



Excelencia IN EDUCATION!

ROADMAP FOR

ENSURING AMERICA'S FUTURE



**BY INCREASING
LATINO COLLEGE
COMPLETION**





ROADMAP – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The nation cannot reach its degree attainment goals without substantially increasing Latino college completion. While all groups will have to increase college degree attainment to meet the goals, increasing Latino educational attainment is crucial for the U.S. to meet its future societal and workforce needs for three main reasons: 1) the Latino population is growing rapidly and will make up a greater percent of the U.S. population by 2020; 2) Latino educational attainment is currently lower than that of other groups; and, 3) many economically competitive jobs in the U.S. will soon require education beyond a high school degree. For these reasons, *Excelencia* in Education and its partners are focusing intentionally on increasing Latino degree attainment.

Latinos will have to earn 5.5 million degrees to close equity gaps and help meet the nation's degree attainment goals by 2020.

OVERVIEW: The roadmap serves as a tool for stimulating dialogue in communities across the nation about action needed to increase degree attainment generally, and Latino degree attainment specifically. The roadmap addresses college preparation, as well as access, persistence, and degree attainment for traditional college-age students along with older students. It is also designed to complement broader efforts by partners as well as others, to meet the nation's goals for degree attainment.

Policy is about scale. Understanding what policies and practices are effective in enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students is directly relevant to communities only now beginning to experience growth in the number of their non-traditional students as well as those with long histories of growth. The following policy recommendations are offered to inform conversations and efforts to increase degree attainment of Hispanic students throughout higher education, and are not exhaustive. Further, the examples provided represent only a sample of the multiple efforts by all 60 partners to improve Latino degree attainment.

Four levels of policy are considered: 1) community; 2) college/institution; 3) state; and, 4) federal. Recommendations may be appropriate for more than one level of policy.

COMMUNITY: While institutional and government policy play critical roles in supporting college completion, K-12 and community-based efforts also help prepare and support students to attain a college degree by providing academic preparation, information on college options, financial and family literacy, and other support services.

WHAT COMMUNITY LEADERS CAN DO:

- Inform the community about pathways to college and support degree attainment
- Develop partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions to improve college-readiness and participation rates
- Review workforce preparation programs and consider expansion
- Establish community partnerships to compliment institutional efforts to increase success in postsecondary education

COLLEGE/INSTITUTION: The investment needed to increase college degree completion across the country for Latino students requires a purposeful review of institutional strategies effective in enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students. Through this review, strategies can be aligned to students' needs and experiences in accessing, persisting, and completing a college education.

WHAT COLLEGE LEADERS CAN DO:

- Implement high impact practices with proven benefits to increase student learning outcomes
- Measure progress in student preparation, access, persistence, and degree attainment
- Increase student retention efforts for working students in good standing
- Increase early college high schools and dual enrollment programs
- Guarantee need-based aid for qualified students

STATE: States have a clear role in determining both the costs and benefits of postsecondary education. With costs for students and families increasing at the same as there are state budget constraints, policies need to be devised to promote both completion and increased efficiency in higher education systems. Several partner organizations are working to build a consensus around common college completion and efficiency measures to track whether states are meeting the goal of increased degree attainment.

WHAT STATE LEADERS CAN DO:

- Support a rigorous public high school curriculum
- Require a simplified transfer pathway to colleges and universities
- Make college accessible and affordable for students of all economic backgrounds
- Build state databases that track equity and success in degree attainment
- Develop a state plan that includes strategies to ensure access to a quality postsecondary education and support to degree attainment

FEDERAL: The role of federal policy in postsecondary education has focused historically on access and opportunity through financial aid (Pell grants and Stafford Loans), support programs (e.g., GEAR Up and TRIO) and capacity building for institutions (Title III and V). As the national policy conversation has evolved to include college completion, the role of the federal government to lead in policy efforts to increase degree attainment continues to focus on access and is challenged to address retention and attainment.

WHAT FEDERAL LEADERS CAN DO:

- Require appropriate training and materials for default management and financial literacy.
- Link support for capacity building at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and emerging HSIs with degree attainment.
- Align efforts on work-study program offerings in partnerships with states.
- Support the development of diagnostic assessments and aligned targeted curriculum to improve delivery of remedial coursework to increase retention rates
- Collect data on certificates leading to a living wage in the National Household Community Survey
- Provide opportunities for undocumented students who are U.S. high school graduates and college-ready to complete college



ABOUT THE INITIATIVE ENSURING AMERICA'S FUTURE BY INCREASING LATINO COLLEGE COMPLETION

Ensuring America's Future by Increasing Latino College Completion is an *Excelencia* in Education initiative in collaboration with partners from diverse sectors and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the Kresge Foundation. The purpose of the initiative is to inform, engage, and sustain efforts to promote the role of Latinos in making the U.S. the world leader in college degree completion.

Excelencia in Education was founded in 2004 to accelerate Latino student success in higher education through strategic information that applies research and knowledge to public policy and institutional practice. In 2011 and with 60 national partners, the Ensuring America's Future initiative leverages the convergence of *Excelencia*'s mission with the emphasis on college degree attainment by the Obama Administration and national and state leaders in government, philanthropy, higher education and business.

***Excelencia* in Education is Ensuring America's Future by:**

- Using its voice and convening power to emphasize the benefits to America of helping Latino students access and complete college;
- Filling an existing void by informing, organizing, and tracking progress towards Latino college degree completion;
- Engaging national, state, community, and institutional stakeholders in meaningful discussion to develop and deploy concrete efforts to accelerate Latino college degree attainment; and,
- Highlighting and disseminating promising practices that accelerate Latino degree completion.

To learn more about the Ensuring America's Future initiative, visit www.Edexcelencia.org/initiatives/EAF/full



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