

Excelencia IN EDUCATION!

R  **A D M A P** **FOR**

ENSURING AMERICA'S FUTURE



**BY INCREASING
LATINO COLLEGE
COMPLETION**





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A PDF version is available on the web at www.EdExcelencia.org/initiatives/EAF/Roadmap

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Excelencia in Education accelerates higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latinos, and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement. A not-for-profit organization, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and for civic leadership. In addition, *Excelencia* in Education is recognized as a leading information source on Latinos in higher education. For more information, please visit www.EdExcelencia.org.

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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



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

ACT

Alliance for Excellent Education

American Council on Education

Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

ASPIRA

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Business Champions

California Community Colleges

California State University System

Campaign for College Opportunity

CEOs for Cities

City Colleges of Chicago

College Board

Complete College America

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Council for Opportunity in Education

Educational Testing Services

Edwin Gould Foundation

Florida ENLACE

Helios Foundation

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Hispanic College Fund

Hispanic Heritage Foundation

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

Institute for Higher Education Policy

Intercultural Development Research Association

Jobs for the Future

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Kresge Foundation

Latin American Youth Center

League of United Latin American Citizens

Manufacturing Institute

Maricopa Community Colleges

Miami Dade College

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

National Center for Family Literacy

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

National Conference of State Legislators

National College Access Network

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

National Council of La Raza

National Hispana Leadership Institute

Nexus Research and Policy Center

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

Project Grad USA

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers

Texas House of Representatives, Rep. Joaquin Castro

Texas Southmost College

TG

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón

University of California System

University of Texas, Brownsville

University of Texas, El Paso

University of Texas System

Univision Communications

USA Funds

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Population projections have made clear 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 (only 19 percent of Latino adults have earned an associate or higher degree); 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 have chosen to focus intentionally on increasing Latino degree attainment.



OVERVIEW

The primary role of the roadmap is to serve as a tool for stimulating and facilitating 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. The roadmap is also designed to complement broader efforts by partners, such as the College Board, CEO for Cities, and Complete College America, as well as others to meet the nation's goals for degree attainment.

Currently, 60 organizations have joined the Ensuring America's Future (EAF) by Increasing Latino College Completion initiative. Partners are collaborating to develop, disseminate, and implement a roadmap to increase Latino degree attainment. This roadmap includes:

- Profile of Latino undergraduates to inform policy priorities;
- Assumptions guiding the policy recommendations;
- Benchmarking data to meet national degree attainment goals;
- Recommendations at the federal, state, community and institutional policy levels to increase Latino degree attainment; and,
- Examples of partner efforts that “move the needle” on Latino degree attainment.



PROFILE OF LATINO STUDENTS

BACKGROUND

To meet the challenge of a more educated U.S. citizenry and workforce, an accurate profile of Hispanic students is needed. This profile will be important to inform appropriate efforts to increase Latinos' educational attainment. However, public perceptions of Latino students are often guided by a limited and inaccurate profile of the population that, in turn, inaccurately guides program and policy efforts aimed to serve this population. For example, it is commonly assumed

that the majority of Latinos are immigrants, high school dropouts, and English language learners (ELL). While Latinos are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to fit this profile, the majority of Latinos do not fit this profile. In fact, the majority of Latinos in the U.S. are native-born, high school graduates, and English language dominant. Consider the following facts:

- In 2007, close to 90 percent of Hispanic students enrolled in K-12 education were U.S.-born. Overall, more than 60 percent of Hispanics in the U.S. were U.S.-born.
- In 2007-08, more than 80 percent of Latino school-age children spoke English with no difficulty.
- High school dropout rates for Hispanics vary from 21 percent in some studies to over 40 percent in other studies. While either of these calculations shows dropout rates for Hispanics is too high, Census data show that in 2008, 67 percent of Latinos 18-24 years-of-age and 62 percent of Latinos 25 years-of-age and over had completed high school.

Source: *Excelencia in Education's* "Taking Stock: Higher Education and Latinos"

Citing current data about Latinos puts the profile of Latinos in perspective. Clarifying this profile of Latinos does not imply the issues of immigration, language acquisition, and high school completion are not important or relevant policy issues. In fact, these are critical issues to address. However, it is not accurate to characterize the majority of Latinos in education today by this limited profile; doing so can marginalize policy efforts to serve the population well. The following profile of Latino students informs the policy issues considered in the roadmap.

Population

- **The college-age population of Latinos is expected to grow.** Between 2005 and 2022, the number of Hispanic public high school graduates is projected to increase by 88 percent. In comparison, the numbers of white high school graduates are projected to decline by 15 percent.
- **The vast majority of Latino students are native-born.** In 2007-08, 88% of Hispanics enrolled in college were U.S. citizens, 11% were resident aliens, and 1% were foreign/international students.

College preparation

- **Latinos' high school completion is increasing.** The high school completion rate for Hispanics overall increased from 60 percent in 1987 to 69 percent in 2009.
- **Latinos are more likely to be placed into lower academic tracks throughout their secondary schooling,** which affects their college preparation.



- **Many Hispanic students have taken remediation courses.** In 2007-08, 45% of Hispanic students had taken a remedial course compared to 38% of all students.

College enrollment

- **Latino's college-going rate is lower than other groups.** The college-going rate for Latino high school completers between 18-24 years of age was 37%. In comparison, the rate was 40% for black and 49% for white high school completers.
- **The college enrollment of Latinos is projected to increase faster than other groups.** Between 2007 and 2018, enrollment of Hispanic students is projected to increase 38%, compared to 4% for whites, 26% for blacks, 29% for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 32% for American Indian/Alaska Natives.
- **Many Latinos are the first in their family to enroll in college.** In 2007-08, about 50% of Hispanics enrolled in college had parents whose highest level of education was a high school diploma or less. In comparison, 45% of black and 28% of white students were the first in their family to go to college.
- **Latino students are more likely than others to be enrolled part-time.** In 2008, 48% of Hispanics were enrolled part-time, compared to 37% of white, 41% of black, 38% of Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 40% of Native American/Alaska Native students.

Economic background

- **Latinos are more likely to be low-income.** In 2007-08, almost 25% of Latino students (dependents) have family incomes less than \$40,000, compared to 11% of white students.
- **The majority of Latino students were employed while enrolled.** In 2007-08, 43% of Hispanic students worked part-time, 33% worked full-time, and 25% did not work. (Students averaged 30 hours a week)
- **Latinos, on average, received lower amounts of total financial aid or any type of aid than all students**—except for work-study—in 2008. Latino students received a lower average financial aid award (\$7,925) than all students (\$9,114).

Enrollment concentration

- **Almost half of all Latino students are in community colleges.** In 2008, 49% of Hispanics were enrolled in community colleges and 31% were enrolled at public colleges and universities.
- **Latino students tend to enroll where they live.** In 2008, 93% of Latino students attended institutions in their state of legal residence; this is higher than all undergraduates (87%) and every racial/ethnic group.
- **Latinos are concentrated in a few locations.** In 2008, more than 60% of Latino students were in three states—California, Texas, Florida—and Puerto Rico. California enrolled the most Latinos.
- **Latino students are concentrated at a limited number of institutions.** Just over half of Latino undergraduates were enrolled in about 260 institutions of higher education identified as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in 2007-08.

Completion

- In 2007-08, Hispanics earned 16% of certificates, 12% of associate degrees and 8% of bachelor's degrees awarded by degree-granting institutions.
- In 2008, Hispanics 25 years and over in the United States were less likely to have earned a postsecondary degree (19 percent) than blacks (29 percent), whites (39 percent), and Asians (59 percent).

Source: data compiled in *Excelencia* in Education's factsheets on the condition of Latinos in education



GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS

In developing the roadmap, it was clear that assumptions of what could improve degree attainment needed to be made explicit. The following assumptions guided the development of the roadmap for increasing Latino degree attainment.

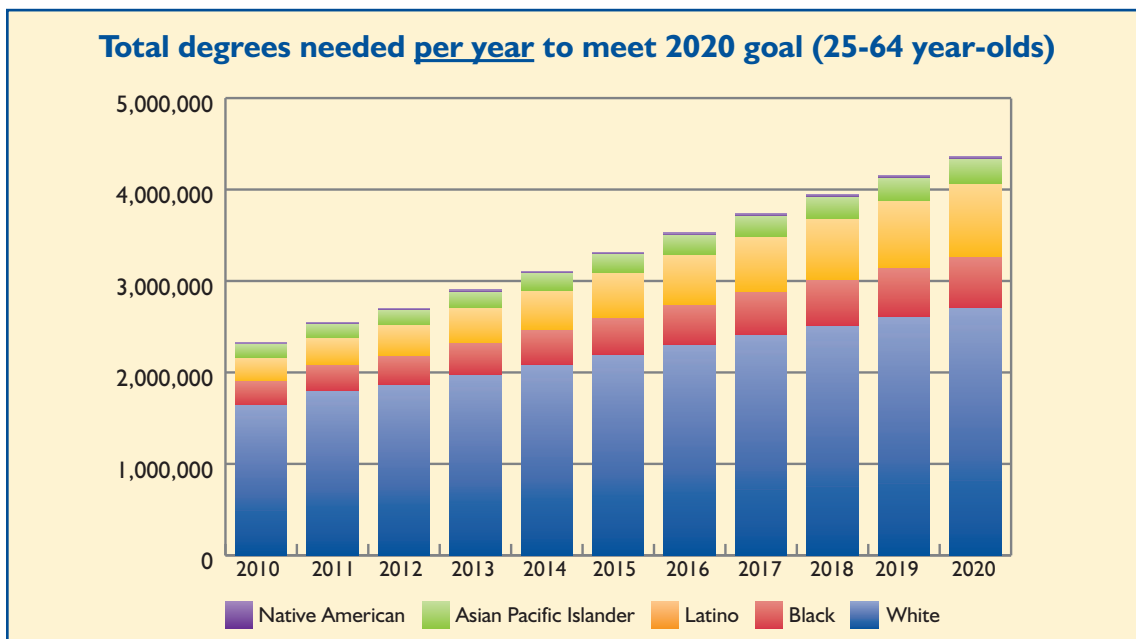
- Higher education cannot meet the nation's demand for more college degrees at current performance levels.
- Racial/ethnic gaps in degree attainment must be eliminated to meet the nation's degree attainment goals.
- Reaching degree attainment goals requires public investment in higher education.
- Increasing degree attainment requires action within the constraints of the current economic and political climate.
- Serving Latinos cannot be contingent solely on receiving new resources; we must find ways to improve serving Latinos among all those being served to increase degree attainment.
- Increasing Latino degree attainment requires intentionality in institutional policy and practice; it is not sufficient to presume Latinos will be served by default.
- Serving Latino students to improve their degree attainment requires more than providing access by enrolling them. Retention to degree attainment is critical.
- A high quality education defines meaningful degree attainment; we must improve access to a quality postsecondary education.
- Degree attainment can have multiple pathways.
- Policy addressing traditional educational pipelines will serve many Latinos, but reaching the national degree attainment goal will also require serving older Latinos (25 and over).



BENCHMARKING SUMMARY

In 2009, President Obama set an ambitious goal for the U.S. to become the top ranked country in the world in college degree attainment by 2020. To reach 51 percent college degree attainment and become the world leader by 2020, projections show the U.S. will need 36 million degrees by 2020.

Latinos will have to earn 5.5 million degrees to close equity gaps and help meet the nation’s degree attainment goals by 2020. The figure below shows the total of degrees needed per year to meet the degree attainment goal.



Other metrics to benchmark degree attainment includes three measures of current equity in degree completion disaggregated by race/ethnicity. Alone, none of these metrics capture the entire “story” of equity in degree attainment. However, in combination, they provide a useful picture. These measures use public data from the most recent three years (2005-2008): 1) graduation rates; 2) degrees per full-time equivalent; and, 3) degrees per 1,000 population with no degree.

Equity gap in degree completion at the national level, 2007-08			
United States	2007-08		
	Latino	White	Equity Gap
Graduation Rates	35.6	49.3	13.7
Completions per 100 FTE Students	14.8	18.5	3.7
Completions Relative to the Population in Need	14.9	40.9	26.0

Graduation rates - Total Graduation within 150% percent of Program Time for limited student cohort
Completions per 100 FTE Students - Total Undergraduate Credentials Awarded per 100 Full-Time Equivalent Students (incorporates part-time students)
Completions Relative to the Population in Need - Undergraduate Credentials Awarded per 1,000 Adults compared to those 18 to 44 with No College Degree

Source: *Excelesia in Education’s Benchmarking Latino College Completion to meet National Goals: 2010 to 2020.*



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE LATINO COLLEGE COMPLETION

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 intended 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 postsecondary 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

Inform parents and family members about the pathway to college and provide support to students to attain a degree. Almost half of Latino students are the first in their family to attend college and over one-third live off-campus and at home with their parents. Therefore, information about how to prepare and pay for college should be provided early and often to students. Given almost half of Latino college students are the first in their family to go to college, the awareness of the education system and process for accessing college may be limited. Effective programs by community-based organizations and others to inform parents and families early and often in the education process increases preparation, access, and choice in postsecondary education.

For example, Univision developed a multi-platform education campaign, *Es el momento* (This is the moment) targeting Spanish-speaking parents and families about the U.S. educational pipeline, how to prepare for college, and the opportunities and resources available to earn a college degree. Many parents and families have accessed Univision's information to guide their efforts to become academically prepared for college and the workforce. [<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/>]

In another example, the College Board has developed a conference entitled “Prepárate” (Prepare yourself) that provides useful information for teachers, counselors, administrators and others in engaging and preparing Latino students for a college education. [<http://www.collegeboard.com/prepare/>]

Develop partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions designed to improve the college-readiness and participation rates of high school graduates. The alignment between the high school curriculum offered and academic preparation for college is off track in too many communities where Latinos are enrolled. Partnerships between school districts and colleges within a community to align college access and preparation through curriculum, course, and assessment alignment can be helpful, particularly for students entering their senior year of high school.

For example, the College Success Academy in Florida encourages partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions to improve the college-readiness and participation rates of high school graduates. The Florida Legislature enacted SB 1908 in 2008 to provide an opportunity for postsecondary readiness testing of high school students and remediation prior to high school graduation. School districts and colleges collaborated to develop high school courses that mirror the highest level of developmental education offered in the Florida College System. These courses, entitled College Success courses, are available for school districts to offer at the high school level to prepare students for entry-level college credit courses in mathematics and English. [<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/pdf/CollegeSuccessAcademyDistrictInformation.pdf>]

Review workforce preparation programs and consider expansion. Currently, Latinos are well-represented in the labor workforce. However, these positions tend to be in lower-skill trades and are less likely to be in management and high-skill trades. While many Latino students work while enrolled, work opportunities are not necessarily related to advanced workforce needs. However, increasingly community-based organizations are looking to integrate workforce preparation (e.g. internships and guided education partnerships) with academic learning to encourage retention and provide a link to a career pathway for college students.

For example, the Hispanic College Fund’s Federal Education to Career Pipeline Programs are multi-year initiatives connecting with the organization’s pipeline of programs to develop undergraduate skills and expertise critical to the future workforce and mission of funding agencies. Their scholarship/internship programs are renewable through college graduation. While the program is relatively small, 89 percent of federal alumni pursue an advanced degree in an agency core-competency field, work in the agency’s industry, or work for the agency itself. [<http://www.hispanicfund.org/>]

Establish or expand community partnerships to compliment institutional efforts to increase students’ access to and success in postsecondary education. Community partnerships play a role in student retention, completion and success. Community organizations can provide services such as childcare, transportation assistance, special tutoring schools cannot afford to provide. They can help students who face high barriers to completion.

For example, Carreras en Salud (Careers in Health) represents a collaboration between the Instituto del Progreso Latino (Instituto); National Council of La Raza (NCLR); Association House of Chicago; and Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center of Wilbur Wright College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. The program provides career paths for nursing and other allied health occupations to students in Chicago’s Latino communities. The partners provide critical support services and case management as well as other support to students, such as tuition assistance and other related educational costs, i.e., childcare and transportation assistance, and special tutoring for participants. Carreras was established in response to a shortage of bilingual and Latino nurses in Chicago. Latinos make up one quarter of the city’s population but less than two percent of its licensed practical and registered nurses. The Carreras en Salud program has been operating for nearly five years working to bridge this gap and the number of Latino L.P.N.s graduating annually in Illinois has tripled. [<http://www.ghpcommunityofwellness.org/Health-priorities/Health-Careers/Carreras-en-Salud.html>]





COLLEGE/INSTITUTION

The reality of the investment needed to increase college degree completion across the country for Latino students requires a dedicated review of institutional strategies effective in enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students. Against the backdrop of this reality, strategies must also be checked to ensure they align with 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

Implement high impact practices with proven benefits to increase student learning outcomes.

Accessing a quality education and completing this education are the overarching goals for every student enrolled. Promising teaching and learning practices across many institutions have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds.

For example, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) works with individual institutions and state institutional systems as part of its Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative to implement high-impact educational practices to increase the quality and equity of education. These practices have clear evidence of effectiveness and can address different components of higher education, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts. [<http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm>]

Measure progress in student preparation, access, persistence, and degree attainment. Studies of institutional efforts to improve student success have shown the importance of using data to inform decision-making and to better understand the strengths and needs of the students the institutions enroll. Establishing a baseline of performance and measuring progress to specific and ambitious goals of student persistence and degree attainment, disaggregated by race/ethnicity are critical for improving the success of students.

For example, *Excelencia* in Education developed the Accelerating Latino Student Success (ALASS) Inquiry Model based on intense work with both community colleges and universities across the country. This Inquiry Model leads institutions through a process of using existing institutional data on student profiles and performance, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to develop a more accurate picture of the students they serve and to identify specific areas to target for improvement with limited resources. [<http://www.edexcelencia.org/initiatives/alass/data-tools>]

Increase student retention efforts for working students in good standing. The majority of Latino college students work while enrolled. Given changes in the economy, more students in good standing encounter shifts in their work schedules after they begin a semester that can decrease their retention or the quality of education they receive.

For example, to increase student retention, the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (University of the Sacred Heart) has designed an initiative to offer main courses online as a backup system for students in good academic standing with unexpected work schedule changes during a semester. Preliminary analysis shows increased retention and the campus is now designing efforts to incorporate support services online as well.



Increase early college high schools and dual enrollment programs. The academic preparation and college-readiness of Latino students can be strengthened to increase college access and persistence. Several recent studies have shown early college high schools and dual enrollment programs in communities with large Latino populations are creating the opportunities for students to earn college course credits while still in high school (often without expense to the student) by having institutions work with nearby school districts to provide these course offerings. Entering college with academic credits lowers the total college expenses for the student's family and can shorten the time to degree attainment if courses are accepted towards degree completion.

For example, the Achieve Early College High School initiative at South Texas College (STC) provides students in local high schools with the opportunity to earn college credits and become college ready. In addition, the college's dual-enrollment program provides the opportunity to earn college credit in areas such as history, math and science, and in technical trades, including precision manufacturing and automotive trades to more than 5,500 students in more than 30 school districts. [<http://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/de/index.html>]

Guarantee need-based aid for qualified students. Finding and receiving sufficient financial aid to pay for college are complex and cumbersome processes. Providing potential and current students with a guarantee of their eligibility for financial support has been effective for enrolling and retaining low-income students at several institutions and has the potential to be effective on a larger scale. This aid provides low-income students with sufficient financial aid (institutional and private) to cover college costs that remain after federal and state aid is awarded. These scholarships serve as a powerful outreach and retention tool to support low-income students by providing a clear message of institutional commitment to access and affordability. These scholarships are contingent upon availability of funds and are available only for four consecutive years of enrollment to encourage timely degree completion.

For example, the UTEP Promise Plan at the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) covers all tuition and mandatory fees. Eligible students must have family incomes of \$30,000 or less, be Texas residents, complete 30 credits a year, and earn a GPA of 2.0 or higher. First time transfer students to UTEP are also eligible. The scholarship is available only for four consecutive years of enrollment and has resulted in increased enrollment and retention of low-income students, many of whom are Latino. [<http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alias=academics.utep.edu/payingforcollege>]





STATE

States have a clear role in determining both the costs and benefits of postsecondary education. Given the increased cost of education at public institutions for students and families along with state government resource constraints, policies will need to be devised that 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 that can accurately show 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

Support a rigorous public high school curriculum that prepares all students, including those traditionally underserved, to succeed. Data show limited academic preparation for postsecondary education for too many high school graduates. Given the growth of Latino high school graduates and the high concentration of Latino students who take remediation courses in college, providing academic rigor in middle and high school courses and effectively monitoring student progress in core courses for any necessary interventions are important strategies for increasing their higher education access, retention and completion.

For example, more than 40 states and DC have signed on to the Common Core State Standards. The standards are designed to be robust and practical, reflecting the essential knowledge and skills needed for college and career success. Anticipating the goal of the Common Core State Standards, six states have already implemented a longitudinal system designed to measure, monitor, and report student achievement over time, benchmarked to college and career readiness, from 8th grade through the transition to college. (Texas, Utah, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee have implemented ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System statewide to measure readiness at key transitions). This new clarity on what students are expected to learn helps educators and parents know what they need to do to help their students succeed, and helps identify timely and effective interventions to keep students on track.

Another example is state-level support for the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) programs. Public high schools with AP programs provide opportunities for interested and prepared students to access rigorous, college-level courses. To support access to this college-level course work, states with a high Latino student population, such as California and Texas, subsidize the cost of the Advanced Placement (AP) exam for low-income students. In 2010, about 137,000 Latinos took at least one AP class and 75,000 took the AP exam and received a 3 or better (eligible for college credit).

Require a simplified transfer pathway to colleges and universities. About half of all Latino undergraduates are enrolled in two-year institutions. Unfortunately, too few complete an associate degree or transfer to a college/university. To encourage completion of an associate degree and continuation to a bachelor degree, the confusing pathway to transfer from one institution to another should be simplified.

For example, in 2010, California passed a transfer reform package, (SB 1440 and AB 2302) to simplify the confusing transfer pathway between community colleges and colleges/universities. The package creates a clear transfer path for all California community college students, no matter which college they attend. Students who successfully complete 60 units of transferrable coursework at a community col-

lege will receive an associate degree and guaranteed admission with upper division junior standing to a California State University system institution. The majority of Latino students enrolled in college in California are enrolled at community colleges. [<http://collegecampaign.org/v1/>]

Make college accessible and affordable for students of all economic backgrounds. Studies show that public colleges and universities will be challenged to provide access given current financial constraints and the growing representation of Latinos in the K-12 population. Further, reports show that higher education has become less affordable for students and their families. To increase access and make college more affordable for Latinos and students from all economic backgrounds, consider these policy efforts.

- Collect data on student reliance on grants and scholarships, including those from private sources. Not all states currently do this, as is shown in the SHEEO report, Strong Foundations [<http://www.sheeo.org/sspds/default.htm>].
- Market state scholarship programs more intentionally targeted at students from economically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities to increase their application of federal and private financial aid resources to pay for college.
- Create financial incentives for low-income students to remain continuously enrolled in higher education until degree attainment. This could include loan forgiveness, textbook waivers, or tuition discounts to students who remain continuously enrolled.
- Expand state tax incentives for employers to support their employees' higher education.
- Expand need-based funding from the state for low-income students.
- Charge leaders of public higher education institutions to develop a coordinated action plan to increase capacity, access, and degree attainment.

Build state databases that track equity and success in degree attainment. There has been an increased effort recently to improve state-level data collection on students' educational progress. These efforts are parallel to the need for institutions to measure and track their progress in increasing degree attainment. However, identifying equity gaps in college preparation and degree attainment as well as tracking the changes in those gaps over time are important components of a state-level database that can inform investments of limited resources to ensure a well-prepared and equitable workforce in a state.

Develop a state plan with strategies to ensure residents—especially those from underrepresented groups—have access to a quality postsecondary education and support to degree attainment. A state's workforce needs will depend increasingly on the education and economic competitiveness of its residents. As the population of Latinos and other underrepresented groups increases in representation, a concerted policy strategy to intentionally serve these populations should also increase. The following are low-cost policy efforts:

- Develop strategies to encourage completion of a diploma or GED, and preparation for postsecondary education.
- Increase state support of colleges and universities that enroll large percentages of students from underrepresented groups.
- Encourage institutions to set degree-attainment goals based on existing baseline data, and create institutional incentives for meeting or exceeding these goals.
- Identify and disseminate examples of institutional practices that have been successful in providing college opportunities to Latinos and other underrepresented students and graduating them in a timely manner.
- Publicly report and hold institutions responsible for increases on measures of student access, persistence, and degree attainment for underrepresented students by campus.
- Institute community-wide campaigns to encourage college enrollment and encourage all community sectors to embrace the challenge, recognizing that college achievement is essential to strong civic and economic development.





FEDERAL

The role of federal policy in postsecondary education has focused historically on access and opportunity through financial aid (Pell grants and Stafford Loans) and support programs (e.g., GEAR Up and TRIO). 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

Require appropriate training and materials for default management and financial literacy.

About one-third of Latino undergraduates get loans to pay for college. Further, Latino students at public institutions are less likely to secure loans to pay for college than white or African American students. This can influence students' persistence and completion. Institutions serving high concentrations of low-income students are concerned about the limited training and support for loan default management and financial literacy needed to manage financial aid options well for both institutions and students with limited resources. Quality materials and expanded training offerings in default management will help institutions improve their financial aid strategies to better serve low-income students and provide them with the options they need to make effective aid choices. In addition, financial literacy programs targeting low-income students can help these students manage their financial aid options.

Link support for capacity building at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and emerging HSIs with degree attainment.

Just over half of all Latino undergraduates are enrolled at HSIs. Further another large concentration of Latino undergraduates are at emerging HSIs (institutions that do not quite meet the enrollment criterion but are projected to in the next few years). Since many of these institutions are public, community-focused, low in cost, and provide open admissions, increasing the capacity of these institutions to serve Latino and other students well is an important policy lever to increase their college access and retention to degree attainment. Strengthening institutional capacity to increase access as well as strengthening the quality of education provided by these institutions can create a stronger link to degree attainment.

Align efforts on work-study program offerings in partnerships with states. Latino undergraduates had the highest average work-study aid award of any racial/ethnic group in 2007-08. While federal policy efforts in the last year have focused predominately on Pell grants and loans (both of these forms of financial aid are critical for Latino students), in this constrained economic environment, students increasingly need to work while they are enrolled to manage their living and college expenses. The federal work-study program is a valuable program for institutions to attract and retain students. In fact, many states also invest in work-study programs that compliment the federal investment. Campus-based work-study programs allow students to work and earn income while enrolled and provide financial support beyond tuition and fees. By keeping students on campus and creating additional opportunities to become aware of and use

institutional services, students have possibilities for increased interaction with faculty, staff and other students, often resulting in a stronger sense of belonging at the campus and retention to graduation.

Support the development of diagnostic assessments and aligned targeted curriculum to improve delivery of remedial coursework to increase retention rates. Studies have shown too many students do not complete remediation courses and dropout from college. Given the large percentage of Latino and other college students who have ever taken a remediation course, institutions can benefit from diagnostic assessments and aligned curriculum that can more accurately and directly improve remedial coursework.

Collect data on certificates leading to a living wage in the National Household Community Survey. In the most recent data on degree attainment, Latinos were well represented in earning certificates. However, according to several recent reviews, national data that can be disaggregated by state and race/ethnicity on the number of certificates awarded that can lead to a living wage is not readily available. Collecting this information can further guide policy efforts to improve postsecondary education and degree attainment.

Provide opportunities for undocumented students who are U.S. high school graduates and college-ready to complete college. The vast majority of Latino students in college are U.S.-born. However, there is a small proportion of college-age Latinos and other students that are undocumented and considered foreign/international students for college enrollment and financial aid purposes. Nine states have created opportunities for these college-ready students who have been educated in the states' public schools to access higher education as a state resident. Providing opportunities for college-ready students further demonstrates the nation's commitment to those who can contribute to our economy, grow an educated citizenry, and strengthen America's global competitiveness.

EXCELENCIA IN EDUCATION SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Ensuring America's Future: Benchmarking Latino College Completion to Meet National Goals: 2010 to 2020 (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/EnsuringAmericasFutureBenchmarking>)

Ensuring America's Future: Federal Policy and Latino College Completion (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/EnsuringAmericasFutureFederalPolicy>)

Taking Stock: Higher Education and Latinos (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/taking-stock-latinos-higher-education>)

Examples of *Excelencia* /Growing What Works database (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/examples>)

Hispanic-Serving Institutions issue brief series (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/hsi/hsi-briefs>)

Factsheets on the Condition of Latinos in Education (<http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/fast-facts>)

All documents can be found at www.EdExcelencia.org



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.



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