they would apply to an undergraduate research program. After taking the Professionalism in STEM Course, **95%** of students considered applying to graduate or professional school.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/arizonas-science-engineering-and-math-scholars>

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Access College & Excel (ACE) Scholar Program

The University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

Summary: The Access College & Excel (ACE) Program recruits and supports ambitious high school students from predominantly Latino, inner-city schools to successfully transition to college and obtain a bachelor's degree.

Description: Established in 1999, ACE was established as a core component of The University of Texas at San Antonio's (UTSA) Downtown Campus, which was built to provide greater access to an affordable, public four-year institution of higher education to the predominately underrepresented communities on the West and South sides of San Antonio. UTSA proposed a partnership with the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) to establish an innovative scholarship program to encourage high school seniors from a few specific high schools in the downtown San Antonio area to apply, attend college, and graduate with a bachelor's degree. ACE's goal is to ensure the academic success of students and learning of life skills that will help students be successful beyond college graduation.

Practices: ACE offers first time, first-generation freshmen from a low-socioeconomic bracket individual advising sessions, financial aid workshops, tutoring, mentoring, academic success coaching, opportunities for experiential learning, and a renewable scholarship during their first two years at UTSA. The program achieves high student contact through offering of the College Success Seminar 1202 course and connects participants to resources on campus. ACE recruits high school seniors from 14 high schools across five school districts.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased first year retention:** Of ACE's 2017-2018 cohort, **83%** of program participants were retained in their first year compared to **78%** of Latino, non-program participants.
- **Improved 6-year graduation:** Of ACE's 2013-2014 cohort, **46%** of program participants graduated within 6 years.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/access-college-and-excel-ace-program>

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Center for Educational Partnerships

California State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA

Summary: The Center for Educational Partnerships provides opportunities for Latino middle and high school students to successfully progress onto college and supports undergraduate students through postbaccalaureate preparation.



Description: Established in 2007, California State University, Fullerton's Division of Student Affairs created the department to coordinate three TRIO grants: GEAR UP, Upward Bound, and Talent Search.

The Educational Partnership's goals are to increase the postsecondary and postbaccalaureate expectations, options, and readiness of students and their families; improve graduation, postsecondary and postbaccalaureate enrollment rates; engage in active collaboration with community partners, educational institutions, and families through a multi-faceted approach to strengthen equitable access and supports; and develop learning opportunities for students that provide them skills and knowledge to become self-advocates and leaders in their communities.

Practices: The Center offers programming for 6th to 12th grade students through GEAR UP, Upward Bound, and the Talent Search. Undergraduates receive support through the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. The Center also leads campus efforts through four intersegmental partnerships and five initiatives with non-profit community-based organizations, local school districts, and community colleges to intentionally develop early interventions and practices that prepare students for a range of college and career options. All programs provided are culturally sensitive and recognize the need to engage Latinx families as a whole and provide bilingual services.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased postsecondary exposure:** In 2018-19, GEAR UP provided more than **7,000** hours of postsecondary exposure, college planning workshops to 2,016 tenth graders, and nearly **3,000** hours of tutoring. **91%** of students were knowledgeable about California A-G requirements and more than **80%** were confident in their knowledge about college entrance requirements.
- **Increased postsecondary enrollment:** Of 2019 graduating Upward Bound scholars, **97%** enrolled in an institution of postsecondary education immediately after high school graduation compared to **66%** of all 2019 California graduating high school students. Similarly, **85%** of Talent Search scholars in 2019 enrolled in an institution of postsecondary education immediately after high school graduation.
- **Increased postbaccalaureate enrollment:** In Fall 2018, **100%** of graduating McNair Scholars were accepted to and enrolled in graduate studies immediately following completion of their bachelor's. In 2018, **83%** of McNair Scholars in their first year of graduate school persisted to their second year.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/center-educational-partnerships>

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Compact Scholars Program

San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Summary: The Compact Scholars Program provides undergraduate students academic and social support, and the opportunity to cultivate a sense of identity in connection to their academic work and community.

Description: Established in 2006, Compact Scholars was designed as the postsecondary component of Compact for Success—a partnership between the Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) and San Diego State University to promote higher graduation rates for Sweetwater District students, a majority of whom are Latino. Compact for Success' goal is to eliminate the national achievement gap in Latino college completion.

Practices: Compact for Success offers undergraduate students first-year experiences, holistic intrusive academic advising, peer/faculty mentoring, and experiential learning including study abroad opportunities, undergraduate research, and service-learning. Program participants also have the opportunity to apply for scholarships which can help cover costs of experiential learning activities including internships, service learning, research and other creative activities.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased college access:** As of Fall 2019, **318** Latino students served had enrolled in college compared to only **84** students as of Fall 2006.
- **Increased retention:** As of 2019, one-year continuation rates for Latino program participants is **86%** compared to **84%** for Latino, non-program participants.
- **Increased 6-year graduation:** As of 2019, **69%** of Latino program participants graduated within 6 years compared to **65%** for Latino, non-program participants. In 2000, the six-year graduation rate for SUHSD Latino students at San Diego State University was only **38%**.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/compact-scholars-program>

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Personalized Achievement Contract (PACT) Program

Mercy College
Dobbs Ferry, NY

Summary: The Personalized Achievement Contract (PACT) Program provides undergraduate students—a majority of whom are Latino—a pathway towards graduation through mentoring provided during the length of a students' college career.

Description: Established in 2009, PACT was first designed as a pilot program to improve the retention and graduation rates for Mercy College's diverse student population. PACT's goal is to increase the retention and graduation rates of Latino students at Mercy College and close the achievement gap for these students.



Practices: PACT pairs participants with a professional mentor through the length of their college career to work together on topics essential to student success including choosing the right major, navigating requirements, registering for classes, tracking academic progress, career exploration, and financial literacy. Currently, PACT has 50 mentors who are selected based upon their ability to relate to current program participants. Mentors include Mercy College alumni, Spanish-speakers, first-generation college graduates, and individuals with experience in the field or major of participants.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased retention:** As of 2018, Latino, first-time in college, full-time students accomplished a retention rate of **77%**. Prior to PACT, Latino students had a retention rate of **60%**.
- **Increased 6-year graduation:** As of 2019, the 6-year graduation rate for Latino program students is **43%**. Prior to PACT, Latino students had a six-year graduation rate of **27%**.
- **Decreased achievement gap:** As of 2019, the achievement gap among graduation rates between Latino and white students stands at **6%**. Prior to PACT, the gap stood at **22%**.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcellencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/personalized-achievement-contract-pact-program>

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UAlbany Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

University at Albany, State University of New York
Albany, NY

Summary: The UAlbany Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provides disadvantaged undergraduate students, a significant number who are Latino, college access; academic support; and financial assistance to successfully persist and graduate.

Description: Established in 1968, UAlbany EOP was designed to increase college access for underrepresented students in New York State. EOP's goal is to ensure high retention, graduation rates, and academic performance for underrepresented students at UAlbany.



Practices: UAlbany EOP offers participants its Summer Bridge Program, a 5-week intensive experience that provides college readiness instruction (basic writing, reading, mathematics) and supportive services to participants, including ongoing academic counseling. Being aware that strong parental engagement is vital to Latino student success, EOP provides a variety of services to ensure families of Latino students understand the services their students receive. Letters to parents of EOP freshmen and all EOP meetings, events, and presentations are done in English and Spanish. EOP also receives numerous calls from Latino parents, of which 85% are from parents who want to ensure their child is well and adjusting. Three Latino EOP staffers receive and return 95% of calls to parents and even go as far as escorting participants to medical appointments when ill. In collaboration with campus Psychological and Counseling Services, Latino participants are also afforded bilingual mental health services in the EOP complex.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased retention:** Across 2018 - 2019, **97%** of Latino program participants were retained in their first year compared to the institutional average of **79%**.
- **Increased 6-year graduation:** Of EOP's Fall 2013 cohort, **68%** of Latino program participants graduated in six years compared to **61%** of Latino non-program participants.
- **Increased GPA:** As of Spring 2019, Latino program participants achieved an average **2.8 GPA** compared to **2.7** for Latino non-program participants.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/ualbany-educational-opportunity-program-eop>

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Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI)

Boston College School of Social Work
Chestnut Hill, MA

Summary: The Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI) trains and supports Latino, bilingual MSW and PhD students to transform how the social work profession works with Latinx communities in the United States.

Description: Established in 2013, LLI was designed to meet the needs of a growing Latinx population in the U.S. Currently, fewer than 5 percent of social workers in the U.S. are Latinx. Research shows that social work services that are language and ethnic concordant are the most beneficial for Latinx communities. However, the dismal number of Latinx social workers in the U.S. cannot meet the current needs of Latinx communities. As a result, many Latinx communities receive services from non-Latinx social workers who do not understand Latinx culture. LLI's goal is to increase the number of Latino social workers in the U.S. and develop social work leaders equipped to work effectively with the Latino community.

Practices: LLI offers its participants a cohort-based learning model emphasizing a paradigm of cultural capital among the Latinx community. Together, all LLI students take 8 master's in social work core classes in Spanish, allowing students to develop professional proficiency in Spanish required to work with Latinx communities and create an academic space in which the assets of Latinx culture can flourish. Students are also offered internship placements supervised by LLI alumni that allow students to work closely with Latinx communities and require them to use their bilingual background. Mentorship is key in the LLI model. Faculty and LLI advisors, who themselves are bilingual Latinxs and are often LLI alumni, serve as mentors to program participants.



OUTCOMES

- **100% career placement:** Of program graduates, **100%** have secured full-time positions and many are now in leadership positions informing practice and serving their community.
- **Robust Latinx MSW network:** LLI has established a network of **148** Latino alumni across 23 states that support current students as advisors and mentors.
- **Increased student recognition:** A substantial proportion of LLI participants have received competitive awards including the national Council of Social Work Education's Minority Fellowship. In just the last two years, **9** LLI students have received this coveted fellowship aimed at increasing the number of individuals trained to work with underserved ethno-racial minorities at risk for mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/latinx-leadership-initiative-lli>

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Masters in School Psychology

The University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

Summary: The Masters in School Psychology program supports Latino graduate students to effectively serve the growing number of Latino students in U.S. public schools.

Description: Established in 2010, The Masters in School Psychology was designed to meet the curricular and practical training requirements for state and national licensure in school psychology. Nationally, Latinos are underrepresented in the area of school psychology. The program's goal is to increase the number of Latino school psychologists in the U.S.



Practices: The Masters in School Psychology offers participants an intensive three-year, 66-hour program that requires students to complete 300-hours of school-based practicum experience completed under the supervision of licensed university faculty and site personnel. In their third year, students complete a full-time internship (1,200 hours) in a school setting. The program also offers students a graduate certificate in bilingual assessment, which provides specialized training and experience for professional assessment and evaluation in Spanish. Culturally responsive practices are infused into the program curriculum including: a service learning requirement encouraging students to work with high-risk, culturally, linguistically diverse schools and use culturally responsive practices; multicultural assessment and intervention learning dedicated to mastering skills necessary to work with diverse populations; and social-emotional assessment learning including the use of evaluation tools and measures with diverse populations.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased graduation:** In 2018-2019, **60%** of program graduates were Latino. In 2017-2018, **57%** of program graduates were Latino.
- **100% student internship placement:** **100%** of students have obtained internships. Moreover, approximately **95%** of students obtain paid internships.
- **100% state licensing exam pass rate:** Student performance on the state licensing exam for psychology is **100%**.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/masters-school-psychology>

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Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC)

University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA

Summary: The Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC) trains and supports Latino, bilingual medical students at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) to develop culturally competent physicians equipped to work with, address, and advocate for the healthcare needs of Latino communities.



Description: Established in 2004, PRIME-LC was designed to meet the need for more culturally and linguistically fluent physicians to care for Latino communities in California and the United States. PRIME-LC's goal is to improve the health care of individual Latino patients by providing the Latino community with culturally sensitive, Spanish-speaking physicians who are well aware of medical, economic and social conditions prevalent within the Latino community.

Practices: PRIME-LC is a five-year MD/Master's program for admitted students at the UCI School of Medicine. Students must apply separately to this program once they have received admission to the School of Medicine. Program participants demonstrate a deep-rooted commitment to impoverished Latino communities and have language skills allowing them to communicate effectively in Spanish. Students complete additional instruction during their first 3 years of medical school focusing on Latino history, culture, and healthcare taught by UCI's Department of Chicano and Latino Studies, helping train students as advocates for the Latino community. During their fourth year of training, students complete an all paid, one-month capstone clinical rotation in Peru. PRIME-LC students also receive preferential placement in hospitals and clinics with a higher proportion of Spanish-speaking patients. All students are provided a scholarship that nearly erases the cost of a one-year master's program.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased Latino physicians:** Nearly **70%** of PRIME-LC students identify as Latino. Nationally, only **6%** of all medical students are Latino. In California, only **9%** of all medical students are Latino.
- **Increased service to Latino communities:** **68%** of program graduates work in community clinics, public hospitals, or academic centers which see a large share of patients from impoverished Latino communities.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/program-medical-education-latino-community-prime>

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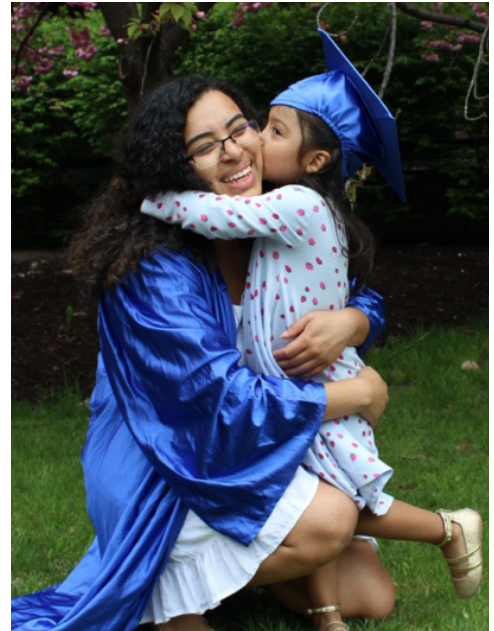
Scholar Program

Generation Hope
Washington, DC

Summary: The Scholar Program empowers teen parent participants—a majority of whom are Latino—to attain a college degree, professional success, and economic stability by providing mentoring, emotional support, and financial resources needed for them to thrive in college, thereby driving a two-generation solution to poverty.

Description: Established in 2010, the Scholar Program was designed to address the 98% of teen mothers in the U.S. who do not earn a college degree before age 30. The Scholar Program’s goal is to help teen parents at 20 two- and four-year colleges in the DC area earn degrees.

Practices: The Scholar Program pairs program participants with a sponsor who provides up to \$2,400 per year in tuition assistance. Scholars are also provided individual, one-on-one mentoring until they graduate from college. Scholars receive one-on-one case management, free tutoring, career preparation, trainings throughout the year on topics including life balance and academic planning, and an annual Hope Conference which provides life and career skills from experts in the community. Latino teen parents are intentionally recruited through community partnerships and free workshops Generation Hope conducts at local high schools, homeless shelters, and social service agencies.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased first-year persistence:** Of Latino program participants, **90%** persist through first year of college. In comparison, nationally, **71%** of Latino students persist through their first year of college. Latino program participants have also achieved a year-to-year persistence rate of **92%**.
- **Increased 6-year graduation:** Of Latino program participants, **59%** graduate college within six years. In comparison, nationally, **50%** of Latino college students graduate within six years.
- **Increased employment and economic mobility:** **90%** of Latino program alumni are employed full-time six months after graduation compared to **55%** of all college graduates in the mid-Atlantic region. The average salary reported after graduation for scholars is \$41,500, which is significantly above the federal poverty line.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/scholar-program>

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College Success Program

Hyde Square Task Force, Inc.
Jamaica Plain, MA

Summary: The College Success Program helps students transition into college, persist, and graduate through one-on-one coaching beginning senior year of high school and ending at college graduation.

Description: Established in 2009, the College Success Program started as part of the Boston Foundation's Success Boston initiative, which was designed in response to data outlining low college completion rates for Boston Public Schools

(BPS) graduates. The College Success Program's goal is to help program participants persist in college and graduate.

Practices: The College Success Program offers program participants year-round, one-on-one coaching beginning spring of senior year to ensure students are on track to attend college and graduate from college. At the beginning and end of each semester, coaches provide more intensive support to students, as many students need support at the beginning of the semester to adjust to their course schedules and troubleshoot issues that arise, while at the end of the semester, students often need help preparing for finals. Coaches aim to interact with 1st and 2nd year college students twice per month, and upperclassmen at least once per semester, checking in more often as needed. Coaching check-ins take place on campuses where students attend, at Hyde Square Task Force headquarters, or are conducted via email or phone. These touchpoints are critical in ensuring that students keep track of things like add/drop deadlines for courses or waiving their health insurance, which can be confusing or overwhelming, particularly for program participants who are primarily Latino, first-generation college students.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased college enrollment:** In 2019, **100%** of program graduates enrolled in college compared to **74%** of BPS class of 2018 high school graduates.
- **Increased college graduation:** Of program alumni from 2012 – 2018, **63%** have either graduated or are still actively pursuing a degree.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/college-success-program-0>

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GRADCAFÉ

Project GRAD Houston
Houston, TX

Summary: GRADCAFÉ provides accessible, community-based college, career access, and success services to local Latino students and families.

Description: Since 1994, Project GRAD has provided college and career advising to students in Houston, Texas. It has shifted from providing school-based advising in its beginnings to community-based advising at present. Project GRAD seeks to help students develop and achieve their educational aspirations.

Practices: GRADCAFÉ offers students and their families a one-stop place for information about preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in a higher education institution of their choice, including completing college and career plans. It provides free, bilingual services around college entry and enrollment, financial aid, the college transition, career planning, and goal setting including near-peer mentors, speakers, and advisors who are motivating role-models. Services are provided via group forums (workshops, tours, presentations, etc.) and a one-on-one, walk-in basis. GRADCAFÉ is open to students without need for an appointment and is available at hours that include evenings and weekends. GRAD's mobile unit, GRADCAFÉ on the Go!, brings demand-driven college and career information to neighborhood events and other venues. GRADCAFÉ's model takes away institutional barriers and ensures that Hispanic communities feel welcomed in an environment where students and their families can receive support in English and Spanish. After many years of serving Latino populations, GRAD has learned that family involvement is key to a student's success, and it is imperative to make post-secondary information accessible to both students and parents.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased college enrollment:** Of all program participants, **51%** are either completing college or remain enrolled at a rate that is nearly double the rate of their peers throughout Texas. **80%** of the program's 2016 cohort have either completed college or remain enrolled.
- **Increased graduation:** **58%** of GRAD's graduating cohort of 2015 completed college. In comparison, **48%** of GRAD's graduating high school cohort of 2010 completed college.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/gradcafe>

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Noble College Access and Success Program

Noble Network of Charter Schools
Chicago, IL

Summary: The Noble College Access and Success Program facilitates Latino high school students' transition to college to encourage college matriculation and college completion.

Description: Established in 2003, the Noble College Access and Success Program emerged out of the need to support the Noble Network of Charter Schools'

Class of 2003 who graduated from high school and enrolled in college. Noble's College Access and Success Program seeks to maximize the number of Chicago students who matriculate to college and persist through to their degree by making the transition from high school to college seamless for students.

Practices: The Noble College Access and Success Program offers 9th through 11th grade Noble Network of Charter Schools students the opportunity to participate in college summer programs and embark on college visits. When students become seniors in high school, they are encouraged to enroll in a year-long College Seminar course led by a team of college counselors. During this course, students apply to college, complete scholarship applications, file for financial aid, and make their college selection. To encourage students to pursue higher education at an institution that is the best fit for them, Noble uses their tool, the College Bot. The College Bot inputs student demographic and academic performance data, including an analysis of graduation rates for underrepresented students at colleges, ensuring that Noble students who identify as Latinx attend a college equipped to meet their needs. With this information, the Bot provides each student a customized list of safety, match, and reach schools.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased college enrollment:** Of Latino program participants from the Class of 2019, **90%** enrolled directly into college. On average, **89%** of program participants matriculate.
- **Increased college acceptance:** Of Latino program participants from the Class of 2019, **95%** were admitted to at least one 4-year college. On average, participants received more than six college acceptance offers each.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/noble-college-access-and-persistence-program>

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UTA University Crossroads

The University of Texas at Arlington
Dallas, TX

Summary: University Crossroads provides Latino, first- and second-generation middle/high school students academic and support programs that academically, financially, socially, and culturally prepare them for educational pursuits beyond high school.

Description: University Crossroads was founded in 1986 with 13 charter members and has grown into an award-winning partnership of 90 colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, businesses, professional associations, North Texas school districts, and charter schools. University Crossroads' goal is to expand access to and success in higher education for first- and second-generation students from low- to moderate-income households.

Practices: University Crossroads offers 6th through 12th grade students free programming centered on creating a college-going culture among students and parents. Through academic, social, cultural engagement, and leadership programming, University Crossroads provides Latino students and families access and equity opportunities that lead to success. Specific college-readiness offerings include Las Llaves del Exito, a fair designed to help Latino students and families navigate the college admissions process, FAFSA workshops, and financial literacy sessions—presented in English and Spanish—that address higher education affordability challenges. To address the financial hurdles of attending college, in addition to facilitating financial aid workshops, University Crossroads coordinates financial literacy classes and raises scholarship money for students. Each year, Crossroads helps numerous North Texas students prepare for the SAT with math tutoring classes. The sessions are open to all high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors in public, private, and charter schools and home-schooled students.



OUTCOMES

- **Increased college access:** During 2019-2020, **19,270** students were exposed to post-secondary options and more than **4,000** students applied for financial aid through the help of University Crossroads.
- **Increased college enrollment:** During 2019-2020, **3,020** students were accepted to a post-secondary education program. **3,000** students matriculated through the help of University Crossroads.
- **Increased college graduation:** During 2019-2020, **974** students graduated from college, obtained a technical college degree, or obtained a degree from a community college within 4 years. During 2018-2019, **881** students received a degree within 4 years.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/programs-initiatives/growing-what-works-database/university-crossroads>

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PROGRAMS TO WATCH: Building Momentum for Student Success

During the annual Examples of *Excelencia* review and selection process, *Excelencia* staff identifies innovative and/or up-and-coming programs that are making a positive impact on the success of their Latino students—Programs to Watch. Amid challenging times for higher education, this year’s Programs to Watch represent 17 programs across 9 states that are ensuring Latino student success and are continuing to grow their evidence of effectiveness.

Excelencia brings attention to these programs to encourage institutions, practitioners, funders, policy makers, and other stakeholders to keep an eye out as these programs continue to improve Latino student success.

Below we share brief summaries of this year’s Programs to Watch and invite you to learn more about their efforts by exploring their website.

ASSOCIATE CATEGORY: ENGAGE TO RETAIN

Among the 2020 Programs to Watch in the associate category are programs that innovate how they engage students to increase retention. They deploy practices including embedded advising, financial education and support, and individualized planning to accomplish increases in enrollment, retention, and graduation for Latino students.

ELLAS (Encouraging Latinas to Lead, Achieve and Succeed)

Year Started: 2017

Tarrant County College-Southeast, Arlington, Texas

No website available

ELLAS provides support to Latina students at Tarrant County College-Southeast to help them overcome academic challenges, develop leadership skills, enhance self-esteem, acquire communication skills, and serve the community. Programming is based on its four pillars—leadership, service, identity, and empowerment—which were first identified through a qualitative study conducted at the program’s beginnings to determine student need. Culturally relevant workshops, events, annual conferences, and services offered in partnership around these four pillars provide an intentional connection to students and support the program’s growth and relationships with other leadership development programs on campus. 100% of program participants have earned their associate degree and transferred to a four-year college. Participants are poised to exceed the 60% graduation rate for Latina, non-participant peers.

The Hancock Promise

Year Started: 2018

Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria, California

<https://www.hancockcollege.edu/promise/index.php>

The Hancock Promise is nurturing a college-going culture by engaging elementary-aged Latino students and staying with them through postsecondary enrollment. Promise provides a unique, four-phased approach: 1) The Bulldog Bound program brings grades 5-8 to campus to explore college and career options through fun, hands-on programming, 2) Path to Promise leverages on-site programs in district high schools to educate students about college entry, 3) Hancock Promise covers first year college costs for every full-time student with a newly granted high school equivalency, and 4) Extended Promise guides every Hancock College student with course sequencing and counseling support. Over 60% of local district high school graduates are attending Hancock College post-high school graduation. Additionally, 67% of Hancock Promise students persist over their non-Promise peers (who persist at a 52% rate).

Mesa Community College/Mesa High Schools College Advisor Program

Year Started: 2017

Mesa Community College, Mesa, Arizona

<https://www.mesacc.edu/academic-advisement/mesa-public-schools-advisors>

The Mesa Community College/Mesa High Schools College Advisor Program is an innovative partnership formed between Mesa Public Schools (largest district in Arizona) and Mesa Community College (MCC) in collaboration with the City of Mesa. Their mission is to provide a one-stop enrollment experience at each high school site to help students enroll, provide a seamless transition to MCC, increase dual enrollment, create a college going culture, and build relationships with students, faculty, and administrators. Since 2017, MCC has seen a 24% increase in recent Mesa Public Schools (MPS) high school graduates enrolling in MCC. Based on feedback from students, over 90% of the college advisors placed in students' high school were agreed to be approachable, knowledgeable and connected them to resources.

Student Money Management Office

Year Started: 2016

Austin Community College, Austin, Texas

www.austincc.edu/money

The mission of the Student Money Management Office (SMMO) is to support student success by providing accessible and relevant money management education, enabling students to make informed financial decisions. Through SMMO, Austin Community College is preparing students to graduate with minimal student debt and enter the workforce equipped to manage their income, save, and build assets. The program's Rainy Day Savings Program, in which students are given incentives to accumulate \$500 in a savings account dedicated for use in a financial emergency, had 95 student savers in its first cohort during Fall 2018. The fall-to-fall retention rates of students in this cohort was 81% for Hispanic students, exceeding the 60% retention rate of the entire population.

Transfer Resources Department

Year Started: 2017

Austin Community College, Austin, Texas

www.austincc.edu/transfer

The mission of the Transfer Resources Department is to provide strategic guidance, resources and programs to help students develop personal transfer plans that lead to a successful transfer. In response to a new strategic plan that highlighted transfer success, the Transfer Resource Department was created in 2017. Services include: providing resources to supplement work on course selection to eliminate loss of completed credit; one-on-one appointments for transfer exploration, application review, and personalized transfer plan development; workshops for faculty, staff, and students to assist their understanding of the transfer process; classroom presentations about transfer fundamentals; supporting co-enrollment programs; and connecting Austin Community College (ACC) with universities to optimize student transfer opportunities. Participants show a higher rate of transfer per National Student Clearinghouse data: the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reports a 20% transfer rate for 2015-16 ACC students, while 46% of students who participated in the Transfer Resources Department's Transfer Academy that year transferred within 3 years. The program's workshops reached more than 6 times the number of students in 2015-16.

BACCALAUREATE CATEGORY: TAILORED STUDENT SUPPORTS

The 2020 Programs to Watch in the baccalaureate category are creating tailored supports or services for students who may have challenges accessing or succeeding in higher education. Their innovation is providing high-impact practices to students who often do not receive them.

Dreamer's Pathway Scholarship

Year Started: 2016

University of Nebraska Omaha, Nebraska

<https://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/achievement/academic-and-career-development-center/dreamers-pathway.php>

The Dreamer's Pathway Scholarship is a program for students who are Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or residents that have graduated from a Nebraska high school and are seeking an undergraduate degree at the University of Nebraska Omaha. Students who qualify through a competitive application process are eligible to receive renewable tuition, housing, fees, and scholarship for books for up to five years, or until an undergraduate degree is earned, whichever comes first. In 2019, the first to second year retention rate for program participants was 100%, in comparison to 73% for all Latino students on campus, and 75% for the entire campus. The graduation rate for the first three years of the program is 95%. This compares to a campus-wide, four-year graduation rate of 50%.

Latinx Assessing Their Intellect through Networking & Exchange (L.A.T.I.N.X)

Year Started: 2017

Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts

<https://www.northeastern.edu/latinx/professional-development/latinx/>

L.A.T.I.N.X empowers students by creating opportunities for identity-based professional development. Through this multi-level program, students explore their Latinx identity in the context of developing skills and attributes of professionalism. L.A.T.I.N.X emphasizes cultural agility and identity leadership in professional environments while focusing on well-being/self-care, imposter syndrome, resilience, and communicating across difference. As a result, students have received scholarships, co-op opportunities, summer internships, the ability to shadow professionals in their work environments, and have found mentors. Participants reported that 94% had a greater understanding of how to navigate challenges related to identity in the workplace. The same percentage feel that participating in this program increased their knowledge of professional development strategies to amplify their preparation and motivation for career success.

Outreach Leadership Institute (OLI)

Year Started: 2000

Oregon State University Extension Service 4-H, Corvallis, Oregon

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/outreach-leadership-institute>

The 4-H Outreach Leadership Institute (OLI) is a series of four overnight-weekend events that include hands-on educational activities, discussions with college students, and professional role models from different cultural backgrounds. The goal of these events is for high school students to develop knowledge about the post-secondary educational system; advancing OLI's mission of increasing access to higher education for Latino/a students. This project has a 100% high school graduation rate, compared to Oregon's 2017 average of 77%. OLI has achieved a 95% college graduation rate for students attending a 2- or 4-year college program compared to the 2017 national average college graduation rate of 60%.

Professional Improvement through Optimization of Native-language Education and the Realization of Academic/familial Symbiosis (PIONERAS)

Year Started: 2017

Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas

<https://twu.edu/pioneras/>

The mission of PIONERAS is to improve the bilingual education practices and second-language acquisition of aspiring dual language teachers and in-service teachers. The program intentionally seeks to enroll Latinos through recruitment and holding all courses and extracurricular activities in Spanish. PIONERAS participants are fully funded; receiving a high-quality and culturally relevant education through university coursework, a study abroad program, a graduate degree, and collaborative mentorship between undergraduate and graduate students. Currently, 96% of graduate student participants are Latinos with an average 4.0 GPA and undergraduate participants have earned a 3.88 GPA.

Resilience & Retention Advising Program

Year Started: 2017

The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas

<http://www.utsa.edu/advising/>

The Resilience and Retention (R&R) Advising Program's goal is to help student success and increase retention rates for high-risk students who were academically dismissed or denied admission into the major of their choice. R&R academic advisors provide a concierge-level of service for students, communicating with 100% of their caseload to help find their path to degree completion. This high level of proactive interaction is achievable due to smaller caseloads per advisor. Trained in all 67 degree offerings, the program weaves financial impact discussions with information about career knowledge and skills that can be gained from any degree, moving from a transactional to a transformational approach. This allows the student to graduate in a timely manner while gaining self-authorship. Among R&R participants, 26% of Hispanic students have graduated or have an active graduation application on file, compared to 19% non-Hispanic R&R students.

STEM Leaders Program

Year Started: 2014

Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon

<https://stemleaders.oregonstate.edu/>

The STEM Leaders Program (SLP) was designed to improve the success, retention and persistence to graduation of underrepresented minority students in undergraduate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. There are four main program components: 1) participation in a faculty-mentored undergraduate research experience, 2) regular meetings with a peer mentor, 3) participation in a series of professional development workshops, and 4) participation in an orientation course designed to prepare students to engage in research. This program has shown that students participating in SLP consistently have higher rates of first-year retention when compared to OSU students, OSU Latinx students, and OSU Latinx within STEM students. This is also true for four-year graduation rates. The four-year graduation rates for STEM Leaders Cohorts 1 and 2 were 33% and 40%, respectively, compared to a four-year graduation rate of 26% and 17% for all Latinx OSU students and Latinx OSU STEM students, respectively.

Student Success Workshops

Year Started: 2017

California State University Channel Islands, Camarillo, CA

<https://sociology.csuci.edu/programs/>

In the spring of 2017, California State University, Channel Islands' Sociology Program partnered with academic advising to create the Student Success Workshops, mandatory for all students who earn D/F grades in Sociology classes, are on probation, disqualified, or reinstated. Semester workshops focus on academic skill-building (e.g. identifying and overcoming academic challenges, building foundational study skills like note-taking, focused reading, and time management), and institutional navigation (identifying campus resources, accessing faculty, and tracking progress to graduation). Following the workshops, students develop and submit a Student Success Action Plan, requiring them to map out specific tangible steps to ensure academic success. Compared to students who qualified but did not participate, workshop participants were more likely to be retained or graduate. In AY 2018-19, 72% of Latinx participants persisted compared to 15% of Latinx non-participants. Beyond retention, program participants show improvement in other indicators of academic success. For example, prior to the workshops, participants had an average cumulative campus GPA of 2.16. This improved to 2.43 after participating in the workshops. For Latinx participants, their cumulative campus GPA improved from 2.16 to 2.46. Nonparticipants did not experience similar GPA improvements. Additionally, workshop participants earned far fewer failing grades and were more likely to be in good academic standing after participating in the workshops.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION CATEGORY: CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

Community-based organizations may be a Latino student's first introduction to higher education. The 2020 Programs to Watch in the community-based organization category share how they create college-going cultures in their communities given an emerging population of Latino students and the need to provide authentic exposure opportunities for students and their families.

Al Éxito University

Year Started: 2017

Al Éxito, Des Moines, Iowa

<https://www.alexitoiowa.org>

Al Éxito (AÉ) is Iowa's only statewide organization dedicated solely to advancing the educational achievement and transformative leadership capacity of Latinx youth and families. Al Éxito University (AÉU) is a free, high school summer residential intensive college preparatory camp offered by Al Éxito that creates a space on campus to better prepare Latinx students for post-secondary success. The focus is on the unique needs of the Latinx population, including rural/urban youth. AÉU's structure replicates post-secondary processes in the application, class registration, and extra-curricular offerings. Classes are intentionally designed to best prepare Latinx students for skills needed to persist in college. AÉU has seen a 39% increase in students who understood the financial obligations to pay for college and a 36% increase in students confident that they had the skills to be successful on a college campus.

Emerging Leaders Program

Year Started: 2006

Edu-Futuro, Arlington, Virginia

<https://edu-futuro.org/emerging-leaders-programs/>

The mission of Edu-Futuro is to break the cycle of poverty by empowering immigrant, underserved youth and families through mentorship, education, leadership development, and parental engagement. We help low-income students reach for a postsecondary education through our Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), which provides bilingual support in four integrated steps from elementary school to high school in partnership with Arlington and Fairfax County Public Schools. Program offerings including an afterschool STEM Robotics Club (Grades 3-8), college readiness workshops, and mentorship in high school. Since ELP Level II started in 2013, 97% of program graduates have been accepted to college, 96% of which were Latino students. In 2019, graduates collectively were offered over \$2.4 million in financial aid and scholarships for their first year of college, much of it renewable for a projected four-year total over \$5.1 million.

Esperanza Post-Secondary Support Program

Year Started: 2016

Esperanza, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio

www.esperanzainc.org

Esperanza, Inc., established in 1983, is a culturally appropriate education and socio-economic support system for Cleveland's Hispanic population. The Post-Secondary Support Program was started in 2017 using UnidosUS' Líderes Avanzando curriculum to support the needs of the Hispanic student population. Students take part in cooperative/interactive learning activities, monthly workshops, and events on topics relevant to the Hispanic and/or first-generation college-going experience. Students also earn a stipend for program completion, which encourages uninterrupted participation and offers added financial resources. Further, students can be assigned a volunteer mentor for added support. Of the program's oldest Lideres cohort, 40% have graduated within 4 years, and 30% are still enrolled. To compare, nationally, only 41% of college students graduate in 4 years, and for Hispanics, this drops to 32% (NCES).

Junior Jaguar Leadership Conference

Year Started: 2013

South Texas College, McAllen, Texas

The Junior Jaguar Leadership Conference is based on the idea that "College begins in Kindergarten," and every student has the opportunity to go to college. The Leadership Conference commissions elementary school students as Junior Ambassadors to Higher Education so they can share what they learn with family, friends, community, and school. The program looks to impact Latino families by encouraging college conversation in the home. Parents are invited to attend and learn financial literacy to help in preparing for college and their own lives. Marketable skills are also taught to parents. In seven years, the program has expanded to 10 elementary schools and over 700 students have been commissioned as Junior Ambassadors. With three cohorts in high school, 49% of the most recent cohort participated in high school dual enrollment courses.

Mente Summit

Year Started: 2016

Mente, Beaverton, Oregon

<https://www.mentesummit.com/>

Higher education attainment for Latinx males is at the center of Mente's mission, spearheading efforts with goals to address the educational inequities faced by Latinx males from Oregon pursuing a trade career or college degree. In its fifth year of existence, Mente hosts the only gender and culturally-specific Latinx male conference in the Pacific Northwest. The Mente Summit draws nearly 500 Latinx males from 45 urban and rural high schools, community colleges, public, and private Oregon universities. Mente considers student voices as part of a continued cycle of improvement. The 2020 Summit exit survey showed that over 90% of males found the workshops/speakers engaging and would recommend the Summit to other students.

2021 Examples of *Excelencia*: Call for Nominations

Know of a program accelerating Latino student success that should be recognized as an Example of *Excelencia*? Nominate them for 2021 Examples of *Excelencia*! Nominations for 2021 Examples of *Excelencia* will open in early 2021. Check out our website (www.edexcelencia.org) in January for more details.

Examples of *Excelencia* is the only national effort to identify and promote evidence-based practices that help accelerate Latino student success in higher education. Through our annual Examples of *Excelencia* campaign, we recognize programs at the associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and community-based organization level for using effective practices that accelerate Latino student success.

Excelencia in Education is committed to accurately promoting and leveraging programs nationally that work for Latino students in higher education. Therefore, *Excelencia* brings attention to what works for Latino students through the following:

- National recognition via *Excelencia*'s website, social media platforms, and publications.
- A \$5,000 financial contribution to further sustain programmatic efforts.
- Recognition at *Excelencia*'s annual *Celebración de Excelencia*, held in Washington, D.C.
- Invitation to participate in the plenary session at the Accelerating Latino Student Success (ALASS) Institute in Washington, D.C.
- Inclusion in the 2021 edition of our *What Works for Latino Students in Higher Education Compendium*, widely distributed online to *Excelencia* in Education's constituents including key funders, educational organizations, and leaders.
- Inclusion in *Excelencia*'s Growing What Works Database—the only national online, searchable database—to promote effective institutional practices for Latino students.
- Complimentary one-year enrollment in *Excelencia* in Action—our national network taking action to accelerate Latino student success.
- Program recognition by their respective member of Congress through *Excelencia*'s outreach.

LEARN MORE: visit our website www.EdExcelencia.org • **CONTACT:** Examples@EdExcelencia.org

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