



TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION  
STAR AWARDS

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TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION  
COORDINATING BOARD

Support for this report comes from Houston Endowment, Inc., which has generously supported the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges for regional and statewide education and dissemination programs related to *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.



## **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

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### **Mission of the Coordinating Board**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, and thereby provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

### **Philosophy of the Coordinating Board**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will promote access to quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access is unacceptable. The Board will be open, ethical, responsive, and committed to public service. The Board will approach its work with a sense of purpose and responsibility to the people of Texas and is committed to the best use of public monies. The Coordinating Board will engage in actions that add value to Texas and to higher education. The agency will avoid efforts that do not add value or that are duplicated by other entities.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.



# INTRODUCTION

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The *Texas Higher Education Star Awards, 2001 – 2008* report is designed to provide a venue to highlight and recognize award recipients for their efforts to develop and implement the state's most successful programs, projects, and activities that help meet the goals of the Texas higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. Recipients represent collaborations among individuals, groups, educational institutions, businesses, and communities.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board appreciates the hard work of all those involved in developing and implementing effective programs and activities. The Coordinating Board also appreciates the efforts of those involved in providing updated information about these award-winning programs and activities for purposes of this publication. Texas Higher Education (THE) Star Award recipients have been categorized by theme according to the primary objectives of the program or activity. The categories are:

- At-Risk and Disadvantaged – Programs and activities that help ethnically diverse students who may not be able to attend college, or have trouble staying in college.
- College and Career Readiness – Programs and activities that help students develop basic academic or career readiness.
- Enrollment and Participation – Programs and activities that help students enroll and participate in higher education.
- Nursing Shortage, Health, and Medical Research – Programs and activities that help increase the number of nursing and other health program graduates, or promote medical research.
- Retention, Transfer, and Success – Programs and activities that help ensure students can successfully accomplish their higher education goals.
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) – Programs and activities that help increase the number of students who participate and succeed in one of the STEM disciplines.
- Teacher Certification and Public Schools – Programs and activities that help students obtain the required skills and learning experience to teach.

The Coordinating Board also has recognized the exceptional leadership of elected officials in helping to meet the goals of *Closing the Gaps*. On November 6, 2006, The Texas Higher Education Leadership Star Award was presented to The Honorable Florence Shapiro, State Senator District 8, and The Honorable Geanie Morrison, State Representative District 30, for their strong leadership and contributions to closing the gaps in Texas higher education through their work on House Bill 1, 79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session. This legislation was designed to increase college readiness and decrease developmental coursework in college.

## History

The Texas Higher Education Star Award, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2001, recognizes public and independent institutions of higher education; public/private schools and school districts; and organizations, groups, and individuals for their exceptional contributions toward one or more of the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, the Texas higher education plan adopted by the Coordinating Board in October 2000. The plan establishes four goals – to close the gaps in student participation, student success, academic excellence, and research. A maximum of 12 awards are presented annually. Star Award winners are announced at a special ceremony each fall.

## Eligibility

There are two primary categories of Star Award eligibility:

1. Programs, projects, and activities at Texas:
  - public and independent two- and four-year colleges and universities;
  - public technical and state colleges;
  - public and independent health science centers; and
  - degree-granting career colleges and schools.
2. Organizations, groups, and individuals in Texas that are helping to meet the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, including:
  - public and private schools or districts;
  - businesses; and
  - community organizations.

## Criteria

To be considered for a Star Award:

1. Programs/projects/activities must:
  - Have been in operation for at least two years;
  - Demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of student participation, student success, academic excellence, or research that are attributable to the program/project/activity;
  - Demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student; and
  - Clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence over time through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.
2. Organizations/groups/individuals must:
  - Have been focused on helping to meet the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015* for at least two years (to include the creation of a college-going culture);
  - Demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of student participation, student success, academic excellence, or research that are attributable to the organization/group/individual; and
  - Clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence over time through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.

## **Nominations and Applications**

To be considered for a Star Award, an eligible program, project, activity, or person must be nominated during the specified nomination period for that year's competition. Self-nominations are welcome. Nominations may be completed and submitted only online at the Coordinating Board website: <https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/Apps/StarAward/Nominate.cfm>  
Instructions for completing and submitting the required application for the Star Award are provided to nominees via email upon receipt of the nomination form.

## **Review Process**

### **Step One – Announcement and Call for Nominations**

The Star Award Program is announced. Coordinating Board staff send the announcement and call for Star Award nominations via e-mail to the following groups:

- Public and independent institutions of higher education (chancellors and presidents, chief academic officers, instructional officers, institutional research directors, deans of education, workforce deans, technical deans, registrars, reporting officials, continuing education officers, and public relations officers);
- Career colleges and schools (presidents and executive officers);
- Texas independent school district superintendents (notified with the assistance of the Texas Association of School Administrators);
- Local government and business organizations (African American Chambers of Commerce of Texas, Texas Association of Business, Texas Regional Council of Governments, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, Texas High School Project,
- Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce, Texas Municipal League, and Texas City Management Association); and
- Chambers of Commerce of Texas' larger cities.

### **Step Two – Nominations**

Nominations must be completed and submitted online at the Coordinating Board website: <https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/Apps/StarAward/Nominate.cfm>

### **Step Three – Notifications to Nominees**

Coordinating Board staff notifies nominees that they have been nominated for a Star Award, and that a formal application must be completed and returned to the Coordinating Board.

### **Step Four – Applications for Star Award**

An application form must be completed for each program/project/activity or organization/group/individual nominated for the Star Award.

#### Step Five – Staff Review of All Applications

A Coordinating Board Staff Review Panel reviews all applications to determine if requested information is complete and adheres to application requirements. The Staff Review Panel forwards a list of recommended finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education on the basis of criteria established for the Star Award. The Commissioner recommends finalists to the Chair of the Coordinating Board.

#### Step Six – Committee Review of Finalists' Applications

A nine-member committee appointed by the Chair of the Coordinating Board reviews the applications of recommended finalists, makes finalist determinations, and decides which of these are to be honored. Committee membership includes three members of the Coordinating Board, three Texas business and community leaders, and three out-of-state education experts.

#### Step Seven – Notification to Finalists

Coordinating Board staff notifies finalists by mid-September and invites them to attend a special ceremony during which Star Award winners are announced and honored.

#### Step Eight – Awards Presentation

The Star Awards are presented at the Coordinating Board's annual Higher Education Leadership Conference/State of Higher Education Luncheon/Star Awards Ceremony.

## Acknowledgements

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board would like to thank all of the educators and administrators involved in the development and implementation of the programs submitted each year for consideration for a Texas Higher Education Star Award and for providing updated information about these programs for purposes of this publication. The Coordinating Board would also like to thank Georgia D. Hodde, Administrative Assistant for Academic Planning and Policy, and Mary E. Smith, Ph.D., Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Academic Planning and Policy, for their careful editing, formatting, and attention to detail in compiling this report. We also would like to acknowledge the Coordinating Board Staff Review Panel for their invaluable assistance in reviewing the applications submitted each year and recommending finalists to the Commissioner of Higher Education and Chair of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. A special thanks also to Coordinating Board members, Texas business and community leaders, and out-of-state education experts who review and rank the finalist recommendations.

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## **AT-RISK AND DISADVANTAGED CATEGORY**

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### ***College Assistance Migrant Program***

St. Edward's University – Austin, Texas

### ***Collegiate Challenge Mentor Program***

Spring Branch Independent School District – Houston, Texas

### ***Community Link***

Amarillo College – Amarillo, Texas

### ***Increasing the Success of the Most Economically Disadvantaged Students***

West Texas A&M University – Canyon, Texas

### ***LULAC Parent/Child Scholarship Program***

Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College – San Antonio, Texas

### ***Mother-Daughter Program***

The University of Texas at El Paso – El Paso, Texas

### ***Rising Star Program***

Dallas County Community College District – Dallas, Texas

### ***Strategies for Success***

Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College – San Antonio, Texas

### ***SureStart Program***

Tarrant County College District – Arlington, Texas

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**THE Star Award 2004**

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at St. Edward's University was the proud recipient of the prestigious Texas Higher Education Star Award in 2004. Now celebrating 37 years of service, the St. Edward's CAMP holds the honor of being the longest continuously running program of its kind in the nation. The mission of CAMP remains unchanged – to help the sons and daughters of migrant and seasonal farm workers transform their lives, and the lives of their families, by obtaining a college degree. As one CAMP alumnus said, "When one of us succeeds, we take our whole community with us."

**Continued Progress**

- To date, St. Edward's has welcomed more than 2,500 CAMP students; approximately 95 percent are Hispanic and come from the South Texas Valley region. CAMP's broad range of academic and social support programs are designed to help migrant students overcome challenges and build on strengths. All freshman CAMP participants attend a weeklong orientation program prior to the start of classes; attend a minimum of three tutoring sessions each week; attend personal and career counseling sessions; meet monthly with an academic counselor; and receive health care services. The annual CAMP Career Day brings together career professionals, many of whom are former CAMP participants, to assist students in exploring career options.
- St. Edward's provides a sizable assistance package to every CAMP student. This tuition support continues as long as the CAMP student maintains satisfactory academic progress.
- The graduation rate for the CAMP students has risen to 60 percent which far exceeds the national rate of 45 percent for first-generation college students enrolled in a four-year institution.

**New Initiatives**

- In 2006, the College Assistance Migrant Program received the Texas Aguila Award in Education.
- In July 2008, St. Edward's University was selected by the Council of Independent Colleges from more than 200 applicants to receive one of 20 Wal-Mart College Success Awards. This award will support a Summer Bridge program to provide CAMP and other first-generation freshmen with an intensive four-week program covering English writing, reading, math, and study skills.

**Contact**

Esther Yacono, Director, College Assistance Migrant Program, St. Edward's University,  
3001 S. Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78704, Phone: (512) 448-8626,  
Email: [esther@stedwards.edu](mailto:esther@stedwards.edu)

## COLLEGIATE CHALLENGE MENTOR PROGRAM

Spring Branch Independent School District



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### THE Star Award 2008

Spring Branch Independent School District (SBISD) serves a highly diverse student population of 32,000 students on 46 campuses. A majority minority district, 55 percent of the students are from economically disadvantaged homes, with a large Hispanic minority. An estimated 30 percent of the students are recent immigrants, and many live in generational poverty sustained due to limited life experience, limited understanding of the American educational system, and limited personal connection to higher education. The Collegiate Challenge Mentor Program (Five-Year Educational Plan) engages community members as mentors to assist high school juniors and seniors with career exploration and the college and scholarship application process to help make higher education a reality. The focus is on financial aid, finding the right school, career exploration, essay writing, and much more. The Collegiate Challenge Mentor Program model pairs a community partner with a group of juniors and seniors from an SBISD high school who need help fulfilling their dreams of college enrollment. Some are first-generation, low- income, or minority students.

### Continued Progress

- Since its inception in 2000, over 300 students have attained the goal of college enrollment as a result of the Collegiate Challenge Mentor Program.
- In 2008-09, approximately 100 students participated. The 44 graduating participants are all college-bound and have earned over \$818,000 in scholarship offers.

### New Initiatives

- In July 2007, SBISD's Collegiate Challenge Mentor Program earned a \$42,500 grant from the Texas High School Project fund of the Communities Foundation of Texas. The grant enabled program expansion to other SBISD high schools and the development of replication materials so that this exemplary college-focused program can be expanded to school districts across the state.
- Program leaders have studied implementation data from three campuses and have determined that program success is maximized when students are selected for the program in the spring semester of their junior year.

### Contact

Linda Buchman, Community Relations Officer, Spring Branch Independent School District,  
955 Campbell Road, Houston, Texas 77024, Phone: (713) 464-1511 Ext. 2286,  
Email: [linda.buchman@springbranchisd.com](mailto:linda.buchman@springbranchisd.com)



**THE Star Award 2004**

Founded in 1987, the Community Link mission is to increase participation of non-traditional students in higher education, thus contributing to *Closing the Gaps* for Texas residents. In spring 2002, the Amarillo College Foundation, Community Link, and 13 partners began a fundraising campaign to expand the building of and to increase scholarships. Operating from a \$325,000 renovated facility, Community Link has established 52 partners and awarded 974 scholarships to bring college opportunities to disadvantaged students.

**Continued Progress**

Table 1 shows a three-year Community Link client contact; participation remains consistent with an increase of 3.4 percent in 2007-08 from 2005-2006, and 7.0 percent from 2006-2007.

TABLE 1: Amarillo College Community Link  
Services & Client Contacts Student Support Services

Service	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Outreach & Recruitment Activities	6,123	6,015	5,078
Computer Literacy Instruction	3,539	3,206	2,750
GED & ESL Classes	7,895	7,522	10,080
Financial Aid Services	68	245	655
General Academic Information	1,255	1,270	968
<b>CONTACTS-YEARLY TOTAL</b>	<b>18,880</b>	<b>18,258</b>	<b>19,531</b>

Table 2 shows Amarillo College Hispanic Enrollment. In 2007, Amarillo College's minority enrollment reached 25 percent, gaining the college a designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, a first in Amarillo College's history and in the region. Community Link contacts parallel the increase in Hispanic enrollment, which in turn impacts the increase in the College's overall Hispanic enrollment.

TABLE 2: Amarillo College Hispanic Enrollment  
(fall unduplicated headcount)

Academic Year	Total Enrollment	Hispanic enrollment
2005	10,573	2,549 (24%)
2006	10,356	2,514 (24%)
2007	10,387	2,608 (25%)
2008	10,224	2,663 (26%)

Data verifiable at Amarillo College Databook at  
<http://sites.acTexas.edu/~iresearch/databook/dbtbl1de.htm>

Through an aggressive business outreach campaign, recruiters go directly to area organizations and businesses to present college opportunities to employees of companies such as Pacific Cheese, McDonald's Restaurants, Bruckner Trucking, City of Amarillo, Xcel Energy, Tyson Fresh Meats, Nationwide Insurance, Amarillo Independent School District, Amarillo Library System, Panhandle Workforce Solutions, VA Hospital, Wal-Mart, and BSA Hospital.

## **New Initiatives**

- The “Pipeline to Higher Education” initiative began in fall 2007 with a goal of registering 50 GED graduates in an academic program.
- The project provides one-on-one assistance with academic advising, financial aid applications, college admission forms, testing advice, and selecting a career plan. To date, 80 GED graduates have enrolled in postsecondary education at Amarillo College.
- The Linking Education and the Community initiative began in spring 2008; it is a collaboration between AT&T Foundation, Travis Middle School, and Amarillo College’s Community Link. AT&T Excelerator grant funds supported the purchase of a mobile computer lab equipped with English as Second Language (ESL) and GED software to educate parents in ESL, GED, and computer skills at the middle school site.
- The initiative impacted 174 students in 2008. Community Link was nominated by Amarillo Independent School District as one of its “Partners in Education” for 2008.

## **Contact**

Maury Roman, Director of Outreach Services, Amarillo College, P.O. Box 447, Amarillo, Texas 79178, Phone: (806) 381-8968, Email: mrroman@acTexas.edu

## **INCREASING THE SUCCESS OF THE MOST ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

West Texas A&M University



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### **THE Star Award 2003**

West Texas A&M University doubled the retention rate of the institution's most economically disadvantaged entering freshmen (students who have an expected family contribution, or "EFC" of \$0). The first- to second-year persistence rate increased from 31 percent in 2000 to 64 percent in 2003.

### **Continued Progress**

- West Texas A&M University has continued to provide pre- and post-enrollment services and support designed to facilitate success among this student population.
- The most recent figures for freshmen with a zero EFC show a 57 percent persistence rate for the fall 2006 cohort and a 58 percent persistence rate for the fall 2007 cohort.

### **New Initiatives**

The recent creation of a first-year success division, and reorganization of the academic advising structure and delivery of services, is anticipated to contribute toward improvement of the persistence rate of this student population, as is the planned fall 2009 opening of a new student center that consolidates support and intervention services.

### **Contact**

James Hallmark, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, West Texas A&M University, 2501 4th Avenue, Canyon, Texas 79016, Phone: (806) 651-2044,  
Email: [jhallmark@wtamu.edu](mailto:jhallmark@wtamu.edu)

## LULAC PARENT/CHILD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College



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### THE Star Award 2007

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Parent/Child Scholarship Program, a partnership between the Alamo Colleges, the League of United Latin American Citizens Council #2, and the San Antonio College Women's Center, seeks to ensure the educational success of two generations: economically disadvantaged, first-time parents and their child. Parents receive scholarships, counseling, and other support to complete an educational goal at one of the Alamo Colleges. Once the student/parent completes their educational goal, their child is entitled to receive a two-year full tuition scholarship to attend any Alamo College after high school graduation.

#### Continued Progress

- Eighty-two percent of program participants are Hispanic or African American.
- Fall-to-fall retention rates are 74 percent versus 42.8 percent for non-participants.
- Degree completion/transfer rates are 36 percent versus 3.4 percent for non-participants.
- Average cumulative Grade Point Average is 2.87 versus 2.68 for non-participants.
- Fifteen contacts per student per academic year were accomplished.

#### New Initiatives

- Each parent/student now selects a padrino/madrina (godparent) to act as their mentor.
- Mid- and end-of-term assemblies are offered to share success testimonials and information.
- Transportation assistance (gas vouchers/bus tickets) is now offered.

#### Contact

Helen Vera, Ph.D., Chair, Services for Women & Non-Traditional Students, Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College, 1300 San Pedro, San Antonio, Texas 78212, Phone: (210) 486-0455, Email: [mvera@mail.accd.edu](mailto:mvera@mail.accd.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2002**

The Mother-Daughter Program is an educational intervention program for 6-12 grade students and their parents. The program builds on school-university partnerships that include representatives from The University of Texas at El Paso and K-12 school district coordinator leaders. The program helps girls and mothers maintain interest in school and raise education/career aspirations. Workshops provide early college planning information to students and parents to help them better understand higher education opportunities. Bilingual (English-Spanish) services are offered, making information about college readily available and understandable for those whose native language is Spanish.

**Continued Progress**

- The Mother-Daughter Program extends services to mothers and daughters, motivating participants to prepare for and pursue higher education.
- At least 36,456 individuals have benefited from the program since 1986.

**New Initiatives**

- Partnership with Girl Scouts of the Rio Grande, 'UNIQUELY ME' Program helps girls enhance their self esteem.
- Project ACE (Action for Equity) engages The University of Texas at El Paso with eight school districts and local American Association of University Women affiliates in promoting gender equity, with a focus on programs of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. ACE also infuses service learning and gender equity components in teacher preparation.
- The Mother-Daughter Program model has been replicated in several communities, including: The University of Texas-Pan American; Angelo State University; Texas Tech University/Lubbock Independent School District; The University of Texas at San Antonio; Junior League of Austin/Austin Independent School District and The University of Texas at Austin; Arizona State University; University of Minnesota; and University of Southern California/Hermanas Unidas.

**Contact**

Josefina Villamil Tinajero, Ed.D., Mother-Daughter Program Director, Dean of the College of Education, The University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W. University Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79968, Phone: (915) 747-5572, Email: tinajero@utep.edu

## **RISING STAR PROGRAM**

Dallas County Community College District



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### **THE Star Award 2003**

The Dallas County Community College District's Rising Star Program has provided financial assistance for college to eligible graduating high school seniors in Dallas County for 10 years. In 1999, the Rising Star Program was created to stem the tide of high school graduates unable to go to college due to a lack of finances.

The Rising Star Program provides scholarships of up to \$4,000 for tuition and textbooks over a three-year period to Dallas County high school seniors who graduate with a "B" average or better, or who have passed the required college assessment test and show economic need.

### **Continued Progress**

- A total of 9,991 Rising Star students have enrolled in Dallas County Community College District since the program's inception.
- Based on the standard method of tracking the completion and persistence of college students over a six-year period, Rising Star students have performed equal to or better than their peers.
- Of the 767 Rising Star students who enrolled their first year in fall 2002, 63 percent received a degree or certificate, transferred, or are still enrolled in the Dallas County Community College District.

### **New Initiatives**

The Rising Star Program recognizes the decline in males attending college and has initiated efforts to increase male enrollment.

### **Contact**

Betheny L. Reid, President, Dallas County Community College District Foundation,  
Dallas County Community College District, 1601 South Lamar, Dallas, Texas 75215,  
Phone: (214) 378-1538, Email: breid@dcccd.edu

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**THE Star Award 2003**

Strategies for Success at San Antonio College is a one-hour course designed for academically at-risk students. Topics covered include, but are not limited to: study techniques, note-taking, test-taking, time management, library use, critical thinking skills, career planning, and interpersonal skills. This course is a requirement for any student on Academic Dismissal or Continued Academic Probation.

**Continued Progress**

- San Antonio College continues to enroll over 1,000 students each year (fall, spring, and summer sessions) in the Strategies for Success course. While the average completion rate was approximately 65 percent in 2003, in 2009, the average completion rate is between 80-85 percent.
- Many of the Strategies for Success completers have been on the President's Honors list. Longitudinally, students who have successfully completed the Strategies for Success course are retained up to four semesters later and continue to show improvement in their Grade Point Average.

**New Initiatives**

- Since receiving the Star Award in 2003, several new initiatives have been implemented. The biggest initiatives have been in the form of technology. The Strategies for Success course is now offered online to meet the needs of students who are unable to come to the campus for a traditional course.
- More technology is being used in the traditional courses, such as class blogs, YouTube videos, and the use of PowerPoint for student presentations. A pilot was recently conducted in which the course is being offered for 12 weeks versus the traditional eight weeks in response to student requests.
- An endowment Grant-In-Aid program was created that provides one-to-two Strategies for Success students each semester with a \$250 – \$500 award for their continued studies. The award is granted to students who have completed the Strategies for Success course with a grade of A or B, completed an application, and submitted letters of recommendation. A committee chooses the recipient(s) for the semester.

**Contact**

Dehlia Wallis, Counselor/Assistant Professor, Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College,  
1300 San Pedro Avenue, San Antonio, Texas 78212, Phone: (210) 486-0776,  
Email: Dstrong2@mail.accd.edu;

Emma L. Mendiola, Counselor/Associate Professor, Chair, Counseling & Student  
Development, Alamo Colleges-San Antonio College, 1300 San Pedro Avenue, San Antonio,  
Texas 78212, Phone: (210) 486-0367, Email: emendiola@mail.accd.edu

## SURESTART PROGRAM

Tarrant County College-Southeast Campus



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### THE Star Award 2006

The SureStart Program is a collaborative effort between academics and student affairs, developed at Tarrant County College-Southeast Campus as an intervention strategy to ensure that first-time-in-college, mainly first-generation students, succeed in higher education. The program incorporates block scheduling in a learning community for students who share three consecutive classes for two semesters. This first-year experience program requires coordinated instruction which is centered on developmental reading courses, with two additional credit classes to enhance academic success. The SureStart Program was designed around two basic concepts of successful group intervention: reducing student isolation and providing a safe learning environment with appropriate structure and supervision.

### Continued Progress

The success of students in the SureStart Program continues to be measured by a number of benchmarks set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Since winning the Texas Higher Education Star Award in fall 2006, the program's latest cohorts – 2006, 2007, and 2008 have continued to perform extremely well.

- The fall-to-spring retention for all three cohorts was:  
2006 – 73.5 percent, 2007 – 79.4 percent, and 2008 – 83.5 percent
- One-year persistence:  
2006 – 63 percent, 2007 – 65 percent, 2008 – N/A\*
- Two-year persistence:  
2006 – 54 percent, 2007 and 2008 – N/A\*
- Percentage of students who completed a related college-level reading course:  
2006 – 43 percent, 2007 – 41 percent, 2008 – N/A\*

\*Data not available

### New Initiatives

- In the fall of 2008, an evening SureStart Program cohort was added. The evening students had a fall- to-spring retention rate of 86.6 percent, and 33 percent passed reading.
- The data collected since the Star Award was presented continue to demonstrate the program's success in *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.
- Student evaluations and faculty and counselor feedback indicate that the program helps these underprepared students get the "sure start" they need as they begin their college experience.

### Contact

Penny Matthes, Counselor, Tarrant County College-Southeast Campus, 2100 Southeast Parkway, Arlington, Texas 76018-3144, Phone: (817) 515-3575, Email: penny.matthes@tccd.edu

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS CATEGORY

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### ***Academic Assistance and Resource Center***

Stephen F. Austin State University – Nacogdoches, Texas

### ***Academy for Collegiate Excellence and Student Success***

Prairie View A&M University – Prairie View, Texas

### ***Developmental Education Initiative Title V Project***

El Paso Community College – El Paso, Texas

### ***Ketelsen Institute for Academic Excellence***

University of Houston-Downtown – Houston, Texas

### ***Student Money Management Center***

University of North Texas – Denton, Texas

### ***Summer Bridge Program***

Lone Star College-North Harris – Houston, Texas

### ***University Writing Center***

Texas Tech University – Lubbock, Texas

### ***Yes Prep Public Schools***

Yes Prep Public Schools – Houston, Texas

**THE Star Award 2006**

The Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) is a student learning center with professional staff and peer tutors. Its programs include supplemental instruction, tutoring sessions, walk-in help desks, close connections with professors across campus, and innovative approaches to learning. The AARC holds "Distinguished Certification" by the National Association for Developmental Education and has received the John Champaign Memorial Award for Outstanding Developmental Education Program and the Texas Higher Education 2006 Star Award, recognizing exemplary contributions to higher education.

**Continued Progress**1-Year Grade Point Averages – All Full-Time Beginning Freshmen

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Non AARC	2.11	2.06	2.01
AARC	2.45	2.51	2.41

3-Year Retention Rates – All Full-Time Beginning Freshmen (5+ Visits)

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Non AARC	48%	50%	46%	47%
AARC	56%	64%	58%	61%

6-Year Graduation Rates – All Full-Time Beginning Freshmen

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Non AARC	33%	39%	38%
AARC	48%	51%	51%

**New Initiatives**

- Online Tutoring for Writing (OWL): Chatting in real time with tutors, submitting papers for feedback, reviewing hundreds of learning modules specifically designed for SFASU students.
- Physics and Astronomy Walk-In Table.
- Workshops for Documentation (MLA, APA, Chicago).
- Workshops for Study Strategies and Time Management designed for freshman success classes, residence hall training for student employees, and residence life programs for campus residents.
- American English Language Institute Conversational Groups: To improve the speaking and writing abilities of the college's international population.

**Contact**

M.E. McWilliams, Director, AARC, Steen Library, Stephen F. Austin State University,  
Box 13055, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, Texas 75962, Phone: (936) 468-1439,  
Email: mmcwilliams@sfasu.edu

## ACADEMY FOR COLLEGIATE EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Prairie View A&M University



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### THE Star Award 2003

The Academy for Collegiate Excellence and Student Success (ACCESS) program at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) is a “bridge to college” program designed to improve students’ academic performance and assist in their transition from high school to college. The program provides intensive preparation and support for students through three key strategies: 1) intensive academic enhancement; 2) advisement coupled with centralized support services; and 3) a structured, academically-focused residential environment. The curriculum for the seven-week residential “academic boot camp” concentrates on learning strategies which address the skill areas of problem solving and critical thinking. Students attend daily classes in composition, critical thinking, math, reading, and problem solving. Complementing the weekly classroom instruction are nightly study halls and specialized workshops. ACCESS students also participate in leadership training, social/personal development activities, and cultural enrichment experiences.

### Continued Progress

- Between 1996 and 2007, 1,181 students participated in the ACCESS program, and 76.3 percent (901) matriculated at Prairie View A&M University. (Attendance at Prairie View A&M University is not a requirement for ACCESS participation.)
- The overall average retention rate to the sophomore year of the ACCESS students attending Prairie View A&M University is 77.5 percent (698), which is above Prairie View A&M University’s 2007 retention rate of 74.8 percent.
- The overall average six-year graduation rate for the ACCESS students at Prairie View A&M University is 41.5 percent (374); this is also above the university’s 2007 graduation rate of 41.1 percent.
- ACCESS students have also gained acceptance to a wide variety of graduate programs.

### New Initiatives

ACCESS promotes The Carnegie Foundation’s concept that “a good college affirms that service to others is a central part of education.” In 2006, ACCESS began emphasizing service learning and civic engagement as a program focus. Students participated in common reading/writing assignments that centered around social problems in the United States today. Students have participated in numerous service learning projects in the Houston area; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Brownsville, Texas. In 2008, ACCESS students mixed service learning with a study of the civil rights movement, visiting Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

### Contact

Lettie Raab, Director, University College, Prairie View A&M University, P. O. Box 519, Prairie View, Texas 77446-0519, Phone: (936) 261-5900, Email: [lmraab@pvamu.edu](mailto:lmraab@pvamu.edu)

## DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE TITLE V PROJECT

El Paso Community College



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### THE Star Award 2007

The Developmental Education Initiative (DEI), Title V Project was recognized with the Texas Higher Education Star Award on October 30, 2007. The program underwent a name change when it went from grant to institutional funding. Its new name is the Pretesting/Retesting Educational Preparation (PREP) Program. The Program provides students an opportunity to prepare for the college placement test. An individualized case management approach is used to determine academic background and goals. A diagnostic assessment is conducted, and computer assisted modules are used for intervention.

### Continued Progress

The following table summarizes the placement success rates of students who completed their intervention program and placed out of at least one developmental education course. Course placement results are based on the Accuplacer placement test.

	Placement Success Rates		
	Math	Reading	Writing
2003-2004	60%	68%	80%
2004-2005	54%	70%	69%
2005-2006	52%	69%	70%
2006-2007	54%	66%	75%
2007-2008*	57%	58%	64%

\*Retest Students Only

### New Initiatives

- PREP conducted a pilot program during summer 2008 which made PREP participation mandatory for students at the Valle Verde campus who were entering college in the fall semester. The program's participation rate was higher than in previous years.
- For the Fiscal Year 2007-2008, PREP provided assistance to 2,500 students, while in previous years the DEI/Title V program averaged 1,800 students per year. Based on results, there are plans to scale up the program in the near future.

### Contact

Juan J. Garcia, Manager, PREP, El Paso Community College, 919 Hunter Drive, El Paso, Texas 79915, Phone: (915) 831-3275, Email: jgarci50@epcc.edu

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**THE Star Award 2001**

The Ketelsen Institute for Academic Excellence, formerly known as the Jesse H. Jones Academic Institute, is a summer enrichment program that assists high school students academically and helps prepare them to transition to the more rigorous university experience. The program is a community-wide collaboration, including Project GRAD (a nonprofit K-12 school reform model that originated in Houston and is currently underway in 10 school districts across the country), Houston Independent School District (HISD), the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD), and corporate and private sponsors. Students are offered an opportunity to participate in a four-week academic enrichment program that supports and enhances their high school curriculum, helps prepare them for college, and acculturates them to a university environment. The university experience helps to reduce apprehension about college attendance by familiarizing students with campus life through interactions with university faculty, staff, students, and state-of-the-art technology. The goals of the institute include encouraging academic excellence and increasing the high school graduation and college enrollment rates.

**Continued Progress**

From its inception in 1990, the Ketelsen Institute for Academic Excellence, in partnership with Project GRAD and the Houston Independent School District, has served over 6,000 students. Because many of these students are the first in their families to attend college, they come to the university setting with little or no university tradition. For some, it is the first time they have been on a university campus.

**New Initiatives**

- From 1990 to 2003, the program served only students from Davis High School; Davis High School is located in a largely Hispanic community in north Houston near the University of Houston-Downtown campus. The enhanced format of the Ketelsen Institute for Academic Excellence currently supports Project GRAD students from five at-risk, inner-city Houston Independent School District schools – Jefferson Davis High School, John Reagan High School, Sam Houston High School, Jack Yates High School, and Phillis Wheatley High School.
- Successful participation for two summers in an approved university academic enrichment program is an eligibility requirement of a Project GRAD scholarship that provides \$1,000 per year for four years to attend college; University of Houston-Downtown has offered matching scholarships for eligible Project GRAD scholars attending the university.
- The summer institute is supported entirely by means of external funding which has exceeded \$3 million since 1990.

**Contact**

Branden Kuzmick, Director, Ketelsen Institute for Academic Excellence, University of Houston-Downtown, One Main Street, Suite 651-South, Houston, Texas 77002, Phone: (713) 221-8046, Email: [kuzmickb@uhd.edu](mailto:kuzmickb@uhd.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2007**

The University of North Texas (UNT) Student Money Management Center, an outreach program administered by the Division of Student Development, received the Texas Higher Education Star Award in 2007 in recognition of its successful design and establishment of financial literacy programming benefiting the university's diverse student body of 34,000 students. This center is defining student success beyond traditional academic and student affairs models. All students, including graduate students, are offered a variety of services and programs intended to give them the knowledge of managing their personal finances. The easily accessible online resources, workshops, consultations with trained counselors, and emergency loan support improve student success.

**Continued Progress**

Since receiving the 2007 Star Award, the Student Money Management Center has served: 7,240 students through its educational outreach presentations and events; 439 students in personalized consultations helping them address \$4.4 million in debt; 3,078 with loan support while addressing unanticipated or emergency-related expenses threatening their enrollment; and 16,038 unduplicated visitors accessing the center's online resources with 306,895 hits on website materials and pages.

**New Initiatives**

- Student-to-Student Financial Success Program (S2S) – The S2S Program takes the peer-to-peer concept and merges it with the center's mission through an innovative, student-centered, student-driven service model. Students are given the opportunity to learn basic money management skills from trained peers through consultations, workshops, and a skills series.
- March to College Day – In partnership with the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, this annual event inspires eighth grade students from economically disadvantaged families to attend college by letting them see and experience life on a college campus for one day.
- Project S.O.A.R. – UNT's Emerald Eagle Scholars program was created for students who are academically talented, but have limited financial resources. The center provides these scholars specialized financial literacy programming support based upon four tenets: Saving, Organization, Accountability, and Responsibility.
- Student Financial Literacy Empowerment Initiative – The center has collaborated with 43 universities and community colleges across the state and country exploring the possibility of bringing financial literacy education and programming to their students. With the support and guidance of the center, two campuses – Bowling Green State University in Ohio and Sam Houston State University in Texas – have opened dedicated student money management centers.

**Contact**

Paul F. Goebel, Director, Student Money Management Center, University of North Texas,  
P.O. Box 305237, Denton, Texas 76203-5237, Phone: (940) 369-7761, Email: [goebel@unt.edu](mailto:goebel@unt.edu)

## SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

Lone Star College-North Harris



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### THE Star Award 2005

The Summer Bridge Program targets suburban north Houston and Harris County high school graduating seniors in need of upper-level developmental education courses in English or math. The intensive, four-week program enables students to complete developmental education courses in the summer so that they can begin the fall semester at college-level, thus facilitating a smooth transition from high school to college. Recruited by a partnership of shared counselors who work at area high schools and the college, the Summer Bridge students come from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and are often the first-generation in their family to attend college. The program also links students to faculty or staff members who mentor the students and help facilitate the students' first college experience. Textbooks are provided free of charge, and successful students receive \$150 scholarships upon completion of the program. Evaluation criteria include the success and retention rates at the end of the Summer Bridge, Grade Point Averages (GPA) at the end of the fall semester, and registration rates the following spring.

### Continued Progress

- In addition to receiving the 2005 Star Award, the Summer Bridge Program was selected as the national honorable mention winner in the "Student Retention and Success" category in the 17th Exemplary Initiatives Competition of the National Council of Instructional Administrators in 2006.
- Since the program received the Star Award, presentations about the Summer Bridge have been made at League for Innovation, the National Institute for Staff & Organizational Development, the Noel-Levitz Student Retention Conference, and the Texas Conference for Academic Support Programs.

### New Initiatives

- As a result of grants and extensive institutional support, the Summer Bridge Program has experienced dramatic growth since it began nine years ago. Starting with 17 students in 2000, the program at Lone Star College-North Harris anticipates an enrollment of 180 students in summer 2009. After experiencing student success in retention, completion, and GPA, it has been disconcerting to face some declining retention and GPA rates. Some of the math students have not been prepared for the intensity of the work in Intermediate Algebra. Placement scores have been an issue in a few cases and are being reviewed system-wide. The program is also being reviewed to determine if any changes are needed.
- All five colleges in the Lone Star College System now offer the Summer Bridge Program. Two colleges are currently participating in an intensive Summer Bridge Program in the Texas research project conducted by the National Center for Post-Secondary Research.

### Contact

Martha Whitley, Director of Student Success Initiatives, Lone Star College-North Harris, 2700 W.W. Thorne Drive, Houston, Texas 77073-3499, Phone: (281) 618-5511, Email: Martha.M.Whitley@LoneStar.edu



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**THE Star Award 2001**

The Texas Higher Education Star Award was presented to the Texas Tech University Writing Center for the Texas Tech/K-12 Instructional Partnership for schools project, which established a university-public schools partnership to address preparation for the writing portion of the TAAS test. Specifically, the program, under the leadership of Lady Brown, Ph.D., enabled fourth- and eighth-grade students to electronically submit writing assignments and receive individual feedback from Texas Tech University Writing Center tutors. During the project, over 450 students, 29 teachers, and 24 schools were served.

An indirect benefit of this project provided opportunities for K-12 teachers to learn how college tutors read and respond to student writing, thereby increasing their repertoire of instructional skills.

**Continued Progress**

The project was grant funded. When the grant ended, the project also ended.

**Contact**

Kathleen T. Gillis, Ph.D., Director of the University Writing Center, Texas Tech University,  
P. O. Box 43091, Lubbock, Texas 79409, Phone: (806) 742-2500 Ext. 282,  
Email: [kathleen.gillis@ttu.edu](mailto:kathleen.gillis@ttu.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2006**

Admission to a four-year college or university is a high school graduation requirement at YES Prep Public Schools (formerly YES College Preparatory Schools) based in Houston. A comprehensive college counseling program is a key element of the program, beginning in middle school with college campus visits. During their junior year, students take a SAT/ACT preparatory course. As seniors, students are enrolled in a “college seminar” course which allows them time to work on college and financial aid applications and visit with college counselors. YES Prep increases the number of low income Houstonians who graduate from college prepared to compete in the global marketplace and give back to their communities.

**Continued Progress**

- One hundred percent of graduating seniors have been accepted to four-year colleges and universities.
- Graduates have gained acceptance to 250+ institutions.
- Eighty-four percent of alumni have graduated from college or are still enrolled.

**New Initiatives**

- YES Prep Public Schools has 4,000+ students on the waiting list.
- By 2020, YES Prep will grow to serve 10,000 students on 13 campuses.

**Contact**

Stephanie S. Jones, Director of Grants Management, YES Prep Public Schools,  
6201 Bonhomme Road, Suite 168-N, Houston, Texas 77036, Phone: (713) 967-9037,  
Email: [stephanie.jones@yesprep.org](mailto:stephanie.jones@yesprep.org)

## ENROLLMENT AND PARTICIPATION CATEGORY

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### *Center for Mexican American Studies*

University of Houston – Houston, Texas

### *College Connection Program*

Austin Community College – Austin, Texas

### *Community Education Centers*

Alamo Colleges – San Antonio, Texas

### *Entering Student Program*

The University of Texas at El Paso – El Paso, Texas

### *First-Year Learning Communities Program*

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi – Corpus Christi, Texas

### *University-wide Enrollment Management*

University of North Texas – Denton, Texas

### *UT TeleCampus*

The University of Texas System – Austin, Texas

### *Virtual College of Texas*

Texas Association of Community Colleges – Austin, Texas



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## **THE Star Award 2005**

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Houston was established in 1972 as an interdisciplinary academic program encompassing the liberal arts, education, and social sciences focusing on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the United States. Its mission is to advance knowledge, promote critical thinking, and foster the value of service to the community. This involves designing a broad spectrum of public and scholarly programs. Located within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CMAS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: teaching, research and publications, recruitment and retention, leadership training, academic advising, and community service.

A diverse spectrum of programs is offered by the University of Houston Center for Mexican American Studies, such as the Academic Achievers Program which supports the needs of a diverse urban Hispanic student population. Efforts are focused on the recruitment and retention of first-time college students, promoting preparation for college, smoothing students' transition from high school to college, financial and academic support for undergraduate students, academic tutoring, career counseling, and leadership skills. Program evaluation results have shown that although these students enter the University of Houston with lower SAT scores than other Latino students, over time students earn higher Grade Point Averages, move more quickly toward graduation, and graduate at higher rates. The different support services offered throughout the year by the Academic Achievers Program has contributed to students' academic and individual potential.

### **Continued Progress**

The Center for Mexican American Studies' Graduate Fellowship Program is designed to recruit outstanding students for graduate study to foster research in areas that benefit the advancement of the Mexican American or Latino community.

### **New Initiatives**

Each year since 1983, the Center for Mexican American Studies schedules College Career Days for Houston-area high school seniors. Students attend workshops on admission, financial aid, and student life. With the help of student volunteers and staff, the high school students receive a tour of the University of Houston's campus and help in completing an admission form.

### **Contact**

Tatcho Mendiola, Jr., Ph.D., Director, Center for Mexican American Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun, Houston, Texas 77004, Phone: (713) 743-3136, Email: [tmendiola@uh.edu](mailto:tmendiola@uh.edu)



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### THE Star Award 2006

The College Connection Program forms part of Austin Community College's (ACC) response to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *Closing the Gaps* initiative. The College Connection Program is a unique, specialized outreach program which takes Austin Community College enrollment services directly onto ACC service-area high school campuses. The program's primary goal is to bring college services to all high school seniors.

The College Connection Program eliminates typical entrance barriers and ensures that every student, regardless of ethnicity or family educational history, has the opportunity to go to college. The program provides students one-on-one assistance to complete the ACC admission application, assessment, orientation, and advising requirements. It also provides assistance with the financial aid application, career planning, student life information, and ACC campus tours. Every graduating senior in the College Connection Program's high schools receives an ACC acceptance letter along with his/her high school diploma.

### Continued Progress

- In spring 2006, the College Connection Program served eight ACC service area school districts, 27 high schools, and more than 6,500 high school seniors. In spring 2009, the program served 25 school districts, 57 high schools, and approximately 13,000 seniors. Overall, from fall 2006 to fall 2008, ACC experienced an increase of 77 percent in student enrollments through the College Connection Program.
- The College Connection Program continues to diversify the student body at ACC. More than 34 percent of the program's ACC enrollees are Hispanic, 10 percent higher than the ACC overall student body.
- In fall 2008, 76 percent of the incoming College Connection Program freshmen persisted to spring 2009. This is 11 percent higher than ACC's overall persistence rate.
- The College Connection Program has served as a state and national model. At least 25 Texas colleges have adopted the program, and ACC has trained 15 of them on program implementation. Nationally, Florida and Maine have used the College Connection Program as a model for statewide programs that require all seniors to complete a college application before graduating.
- The College Connection Program was named an Innovation of the Year (2009) by the League for Innovation, was awarded a national Bellwether Award (2007), and was recognized as a semi-finalist for the national Excelencia in Education award (2006).

### New Initiatives

ACC Adult Education has implemented a "mini-College Connection" which provides services to GED students to encourage their college enrollment. After program implementation, 41 percent of GED completers enrolled in ACC in fall 2008.

### Contact

Melissa Richardson, Ph.D., Director, College Connection, Austin Community College,  
5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, Texas 78752, Phone: (512) 223-7084,  
Email: [mrichard@austincc.edu](mailto:mrichard@austincc.edu)

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**THE Star Award 2003**

The Alamo Colleges' Community Education and Computer Technology Centers are one-stop, outreach and matriculation centers located in traditionally underserved communities. The centers are committed to *Closing the Gaps* by providing preliminary college enrollment services in the areas of admission, assessment, financial aid, registration, and career exploration for prospective students seeking information regarding any of the five Alamo Colleges. The centers are centrally located within the communities in the western, southern, and eastern sectors of San Antonio. Each center provides computer access to community members at the Computer Technology Centers located within each Community Education Center.

**Continued Progress**

- In the past nine years, 2000 to 2008, the centers have successfully increased the recruitment of low income, educationally disadvantaged, minority, and first-time-in-college students.
- A total of 51,142 prospective students visited the centers, with 25,155 of these students successfully enrolling in one of the Alamo Colleges. During the period of 2000-2007, the first seven years of operation, 10,002 students of those enrolled were awarded financial aid. Technology awareness and computer accessibility has been provided to more than 15,318 individuals from the surrounding communities.
- The centers continue to fulfill the vision and goal of eliminating barriers that traditionally restrict access to college for students from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- To ensure delivery of services to meet the needs of the community, the Community Education Centers have created partnerships with community-based organizations, local churches, and school districts.
- The Community Education Centers serve as a link between the community and the Alamo Colleges.

**New Initiatives**

- New initiatives for the centers include the integration of the Community Education Centers into the Economic and Workforce Development area of the Alamo Colleges.
- In September 2006, the Westside Community Education Center experienced a significant evolution when the Alamo Colleges and the center's hosts, Edgewood Independent School District, the City of San Antonio, and community representatives joined forces to establish the Westside Education and Training center.
- In an effort to enhance the economic and workforce development of the community, the center began to offer training, credit and non-credit courses, academic and technical courses, developmental education, and college-level courses.
- The Eastside and Southside Community Education and Computer Technology Centers are also in the process of enhancing these additional services to meet the needs of their respective communities.

**Contact**

Carmen De Luna-Jones, Off-Site Coordinator, Eastside/Southside Community Education & Technology Centers, Alamo Colleges, 901 March, San Antonio, Texas 78214,  
Phone: (210) 485-0280 or (210) 977-1487; Email: mdeluna-joness@mail.accd.edu;

Gene Gonzalez, Off-Site Coordinator, Westside Community Education & Technology Center, Alamo Colleges, 563 SW 40th Street, San Antonio, Texas 78237, Phone: (210) 485-0240,  
Email: egonzalez1@mail.accd.edu

**THE Star Award 2003**

The Entering Student Program received the Texas Higher Education Star Award for contributions to improved academic success of first-year students. The program includes the first-year seminar, learning communities, and Student Leadership Institute.

**Continued Progress**

The following data show the seminar's impact since receiving the 2003 Star Award. The two charts compare the one-year retention and average Grade Point Average of first-year students who enrolled in the seminar their first semester with those of students who did not enroll in the seminar.

One-Year Retention		
Year	Enrolled in Seminar	Never Enrolled in
	First Fall	Seminar
2003	68.1%	37.7%
2004	68.1%	39.9%
2005	66.2%	47.0%
2006	67.5%	36.8%
2007	69.6%	45.0%

One-Year Average GPA		
Year	Enrolled in Seminar	Never Enrolled in
	First Fall	Seminar
2003	2.58	2.01
2004	2.51	2.27
2005	2.43	2.19
2006	2.45	2.07
2007	2.49	2.32

- In fall 2008, 82 percent of first-year students enrolled in the fall seminar.
- In fall 2008, 75 learning communities (1,526 seats) were offered.
- In spring 2009, 43 students will graduate from the Student Leadership Institute.

**New Initiatives**

The Entering Student Program has been enhanced in the following ways: adding an academic advisor to the seminar instructional team, which also includes an instructor, peer (student) leader, and a librarian; creating a custom-published seminar textbook; connecting a class of seminar students from The University of Texas at El Paso with students enrolled in a comparably-themed course at Victoria University in Australia; and awarding mini-grants to learning community instructors for the development of interdisciplinary assignments that link their courses.

**Contact**

Dorothy Ward, Ph.D., Director, Entering Student Program, The University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W. University Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79968, Phone: (915) 747-8439, Email: dpward@utep.edu

## FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi



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### THE Star Award 2001

The First-Year Learning Communities Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi enrolls all full-time, first-year students in clusters of core curriculum classes (e.g., composition and history) linked by a discussion-based, critical thinking seminar.

### Continued Progress

- In 2004, the First-Year Learning Communities Program won Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi the distinction of Foundation of the Excellence in the First College Year®.
- The First-Year Learning Communities Program has continued to serve as a national model for learning community programs. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi teams continue to present at national conferences and publish in journals and monographs regarding first-year learning.

### New Initiatives

#### *"Academic Success" Learning Communities*

- Part of the First-Year Islander quality enhancement plan (Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaccreditation 2010) is centered on the First-Year Learning Communities Program. This plan includes faculty communities of practice focused on first-year teaching and learning and curriculum redesign of core and learning community courses to meet the needs of all students. Part of the attempt to better serve at-risk students is the formation of "basic skills" learning communities (Darabi, 2006; Tinto, 2008).
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has been invited to join the consortium that sponsors the National Learning Communities Conference.

### Contact

Susan Wolff Murphy, Co-Director, University Core Curriculum Programs, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5812, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412-5812, Phone: (361) 825-2640, Email: [susan.murphy@tamucc.edu](mailto:susan.murphy@tamucc.edu)



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### THE Star Award 2008

A multitude of campus-wide enrollment strategies have led to documented state leadership in increasing college attendance and degrees awarded while maintaining high levels of financial efficiency for the state of Texas. When it comes to *Closing the Gaps* in participation and success, the University of North Texas (UNT) has delivered. Since *Closing the Gaps* counting began in 2000, purposeful enrollment planning and management across the campus has led the UNT to rank at the top for increasing enrollments and increasing degrees awarded. The University of North Texas ranks first in the state for increased number of degrees awarded, and UNT ranks second in the state for increased total enrollment. Additionally, UNT has performed at the top in the critical areas of increasing participation and success of African American, Hispanic, and transfer students.

### Continued Progress

- University-wide Enrollment Management continues strongly and actively at the University of North Texas.
- The Star Award recognized effort that led to uncommon, simultaneous growth in student quality, quantity, and diversity continues to be elemental to UNT's current enrollment successes. The effort is rooted in campus-wide work teams and collaborations which continue to grow.

### New Initiatives

- The effort has expanded its focus on P-16 work, community college partnerships, and outreach to schools and community-based organizations.
- The focus on student access and success has led to increased pursuit and award of external grants to provide direct financial assistance to students and student support programs.
- The University of North Texas continues the expansion of research projects about student access and success, as well as curricular innovations targeted to improving student engagement and academic success.
- All totaled, UNT's efforts add up to continued enrollment growth and success in degrees awarded. Since 2000, UNT ranks first in Texas for increased number of degrees awarded and second for growth in total enrollments. UNT also leads the state in transfer enrollments, and ranks sixth among all residential universities in the country. As of fall 2008, UNT has become one of few universities in the country enrolling more than 4,000 African American and 4,000 Hispanic students.

### Contact

Troy Johnson, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, UNT Enrollment Management,  
University of North Texas, 1155 Union Circle #310830, Denton, Texas 76203-5017,  
Phone: (940) 565-4602, Email: [Troy.johnson@unt.edu](mailto:Troy.johnson@unt.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2007**

The University of Texas System UT TeleCampus, working at The University of Texas System Administration level, partners with The University of Texas System institutions to build and deliver high-quality online courses, degree programs, and support services. The work of the UT TeleCampus supports the goals of *Closing the Gaps* and earned a Texas Higher Education Star Award in 2007 for increasing student participation and success. Since launching in 1998, UT TeleCampus-based courses have served more than 60,000 enrollments taught by hundreds of University of Texas System faculty members. Today the UT TeleCampus offers more than 20 fully online certificate and degree programs.

**Continued Progress**

- To continue meeting the goals of *Closing the Gaps* and the TeleCampus mission to expand access to The University of Texas System, UT TeleCampus is partnering with The University of Texas System institutions to build and deliver multiple Accelerated Bachelor Completion Programs. Centralized in-house marketing will target the three million-plus working age adults in Texas who started college but never completed a degree.
- The degree programs are designed to address a pressing state and national need for more college graduates. Internationally, the U.S. has dropped to the bottom of the top 10 in educational attainment, and in Texas, only 29 percent of adults currently hold a college degree. Texans with a college degree are 32 percent more likely to participate in the workforce than those with less than a high school diploma. The annual increase in earnings from a high school diploma to attainment of the bachelor's degree is estimated at more than \$23,000.
- To meet goals of global competitiveness and to achieve a healthy future for the state, Texas must focus on graduating more adults from college. Online education provides an excellent solution for reaching this population, and The University of Texas System is poised to make that vision a reality with significant economic benefits to the state.

**New Initiatives**

- Students enrolled in the Accelerated Bachelor Completion Program will have access to a robust website and a full suite of student support services, such as degree audits, financial aid, 24x7 help desk support, access to digital library resources, and a 24x7 academic tutoring service. Students will be taught by expert University of Texas faculty trained in online instruction.
- The first cohort of students will begin the program in 2010, with a projected stream of more than 1,000 graduates within five years, creating a positive economic impact to the state in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

**Contact**

Darcy Hardy, Ph.D., Executive Director, UT TeleCampus, The University of Texas System, 702 Colorado, Suite 4.100, Austin, Texas 78701, Phone: (512) 499-4207, Email: [dhardy@utsystem.edu](mailto:dhardy@utsystem.edu)



## **THE Star Award 2001**

The Virtual College of Texas (VCT) is a collaborative of all Texas public two-year colleges. It was created by the Texas Association of Community Colleges to facilitate sharing of distance learning courses among member colleges. Chief Executive Officers of the VCT member colleges developed the host-provider model upon which the VCT operations rest and defined the principles of the VCT's organization and management.

Under the terms of the VCT's host-provider model, students register at their home (host) colleges for courses offered by other colleges (providers). Host colleges collect tuition, fees, and state funding; deliver full support services to students; and award course credit. The provider college delivers the instruction and collects an instruction fee from the host college.

## **Continued Progress**

- Since the Virtual College of Texas started in fall 1998, it has supported more than 50,000 course enrollments. In its second year, the VCT began providing additional services to colleges with grant support: purchasing a course management system license for all public two-year colleges in Texas, and providing faculty training on how to develop and deliver online courses through an online curriculum developed by Texas community colleges.
- The training program benefited more than 1,000 faculty members.
- In stages, the VCT developed a sophisticated website that specifically supports host-provider operations.
- The Virtual College of Texas successfully underwent a statewide review by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 2005-2006.

## **New Initiatives**

- The Virtual College of Texas's original mission "to increase access to higher education" now includes "to increase student success."
- The VCT has negotiated licenses for web-based services that support two major pillars of student success: course quality and student support. These licenses include a program for assessing student readiness for distance learning, a user-friendly online lesson builder that offers exceptional, multi-purpose lesson-building power, a repository of video and Flash learning objects, and a system that facilitates peer review of courses.
- The Virtual College of Texas is also collaborating with the Texas Virtual School Network, established to serve K-12 schools, to address the increasing need for dual credit courses.

## **Contact**

Ron Thomson, Director, Virtual College of Texas, Austin Community College-Pinnacle Campus, 7748 Highway 290 West, Austin, Texas 78736, Phone: (512) 223-8030, Email: Thomson@austincc.edu

# **NURSING SHORTAGE, HEALTH, AND MEDICAL RESEARCH CATEGORY**

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## ***Gulf Coast Consortia/Keck Center***

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston – Houston, Texas

## ***Nursing Success Program***

Texas Woman's University – Houston, Texas

## ***Premedical Honors College***

Baylor College of Medicine/The University of Texas-Pan American – Houston, Texas

## ***Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program***

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center – Lubbock, Texas

## ***South Plains Nursing Education Community Coalition***

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center – Lubbock, Texas

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## **THE Star Award 2005**

The Gulf Coast Consortia, one of the largest inter-institutional cooperatives in the world, brings together the strengths of Houston-Galveston-area academic medical research institutions and universities to build interdisciplinary collaborative research teams and training programs at the frontiers of biomedical sciences. The W. M. Keck Center for Interdisciplinary Bioscience Training – the training arm of the consortia – supports more than 70 trainees and has more than 200 faculty affiliated with eight joint training programs. Members include The University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, Baylor College of Medicine, Rice University, and the University of Houston.

## **Continued Progress**

- The Gulf Coast Consortia and its training arm the Keck Center, currently with 10 training programs and more than 400 faculty participants, continue to provide interdisciplinary biomedical training opportunities for graduate students across its six member institutions. Students are involved in computational biology, biomedical informatics, nanobiology, molecular biophysics, pharmacoinformatics, and computational and structural biology in biodefense.
- Additional areas of training since 2005 include theoretical and computational neuroscience, biomedical discovery from large scale datasets, virus imaging, and patient safety and quality. Many supporting programmatic activities, such as seminars and conferences, are free and open to the public so that interested students and faculty in the statewide scientific community may participate.
- The Gulf Coast Consortia continues its national recruitment of under-represented minorities to the Houston-Galveston area through participation in the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science and the Annual Biomedical Conference for Minority Students, as well as through state and local recruiting efforts.

## **New Initiatives**

- The Gulf Coast Consortia is expanding into emerging biomedical research areas, such as mathematical biosciences, translational pain research, and early disease detection.
- New facilities for high throughput screening provide powerful tools for the identification of new chemical compounds that may lead to new drugs for cancer and other major diseases. Its offices will move in late 2009 to the BioScience Research Collaborative, Rice University's new building adjacent to the Texas Medical Center, designed and built with collaborative research in mind and featuring eight floors of research labs.

## **Contact**

Karen Ethun, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Consortia, Rice University, P. O. Box 1892, MS-141, Houston, Texas 77251-1892, Phone: (713) 348-4753, Email: [kethun@rice.edu](mailto:kethun@rice.edu)

## **NURSING SUCCESS PROGRAM**

Texas Woman's University



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### **THE Star Award 2002**

The Nursing Success Program was developed to retain academically at-risk nursing students. Students admitted to upper-division nursing, and who have low reading comprehension scores on an entrance exam, participate in the retention program. The program provides accent modification to students for whom English is a second language, proactive advisement, strategies for becoming excellent learners, and skills development in thinking through clinical cases using case studies.

#### **Continued Progress**

- From fall 2000 through spring 2006, 225 students participated in the Nursing Success Program on the Houston campus. Of those, 126 (56 percent) were African American, 32 (14 percent) were Asian American, 44 (20 percent) were Anglo American, and 23 (10 percent) were Hispanic. Of the 225 participants, 175 (78 percent) completed the nursing program.
- During the three semesters prior to introducing the Nursing Success Program, only 47 percent of students with low reading scores on the admission exam progressed to graduation. Perhaps without the Nursing Success Program, only 106 of the 225 students would have completed the nursing program. Instead, an additional 69 students completed requirements to become practicing baccalaureate nurses.

#### **New Initiatives**

- A website was developed, and nurse leaders throughout the country were notified that it was available. As planned, the website was available for two years. Program representatives provide the materials to those who request them.
- Two articles have been published about the Nursing Success Program.
- The Nursing Success Program strategies were included in a federally funded collaboration (Health Resources and Services Administration) between three universities to retain nursing students and contributed to the success of that project.

#### **Contact**

Lene Symes, Ph.D., RN, Associate Professor, College of Nursing, Texas Woman's University, 6700 Fannin, Houston, Texas 77030, Phone: (713) 794-2100, Email: [LSymes@TWU.edu](mailto:LSymes@TWU.edu)

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## **THE Star Award 2002**

This eight-year, high school-through-medical school pathway, established in partnership with The University of Texas-Pan American in 1994, is significantly increasing the number of South Texas students pursuing medical education. Each year 10 to 15 high school graduates from medically underserved counties in South Texas are selected for the program based on their academic performance, maturity, community service, and other factors. Selected students enroll as undergraduates at The University of Texas-Pan American and are given conditional acceptance to Baylor College of Medicine. They participate in summer academic programs, clinical experiences, mentoring activities, and biomedical research as undergraduates, and receive need-based tuition and fee scholarships for eight years (as undergraduates and medical students).

## **Continued Progress**

- Since the program's inception in 1994, 242 students have been selected for the Premedical Honors College and 134 have matriculated into medical school – 99 at Baylor College of Medicine and 35 at other Texas medical schools. These students represent nearly 50 high schools across more than 30 cities and towns in South Texas, and 70 percent of the students are Hispanic.
- As of June 2009, the program has produced a total of 65 M.D.s, 85 percent of them Hispanic. Of these, 20 are currently practicing, 12 of those in South Texas. The other 45 are in residency or fellowship training programs, 9 in South Texas. Many of these young physicians have expressed a desire to return to South Texas to practice. Others are interested in continuing in academia with a role in teaching and mentoring. Seven graduates are faculty members at academic medical centers, and all are Hispanic.
- Currently, there are 46 students in the Premedical Honors College at The University of Texas-Pan American, 45 students at Baylor College of Medicine, and 9 students at other Texas medical schools.

## **New Initiatives**

- The Premedical Honors College has served as a model for other similar programs in Texas.
- In 2002, the Texas Legislature replicated the program on a statewide level when it established the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) which seeks to increase opportunities for economically disadvantaged Texans to access medical education. JAMP involves all eight Texas medical schools, 31 of the state's four-year public universities, and 34 Texas private four-year universities.

## **Contact**

William A. Thomson, Ph.D., Baylor College of Medicine, One Baylor Plaza, BCM411, Houston, Texas 77030, Phone: (800) 798-8244, Email: [wthomson@bcm.tmc.edu](mailto:wthomson@bcm.tmc.edu)

## SECOND DEGREE ACCELERATED BSN PROGRAM

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

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### THE Star Award 2008

The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program is a one-year, accelerated nursing program which allows students who have a previous baccalaureate degree to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in one calendar year. The program was developed in response to the nursing shortage and the increased desire for degreed individuals to enter the nursing workforce in a shorter time period than the standard two-year nursing education program. The didactic component of the curriculum is delivered entirely online, allowing students to remain in their home region (the program is offered in the Lubbock, Odessa, Abilene, and Austin/Hill Country areas). The clinical component is completed in a regional hospital under the supervision of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing-prepared staff nurse who serves as the students' Clinical Coach for the entire year. This educational model promotes participation and success goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

### Continued Progress

- The Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program continues to produce quality graduates, with most (60 percent) staying at the hospital in which they trained.
- Graduation rates for the program are almost 96 percent, and the overall NCLEX pass rate for all students is 89 percent. The program has graduated 144 students since spring 2005.

### New Initiatives

- The School of Nursing started a cohort of 10 students in the Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program in El Paso beginning fall 2008.
- The program is now offered in five regions in Texas.

### Contact

Cathleen A. Collins, Ph.D., RN, CNE, Assistant Professor and Department Chair,  
Non-Traditional Nursing Studies, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center,  
3601 4th Street, STOP 6264, Lubbock, Texas 79430, Phone: (806) 743-2730 Ext. 244,  
Email: [cathie.collins@tthsc.edu](mailto:cathie.collins@tthsc.edu)



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## **THE Star Award 2003**

The South Plains Nursing Education Community Coalition was organized to form educational, employer, and community partnerships to help fight the growing crisis of a staggering nursing shortage that not only threatens the health care of the South Plains region of Texas, but the entire nation. The Coalition is composed of four South Plains nursing schools (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock Christian University, South Plains College, and Covenant), two hospital systems (University Medical Center and Covenant Health System), a local bank (American State Bank), and the South Plains Workforce Development Board.

### **Continued Progress**

- The Lubbock Heart Hospital is a new member of the Coalition.
- The South Plains Nursing Education Community Coalition has continued to have quarterly meetings to discuss partnering and funding possibilities.
- Since the inception of the Coalition, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing has added a second Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program; has added regional campuses at Abilene, Marble Falls, and El Paso; has instigated a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program; and is constructing a Regional Simulation Center. Lubbock Christian University School of Nursing has added a master's program, and the South Plains College School of Nursing has added distance learning and is completing a Simulation Center. Covenant School of Nursing, Covenant Hospital, and University Medical Center are active participants in the simulation centers.

### **New Initiatives**

- American State Bank: \$250,000 Partnerships in Nursing Grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- Regional Simulation Alliance organized under Robert Wood Johnson grant from Coalition members.

### **Contacts**

Alexia Green, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Professor and Dean, Anita Thigpen Perry School of Nursing, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 3601 4th Street MS6264, Lubbock, Texas 79401, Phone: (806) 743-2730, Email: [Alexia.green@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:Alexia.green@ttuhsc.edu)

Marla Cottenoir, MSN, Dean, South Plains College Department of Nursing, South Plains College, 1401 S. College Avenue, Levelland, Texas 79336, Phone: (806) 894-2332, Email: [mcotteno@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:mcotteno@southplainscollege.edu)

## RETENTION, TRANSFER, AND SUCCESS CATEGORY

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### ***Graduates and Completers Projects***

Houston Community College System – Houston, Texas

### ***Law School Preparation Institute***

The University of Texas at El Paso – El Paso, Texas

### ***Monitored Probation Early Intervention Program***

Lamar University – Beaumont, Texas

### ***Student Employment Initiative***

The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College – Brownsville, Texas

### ***Transfer Scholarship Program***

The University of Texas at El Paso/El Paso Community College – El Paso, Texas

### ***University Scholars***

The University of Texas-Pan American – Edinburg, Texas

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## **THE Star Award 2005**

The Houston Community College System's Graduates and Completers project addresses *Closing the Gaps* in student success by increasing the number of community college graduates and completers. In four years, Houston Community College System (HCCS) has increased its total number of graduates and completers from 2,025 in 2000-2001 to 6,144 in 2003-2004, a 203 percent increase through implementing the following six strategies:

1. Degree Audit – By targeting workforce students enrolled in a "Capstone" course, transcripts are monitored for student readiness to graduate. Students and department chairs are contacted and counseled for possible course substitutions. Associate of Arts in Science candidates are monitored for potential awards in levels I or II certificates or the Marketable Skills Achievement Award. Annual queries of students with 55 or more semester credit hours are analyzed for degree completion.
2. Degree Completion Fairs – Degree completion fairs are held each fall and spring in all HCCS colleges.
3. Student Success Week – Held twice yearly at each college, various scheduled activities include advising, transcript evaluation, and filing of graduation applications.
4. Core Completers – Houston Community College System identifies students who are core complete but who have not applied for graduation. The program is run three times a year. Once identified, student transcripts are audited for student graduation readiness and/or counseling.
5. Transfer Back Process – Students may transfer back equivalent courses within three years of enrollment in the Houston Community College System.
6. Graduation Problem Resolution – Incomplete application packets received by the graduation office are routed to student services for analysis and completion.

### **Continued Progress**

- The Graduates and Completers project is still in operation and is partially funded with a part-time Carl D. Perkins basic grant position.
- The Houston Community College System has been able to maintain the gains in graduates and completers since the project's inception.
- HCCS estimates that the value added is at least 2,000 additional graduates and completers per year. For 2007-2008, Houston Community College System had 5,978 graduates and completers.

### **New Initiatives**

- In addition to examining student transcripts for completion of awards, the Houston Community College System is also checking to see that students have the correct degree plan on file. When inconsistencies are found, the correct degree plan is filed.
- The project will be supplemented by the Houston Pathways Initiative, funded 2009-2011 by Houston Endowment, Inc.

### **Contact**

Lawrence E. Markey, System Director, Grants and Career and Technical Education,  
Houston Community College System, P.O. Box 667517, Houston, Texas 77266-7517,  
Phone: (713) 718-5045, Email: lawrence.markey@hccs.edu



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## THE Star Award 2004

The Law School Preparation Institute (LSPI) began as a way to help remedy disparities in admissions that hurt acceptance chances for The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) students applying to law school. The LSPI received the Texas Higher Education Star Award in 2004 for its success in increasing the number of UTEP students going to law school.

## Continued Progress

- Since the Law School Preparation Institute's inception, 220 of its graduates have been admitted to law school. Thirty-five percent of LSPI graduates who apply to law school are accepted by at least one top-fifteen law school. This is an extraordinary achievement. Just 4.5 percent of applying LSPI students did not receive an offer from at least one law school. In comparison, for the 2006-2007 application year, nationally 36.8 percent of all applicants were rejected by all law schools to which they applied.
- The Law School Preparation Institute has built an excellent reputation with deans of admission at numerous law schools, and they trust the program and the recommendations that LSPI faculty make on behalf of students. It is clear from the data that when these students are given the tools and training to succeed, their own desires and motivation are the only limits to what they may achieve.
- Since winning the Star Award in 2004, the Law School Preparation Institute's success has continued apace, with many of the students entering the best law schools in the nation. Since 2004, over half of applying LSPI graduates have been admitted to at least one first-tier law school as defined in *U.S. News and World Report*. Many LSPI graduates have returned to El Paso to practice law and have made a strong impact on the legal community. For example, aside from private practice, a number of LSPI graduates occupy offices in the local bar association, work in the prosecutor's office, or are employed in nonprofit corporations.

## New Initiatives

- Summer High School Law Prep Camp (started in 2008) – Month-long introduction to law from various perspectives; 25 participating students the first year and 40 students projected for 2009.
- Law School Boot Camp – Intensive two-week camp to prepare students starting law school in the fall on how to approach law examinations.
- Internships at new venues – Summer internships at the Office of General Counsel and Central Intelligence Agency.

## Contact

William G. Weaver, J.D., Ph.D., Director, Law School Preparation Institute, 403 Kelly Hall, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas, 79968-0703, Phone: (915) 747-8867, Email: [wweaver@utep.edu](mailto:wweaver@utep.edu)

## MONITORED PROBATION EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Lamar University



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### THE Star Award 2002

In 1999, the Center for General Studies at Lamar University instituted the Monitored Probation Program, a comprehensive academic retention program, as an early intervention approach to facilitate academic recovery for students placed on academic probation or suspension.

### Continued Progress

After receiving the 2002 Texas Higher Education Star Award, the Monitored Probation Program continued to successfully serve General Studies students until fall 2008, when the program was expanded to provide services to all Lamar University students. The result was a newly created department, Student Advising and Retention Services.

### New Initiatives

- Student Advising and Retention Services serves all Lamar University students on monitored probation and provides a variety of academic support services to other students as well.
- Services include the Early Alert Referral System; proactive advising (academic, career, and personal); study skills instruction; tutoring; supplemental instruction; academic workshops; and mentoring programs, such as WINGS, African American Male Professional Connections, and G-Force.
- Student Advising and Retention Services also coordinates learning communities and has secured a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Summer Bridge Program and a Summer Intensive Program to help target at-risk students and provide resources to help those students succeed in post-secondary education.

### Contact

Madelyn D. Hunt, Dr. P.H., Associate Provost for Student Retention, Lamar University,  
P.O. Box 10909, Beaumont, Texas 77710, Phone: (409) 880-7548,  
Email: [madelyn.hunt@lamar.edu](mailto:madelyn.hunt@lamar.edu)

## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College



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### THE Star Award 2008

The Student Employment Initiative Program (SEI) at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC) operates with an annual budget of \$439,000 from tuition set-aside. This program is part of the institutional student retention and time-to-graduate strategy. On this commuter campus, most students are employed either full- or part-time while enrolled. On-campus employment opportunities that are related to their fields of study enable students to earn money while they learn, strengthening their relationships with university faculty and staff, while adding greater value to their educational experience.

Since fall 2005, approximately 80 students have participated in the Student Employment Initiative each semester, and a total of 540 students have participated in this program. They serve in more than 50 departments at UTB/TSC and perform a myriad of duties vital to the institution's success.

Work opportunities on campus have had positive effects on retention of program participants, retention of the students, critical campus connections, expanded support services for other students, and students' time-to-graduate.

To be eligible for this program, students must be enrolled in at least 15 semester credit hours, maintain a minimum 2.75 Grade Point Average (GPA), and work in a job related to their major field of study for a maximum of 20 hours per week and for up to 32 weeks each semester. Students in the program currently receive a wage of \$8.25 per hour.

### Continued Progress

- The Career Services office has identified three representative groups and monitored their performance from fall 2005 to fall 2008: 1) Student Employment Initiative (test group) (N=540); 2) group of students with similar course load (control group) (N=8,482); and 3) all UTB/TSC undergraduate students (N=72,395). The benchmark study includes number of credits attempted, number of semester credit hours completed, semester GPA, cumulative GPA, and retention data. The results are conclusive; the Student Employment Initiative participants have higher completion rates, GPA, and retention rates than the control group and the overall student community.
- Cohort Performance during first active semester:
  - *Semester Credit Hours (SCH) Attempted and Completed* – Student Employment Initiative: Attempted 15.76 SCH, Completed 15.22 SCH; Control Group: Attempted 16.05 SCH, Completed 14.36 SCH; All UTB/TSC Undergraduate Students: Attempted 10.30 SCH, Completed 8.32 SCH.
  - *Semester GPA and Cumulative GPA* – Student Employment Initiative: Semester GPA 3.25, Cumulative GPA 3.27; Control Group: Semester GPA 2.86, Cumulative GPA 2.92; All UTB/TSC Undergraduate Students: Semester GPA 2.41, Cumulative GPA 2.58.

- *Retention Rate* – Student Employment Initiative: 98.47 percent; Control Group: 90.30 percent; All UTB/TSC Undergraduate Students: 77.55 percent.
- *Conclusion* – The SEI participants performed better than either students with a similar course load who had not participated in the program (control group) or the overall undergraduate student population of UTB/TSC. The undergraduate student population at UTB/TSC is striving to take on increased course loads, in addition to maintaining, and in some cases increasing, their cumulative GPAs when compared to previous years.

## **New Initiatives**

Due to the upcoming Federal Minimum Wage increase, UTB/TSC is considering increasing the hourly rate for SEI participants to \$9.00 per hour. Because this would have budgetary implications, UTB/TSC is looking for additional funding opportunities to augment the cost of the program.

## **Contact**

Juan Andres Rodriguez, MBA, PHR, Career Services, Program Director, The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 80 Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas 78520, Phone: (956) 882-5627, Email: [juan.a.rodriguez@utb.edu](mailto:juan.a.rodriguez@utb.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2008**

The University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College (UTEP-EPCC) Transfer Scholarship Program provides scholarships to outstanding El Paso Community College students who wish to complete their undergraduate education at The University of Texas at El Paso. Begun in 1997, and supported entirely by private sector funds, the program, through spring 2008, has enabled 253 talented El Paso Community College students to pursue undergraduate degrees at The University of Texas at El Paso, with an outstanding 95 percent retention rate. Of these Transfer Scholars, 171 have completed their degrees, 116 with honors, and 69 remained enrolled in The University of Texas at El Paso degree programs. The mean cumulative Grade Point Average of all Transfer Scholars at The University of Texas at El Paso since 1997 is 3.6.

**Continued Progress**

- The UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program has added 40 new scholars and 20 graduates since spring 2008.
- Since winning the Texas Higher Education Star Award, the program's principal benefactor, the Wolslager Foundation, has increased its annual funding from \$350,000 to \$420,000.
- An additional \$25,000 has been raised for the program from the Greater Texas Foundation.

**New Initiatives**

- The increase in Wolslager Foundation funding has allowed The University of Texas at El Paso to raise the award amount of the 70 annual scholarships from \$5,000 to \$6,000.
- The additional funding from the Greater Texas Foundation will allow the university to award 10 additional annual scholarships of \$2,500.

**Contact**

Audrey Price, Assistant Vice President, University Development, The University of Texas at El Paso, 500 West University Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79968-0524, Phone: (915) 747-8522, Email: [aprice@utep.edu](mailto:aprice@utep.edu)

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## THE Star Award 2002

The University Scholars program is a four-year renewable scholarship awarded to students who have successfully earned college credit through Advanced Placement examinations and/or concurrent enrollment at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA). It is designed to encourage high school students to enroll in rigorous academic courses that will prepare them for success at the college level.

### Continued Progress

The entering freshmen (EF) retention rate for students in this program is significantly higher than the overall entering freshmen retention rate at UTPA.

University Scholars Entering Freshmen Retention Rate		
Cohort Semester	University Scholars EF Retention Rate	UTPA EF Retention Rate
Fall 2003	94.29%	66.40%
Fall 2004	96.08%	68.00%
Fall 2005	95.76%	72.70%
Fall 2006	94.57%	68.20%
Fall 2007	97.37%	71.50%

The students in this program are graduating at a much faster rate than the UTPA overall population. The UTPA's latest six-year graduation rate is 36.4 percent. The retention and graduation rates for these students reflect the success of this program.

Graduation Rates					
Cohort	2-Year	3-Year	4-Year	5-Year	6-Year
Fall 1998		5%	68%	68%	74%
Fall 1999		11%	35%	53%	64%
Fall 2000	5%	8%	47%	64%	67%
Fall 2001		5%	37%	58%	66%
Fall 2002	1%	11%	51%	63%	71%

### New Initiatives

The University of Texas-Pan American is considering a new initiative to advance University Scholars into a tiered scholarship program. The next step is to develop a four-year renewable tiered scholarship program that is geared to attract the type of students the university wants to enroll and retain. The tiered scholarship will provide a scholarship that can be offered to a wider range of students, generating additional interest in the university and encouraging more students to prepare for college while in high school.

### Contact

Griselda C. Castilla, Associate Director, The University of Texas-Pan American,  
1201 W. University Drive, SSB1.136, Edinburg, Texas 78539, Phone: (956) 381-2507,  
Email: gcabrera@utpa.edu

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) CATEGORY

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## *Chemistry Peer Leader Program*

The University of Texas at El Paso – El Paso, Texas

## *College of Science & Technology Scholars Academy*

University of Houston-Downtown – Houston, Texas

## *Model Institutions for Excellence Initiative*

The University of Texas at El Paso – El Paso, Texas

## *Pathways to Success in Science*

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi – Corpus Christi, Texas

## *Mathworks Summer Program*

Texas State University-San Marcos – San Marcos, Texas

## *Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program*

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



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## THE Star Award 2006

The Chemistry Peer Leader Program at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) replaces one hour of large-section faculty lecture per week in the first semester general chemistry course with two hours ('Plus Two') of small-section, student-facilitated Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) Workshop. This 'Plus Two' PLTL strategy has dramatically increased the A + B + C passing rate (from about 53 percent to about 65 percent); more than doubled the number of students majoring in chemistry and receiving Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degrees; increased the retention of STEM students; and increased the percentage of students receiving a bachelor's degree at UTEP measured five years after taking the course. The Chemistry Peer Leader Program is important because this general chemistry course is a gateway to majors in STEM disciplines; every student intending a major in science or engineering at UTEP must successfully pass this course to proceed into the chosen STEM major.

### Continued Progress

- Data relating to the Chemistry Peer Leader Program continue to support the increases mentioned above: increased student success in the Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) first semester general chemistry course, increased numbers of students majoring in chemistry, and increased retention and graduation.
- In the past two years, the number of Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degrees awarded at UTEP has dramatically increased. From 1988 to 2006, the approximate average number of Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degrees awarded was about 10 per year. In the 2006-2007 academic year, this increased to 25; in 2007-2008 there were 39 Bachelor of Science in Chemistry degrees awarded at The University of Texas at El Paso.

### New Initiatives

- Building on the successes of, and the data for, the Peer-Led intervention in first semester general chemistry, the National Science Foundation funded Project I-STAR (Integrated Student Success, Teaching, and Research) starting in fall 2007 under the Science Talent Expansion Program (STEP) grant program. I-STAR provides financial support for the Peer-Led Team Learning Foundation and extends this 'Plus Two' Peer-Led intervention and strategy to second semester general chemistry, first semester organic chemistry, first- and second-semester general physics, and the large pre-calculus service course at UTEP. 'Plus Two' replaces one hour of weekly 'professor' lecture with two hours of mandatory, integrated, student-centered learning overseen by an undergraduate facilitator and guide, the Peer Leader.
- Of the 80 Peer Leaders in the program since fall 2000, at least nine have chosen a career in teaching at the secondary level.

### Contact

James E. Becvar, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry, The University of Texas at El Paso,  
500 West University Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79968, Phone: (915) 747-7563,  
Email: [jbecvar@utep.edu](mailto:jbecvar@utep.edu)

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## **THE Star Award 2004**

The purpose of the College of Science & Technology Scholars Academy is to encourage the persistence of academically capable, first-generation-in-college science, math, computer science, and engineering students by overcoming some of the academic preparation, peer culture, and classroom climate barriers they face. As part of an effort to increase the number of minority and female students and graduates in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines, the program provides scholarships, mentorship stipends, and summer research stipends. It also cultivates a culture of achievement, community, and support among participants.

### **Continued Progress**

- This program has continued to grow in the number of student participants; student accomplishments; and the number of minority, female, and financially-needy students earning degrees in STEM fields and who either enter the STEM workforce directly or who pursue related graduate-level degrees. From 2004-2009, 229 graduated; of these, 150 went directly into the STEM workforce in Texas, 41 entered STEM graduate programs (mainly in Texas), and 28 entered health-related graduate programs. A major factor associated with the success of the Scholars Academy is a very active undergraduate research program in STEM.
- During the past five years, 262 students have received semester and summer undergraduate research stipends to participate in on-campus STEM research. One hundred twenty-two of these students presented the results of their research at major professional meetings. Two hundred twenty students attended major state and national STEM meetings. One hundred twenty-six STEM seminars were presented on campus. The average graduate retention rate was 85 percent.

### **New Initiatives**

- Through the Academy, a STEM Pre-START program was initiated for students entering the 9th-12th grades who stated their intent to pursue a STEM college degree. These students came from minority high schools. Each summer, a total of 112 students participated in these three-week sessions with a year-to-year retention rate of 89 percent.
- In addition, a Pre-AP Certification program for high school mathematics and science was started for teachers in local minority high schools. Between 2004 and 2008, 168 teachers completed this program. In addition, they received certification training for Gifted and Talented education in Texas.

### **Contact**

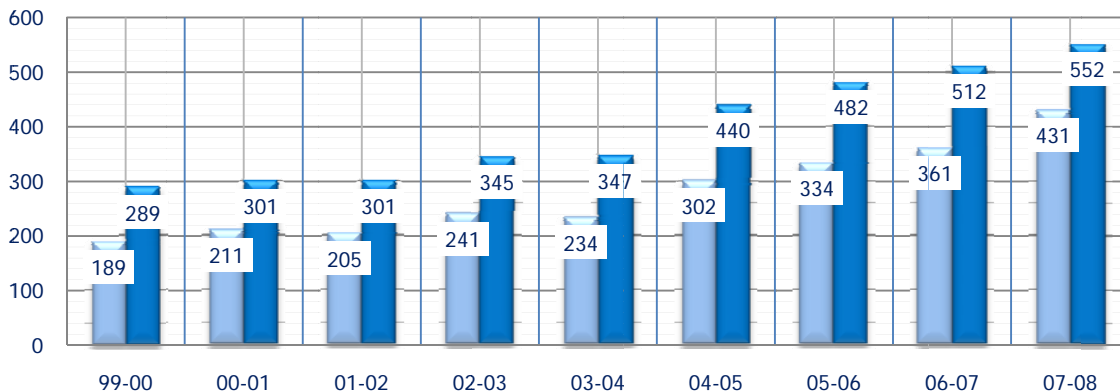
Larry Spears, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry, Co-Director of the UHD Scholars Academy,  
University of Houston-Downtown, One Main St., Suite N725, Houston, Texas 77002,  
Phone: (713) 221-8426, Email: spearsl@uhd.edu

## THE Star Award 2005

The Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE) Initiative was implemented with the purpose of increasing the quantity and quality of students that pursue degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Funded by the National Science Foundation, MIE represented an investment of \$22.5M over a period of 12 years. The Model Institutions for Excellence was successful in shifting the culture of the Colleges of Engineering and Science toward an educational paradigm based on student success.

## Continued Progress

Through the Model Institutions for Excellence Initiative, the number of STEM degrees awarded annually continues to increase at a pace that surpasses expectations. This trend is illustrated below on an annual basis. The left bar shows the number of Bachelor of Science STEM degrees awarded to Latino students, while the right bar indicates the total number of Bachelor of Science STEM degrees awarded.



## New Initiatives

- Based on the results obtained by the Model Institutions for Excellence Initiative, The University of Texas at El Paso has secured additional funding to support: (1) the curricular innovation of sophomore gateway STEM courses through the National Science Foundation *STEM Talent Expansion Program*; and (2) continuation of undergraduate research experiences through the *National Science Foundation UT System Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation*.
- The College of Engineering designated the “Engineering Plaza” as the one-stop shop for all engineering and computer science majors. The Engineering Plaza offers first-time advising to all freshman and transfer students and houses the Student Ambassadors program, which is the main outreach arm of the College of Engineering.
- The University of Texas at El Paso has institutionalized the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, which promotes best practices for student development.

## Contact

Benjamin C. Flores, Ph.D., Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, The University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W. University Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79968, Phone: (915) 747-6961, Email: [bflores@utep.edu](mailto:bflores@utep.edu)



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### THE Star Award 2003

In 1995, the College of Science and Technology initiated its Pathways to Success in Science Program (Pathways) to increase the participation of South Texas students in the scientific workforce. Pathways pre-dates the *Closing the Gaps* initiative but addresses the same four goals. Pathways enhances student mentoring, beginning at freshman orientation and continuing throughout the undergraduate years. Student development includes instilling self-confidence through hands-on undergraduate research and interaction with faculty members, and providing opportunities for the development of professional skills. Pathways includes faculty needs as well; faculty development and research are encouraged and supported. Pathways resulted in an increase of more than 500 percent in matriculation into medical, dental, and other professional schools; an increase of 385 percent in research dollars; and a \$46M endowment for the Harte Research Center. In 2001, Minority Access, Inc. designated Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi as a Role Model Institution for its exemplary success in recruiting, retaining, and graduating minority researchers. It is particularly significant that these successes were achieved in less than 10 years.

### Continued Progress

- Enrollment continues to increase. In 2007, South Texas enrolled 1,690 students (39 percent minority, an increase of 1 percent over 2004) and had 266 graduates (30 percent minority students, a 1 percent increase over 2004). Professional school matriculation has averaged 22 students each year since 2004.
- In 2004, the chapter of Sigma Xi received the Diversity Award. Eugene Billiot, Ph.D., received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers in 2006.
- Between 2004 and 2008, grant submissions increased from 170 to 185 (9 percent); awards increased from 110 to 123 (12 percent); and funding dollars increased from \$10,400,000 to \$14,410,000 (39 percent).

### New Initiatives

- The Coastal and Marine Systems Science Ph.D. program, begun in fall 2005, had 22 students enrolled (15 percent minority) and graduated its first student in May 2009.
- The Marine Biology Ph.D. program, begun in fall 2008, had seven students (43 percent minority).
- The new Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering begins fall 2009.
- Since 2004, South Texas has received several training grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Health for development of both faculty and students.

### Contact

Suzette F. Chopin, Ph.D., M.B.A., Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Regents Professor, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Dr., Mail Stop 5802, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412, Phone: (361) 825-6022, Email: [suzette.chopin@tamucc.edu](mailto:suzette.chopin@tamucc.edu)

## MATHWORKS SUMMER PROGRAM

Texas State University-San Marcos



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### THE Star Award 2001

In 2001, the Mathworks Summer Program was one of five programs in the state of Texas to receive the first annual Texas Higher Education Star Award from among 88 nominees. The Mathworks Summer Program develops model programs that engage students and teachers in doing mathematics at a high level.

### Continued Progress

- The Mathworks Summer Program has been recognized eight times by the American Math Society Epsilon Fund as one of the very top mathematics programs in the nation.
- The Mathworks Summer Program received the 2007 Siemens Foundation Albert Hoser Founder's Award, and more than 80 Mathworks students have been semi-finalists or above in the Siemens competition.
- The Mathworks Summer Program founder and Director, Max Warshaer, Ph.D., was recognized in 2007 as a Texas State University System Regents' Professor, the highest honor in the university system; in 2001, he received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Math, and Engineering Mentoring from President George W. Bush.
- More than 80 percent of the Mathworks Program alums are majoring in math, science, or engineering in college.
- In 2008, the Mathworks Program team tied for the overall top prize in the Primary Math World Contest in Hong Kong. Since 2002, the Program entry has been the top non-Asian team six times, winning the "Po Lueng Kuk Cup."
- Six Honors Summer Math Camp students have been named Presidential Scholars.
- More than 7,500 students and more than 650 Texas teachers have participated in the Mathworks Summer Programs.

### New Initiatives

- An exciting new curriculum development project pioneered by the Mathworks Summer Program integrates the summer math camp curriculum as a middle school curriculum covering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through algebra.
- Most important is the integrated training and support that prepares teachers for success when they use the curriculum in their classrooms.
- The legacy programs, the Honors Summer Math Camp, and Junior Summer Math Camp, continue to excite young students in mathematics each summer.

### Contact

Max Warshauer, Ph.D., Director, Mathworks, Texas State University-San Marcos,  
601 University Dr., San Marcos, Texas 78666, Phone: (512)245-3439, Email: [mathworks@txstate.edu](mailto:mathworks@txstate.edu)



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### THE Star Award 2002

The Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program, based at The University of Texas at San Antonio, is a collaboration of colleges, universities, and school districts throughout Texas that focuses on preparing middle and high school students for careers in math, science, technology, and engineering (STEM) through an eight-week summer program. The goals of the Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program are: to increase the number of middle and high school students, focusing on underrepresented groups, who will pursue STEM fields in college; to provide an academically intense, mathematics-based program for these students; to increase the success rate of students in college; and to acquaint students with professional opportunities in STEM.

### Continued Progress

- The Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program celebrated its 30th anniversary as it continues to grow across the state.
- Thirteen new sites have been added; participation continues to grow, with over 3,500 students in 2008.
- An evidenced-based research study is in progress to obtain additional data on the impact that the Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program has on student performance.

### New Initiatives

- PREP IV – A new program for students who successfully complete PREP I, II, and III that includes systems thinking, dynamic modeling for problem solving, water science, and computer science.
- University PREP – Alternative programs for students who successfully complete PREP I, II, and III that provides opportunities for students to take college courses for credit during the summer.
- Systems Academy for Young Scientists – A new STEM pilot program for fourth and fifth graders to include systems-based problem solving, mathematics, and project-based learning.

### Contact

Raul A. Reyna, Ph.D., Executive Director, Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program,  
The University of Texas at San Antonio, 501 W. Durango, San Antonio, Texas 78207,  
Phone: (210) 458-2072, Email: [rudy.reyna@utsa.edu](mailto:rudy.reyna@utsa.edu)

# TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS CATEGORY

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## *College of Education Partnership*

South Plains College/Texas Tech University – Levelland, Texas

## *HomeGrown Teacher Education Program*

San Jacinto College-North – Houston, Texas

## *Navarro College Partnership*

Texas A&M University-Commerce – Commerce, Texas

## *Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals*

Stephen F. Austin State University – Nacogdoches, Texas

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## THE Star Award 2008

South Plains College and Texas Tech University-College of Education Partnership is a seamless option for students to begin teacher preparation at South Plains College, earn an Associate of Arts in Teaching degree, and complete a degree and/or certification at Texas Tech University. The partnership addresses gaps in student participation, diversity, and success. In August 2004, South Plains College became the first community college in Texas to receive approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer the Associate of Arts in Teaching degree. South Plains College began offering the courses developed jointly between the two institutions. The partnership helps ensure a barrier-free transition, a highly articulated Associate of Arts in Teaching curriculum, unconditional admission to the Texas Tech University-College of Education for Associate of Arts in Teaching graduates, joint recruitment activities, intensive advisement, and mentoring. Presently, 99 students have received an Associate of Arts in Teaching degree from South Plains College and enrolled at Texas Tech University. One hundred percent of those students have either graduated or are still enrolled.

## Continued Progress

- The South Plains College Associate of Arts in Teaching program had 46 new graduates in May 2009, with over half transferring to the Texas Tech University-College of Education.
- The graduation and enrollment rates are holding at 100 percent for students transferring from South Plains College to the Texas Tech University-College of Education.
- Advising and transitional support from both institutions remain the key factors in fostering this success.

## New Initiatives

Representatives from the South Plains College Associate of Arts in Teaching program and Texas Tech University-College of Education met in spring 2009 to collaborate on a new Associate of Arts in Teaching bilingual degree plan. This new plan will incorporate two Spanish for Educators courses in order to better prepare students before entering the bilingual courses at the university level. The new South Plains College Associate of Arts in Teaching degree plan debuted in fall 2009, along with a learning community that combines physical geology and EDUC 1301 (Introduction to the Teaching Profession). Students will gain firsthand experience in developing teaching skills in the high-need area of science, in addition to gaining interest toward the Texas Tech University-College of Education EC-6 and 4-8 Math/Science areas of specialization.

## Contact

Annette Davis-Smith, M.Ed., Coordinator of the AAT Program, Assistant Professor of Education, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Levelland, Texas 79336,  
Phone: (806) 716-2173, Email: [adsmith@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:adsmith@southplainscollege.edu);

Margaret (Peggy) Johnson, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Teacher Education, College of Education, Texas Tech University, 3601 4th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79430,  
Phone: (806) 742-1998 Ext 437, Email: [peggy.johnson@ttu.edu](mailto:peggy.johnson@ttu.edu)

## HOME GROWN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

San Jacinto College-North Campus



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### THE Star Award 2002

The HomeGrown Teacher Education Program at the San Jacinto College-North Campus is a collaborative partnership in East Harris County involving a community college, a public school district, and a senior-level institution. The HomeGrown Teacher Education Program targets students who have graduated from area high schools. Participants work as teacher aides in school district classrooms while completing their degrees. San Jacinto College-North Campus uses Federal Work Study funds to pay eligible teacher aides; school districts pay students who are not eligible for Federal Work Study. When students move on to the senior institution, that institution uses Federal Work Study money as well as scholarship money provided by area civic organizations.

### Continued Progress

- Students at San Jacinto College-North Campus continue to work as teacher assistants in the Galena Park Independent School District; they are paid either with Federal Work Study funds at San Jacinto College-North Campus or by Galena Park Independent School District. University of Houston-Clear Lake continues to pay the students once they transfer from San Jacinto College-North Campus to the University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- Students reap additional benefits from the program by attending meetings of the HomeGrown Teacher Education Program which also has begun to sponsor an annual *Education Symposium* to interest students and provide greater understanding about the fields of education.

### New Initiatives

- The *Education Symposium* is a new series that teaches students about the different facets of the education field and promotes education as a career. During the course of a typical symposium, a wide variety of current hot topics in public education are discussed (e.g., Early Childhood; Diversity in the Classroom; Teaching Reading; Bilingual Education; Classroom Management) as well as topics pertinent to community college students (e.g., Transferring to a Senior Institution, Earning the Associate of Arts in Teaching degree; the Student Teaching Experience; Building the Portfolio).
- The *Education Symposium* guest speakers are brought in from four-year universities and other community colleges; administrators and teachers from surrounding independent school districts also serve as guest speakers. While this serves as a means of reinforcing students of their commitment and passion in becoming teachers, for many, this symposium presents students with information that piques their interest and, in turn, inspires them to become education majors.
- Students visit and interact with the administrators from the independent school districts to learn of job opportunities and the disciplines that most need teachers.

### Contact

Randy Snyder, DMA, Department Chair of Fine Arts and Education, San Jacinto College-North Campus, 5800 Uvalde, Houston, Texas 77049, Phone: (281) 998-6150 x7228, Email: [randy.snyder@sjcd.edu](mailto:randy.snyder@sjcd.edu)



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**THE Star Award 2005**

Through the Navarro College Partnership, Texas A&M University-Commerce offers on the Navarro College campuses in Corsicana and Midlothian upper-division courses leading to teacher certification, a bachelor's degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies, Criminal Justice, and a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree, providing a full-time director and advisors, faculty who teach on-site, and full student support services. The partnership also offers students the opportunity to complete a master's degree at Corsicana in Elementary Education, Special Education, and Educational Leadership. Prior to the partnership at the Corsicana campuses, Navarro College students had to drive one to two hours to reach a campus offering upper-division courses. Enrollment has increased from 63 students in fall 1999 to 674 students in spring 2009. The partnership has graduated 975 students; 788 are certified teachers who are employed in the surrounding five-county service area.

**Continued Progress**

- Since its inception, the Navarro College Partnership has expanded to include the Midlothian campus of the Navarro College district and provides support services, advisors, and a full-time coordinator.
- Enrollment has increased from 43 students in 2006 to 258 students in 2009.

**New Initiatives**

The partnership now offers students the opportunity to complete master's degrees in Elementary Education, Special Education, and Educational Leadership at the Corsicana and Midlothian campuses.

**Contact**

Sharon Johnson, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Student Access & Success,  
Texas A&M University-Commerce, P. O. Box 3011, Commerce, Texas 75429-3011,  
Phone: (903) 468-8707, Email: Sharon\_Johnson@tamu-commerce.edu

## ONLINE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

Stephen F. Austin State University



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### THE Star Award 2008

In January 2005, the Department of Elementary Education at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), in partnership with 22 Texas community colleges (representing 45 percent of all Texas community college students), began offering an EC-4 Online Completer Program. This innovative program allows paraprofessionals (instructional aides) working in Texas public schools to earn an Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree at a local community college and seamlessly transfer to SFASU to complete online a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (BSIS) degree with EC-4 (now EC-6) teacher certification. Each semester, these students complete coursework online and spend one to three days on campus observing in the Early Childhood Lab/University Charter and participating in face-to-face workshops.

### Continued Progress

- Since receiving the Texas Higher Education Star Award in 2008, SFASU has continued to add candidates to the innovative Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals.
- As of spring 2009, 126 candidates have graduated from the Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals. Currently over 160 candidates are in various stages of completion. The candidate pass rate on the state of Texas certification exams continues to be between 99 and 100 percent.
- Ninety percent of the paraprofessionals who have completed this program are remaining in their original school district after graduation.

### New Initiatives

- In July 2009, the Department of Elementary Education will be moving into SFASU's new Early Childhood Research Center, a 120,000 square foot facility consisting of a National Association of Education of Young Children-accredited Early Childhood Laboratory, an exemplary-rated University Charter School, and the Department of Elementary Education.
- The new Early Childhood Research Center will be producing more videos for online courses and providing state-of-the-art observation facilities when paraprofessionals come to campus.
- In the fall of 2009, all participating candidates in this program will be provided webcams to transmit lessons from their home classrooms where they serve as paraprofessionals. This will allow for immediate observation feedback from their university instructors and mentors.

### Contact

Susan Barber, Coordinator EC-6 Degree Completion Program, Stephen F. Austin State University, P.O. Box 13017, SFASU Station, Nacogdoches, Texas 75962, Phone: (936) 468-1431 or (936) 468-2904, Email: sbarber@sfasu.edu

# TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP STAR AWARD 2006

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*The Honorable Florence Shapiro*

Texas Senate

*The Honorable Geanie Morrison*

Texas House of Representatives

## TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP STAR AWARD 2006

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### The Honorable Florence Shapiro Texas Senate

Senator Florence Shapiro, District 8, was the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education in the 79th Texas Legislative Session. Some of her many contributions toward improving education in Texas include the following:

During the 79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session, Senator Shapiro spearheaded discussions and passage of House Bill 1. Although most of Texas thinks of House Bill 1 as the school finance legislation, it was much more than that. Through Senator Shapiro's leadership, it also included some major initiatives for helping Texas close the gaps in higher education. As a result, the state has now developed meaningful definitions and standards for determining college and career readiness, created vertical teams of faculty and teachers, established education research centers, and has taken (and is taking) other actions that will improve education in Texas.

In the regular session prior to the special session, Senator Shapiro authored major higher education legislation, including the financial aid omnibus bill.

In recognition of these and many other contributions to the people of Texas, the Coordinating Board presented Senator Florence Shapiro with the Texas Higher Education Leadership Star Award on November 6, 2006.

**Contact** Jennifer Ransom Rice, Chief of Staff, Texas Senate, P. O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711, Phone: (512) 463-0108, Email: [Jennifer.rice@senate.state.tx.us](mailto:Jennifer.rice@senate.state.tx.us)



**The Honorable Geanie Morrison  
Texas House of Representatives**

Representative Geanie Morrison, District 30, is a long-time advocate of higher education in Texas. Representative Morrison's support reached new heights as Chair of the Higher Education Committee in the 79th Texas Legislative Session. In the regular session, in addition to sponsoring the omnibus financial aid bill in the House, she was instrumental in passing key legislation to help the state ensure the quality of career colleges, improve the effectiveness of the state's P-16 Council, establish the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, and increase support for the Higher Education Assistance Fund.

In the 79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session, Representative Morrison played a key role in authorizing additional tuition revenue bonds to pay for badly needed capital projects at many public higher education institutions.

In recognition of these and many other contributions to the people of Texas, the Coordinating Board presented Representative Geanie Morrison with the Texas Higher Education Leadership Star Award on November 6, 2006.

**Contact** Lisa Peterson, Chief of Staff, Texas House of Representatives, P. O. Box 2910, Austin, Texas 78768-2910, Phone: (512) 463-0456, Email: [lisa.peterson@house.state.tx.us](mailto:lisa.peterson@house.state.tx.us)

**Association of Governing Boards  
of Universities and Colleges**

1133 20th St. N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.agb.org](http://www.agb.org)

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

1200 East Anderson Lane  
Austin, Texas 78752-1743  
[www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us)

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administrator directly.