

2008 Winners

College of Education Partnership

South Plains College/Texas Tech University

Collegiate Challenge Program

Spring Branch Independent School District

Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals

Stephen F. Austin State University

Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Student Employment Initiative

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College

UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program

The University of Texas at El Paso

University-Wide Enrollment Management

University of North Texas

South Plains College/Texas Tech University- College of Education Partnership

The South Plains College (SPC) and Texas Tech University – College of Education (TTU-COE) partnership focuses on addressing the widening gap in student participation, diversity, and success in teacher preparation programs through the development and implementation of a seamless Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) program. South Plains College became the first of the community colleges in Texas to receive approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer the AAT in August 2004, and began offering the program in the fall 2004 semester. Capitalizing upon an existing partnership, the two institutions worked to implement the following strategies to provide a barrier-free transition for students: joint development of a highly articulated AAT curriculum, unconditional admission to TTU-COE for AAT graduates to meet Texas Tech University criteria, joint program recruitment activities, and intensive advisement and mentoring for students. South Plains College is a Hispanic-serving institution. To date, 99 students have received an AAT degree from SPC and have enrolled in TTU. One hundred percent of those students are either graduated or still enrolled. Contact: Annette Smith; (806) 716-2173; adsmith@southplainscollege.edu

Spring Branch Independent School District- Collegiate Challenge Program

Spring Branch Independent School District 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, and limited personal connection to higher education. The district recently launched a Five Year Educational Plan. The Collegiate Challenge Mentor program engages community members as mentors to assist high school juniors and seniors with career exploration and the college and scholarship application process to 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 Spring Branch ISD high school who need help fulfilling their dreams of college enrollment.

Some are first generation, low income or minority students. Since its inception in 2000, nearly 300 students have attained the goal of college enrollment as a result of Collegiate Challenge. In 2008, approximately 30 students participated. They gained admission to nearly 75 universities and earned over \$300,000 in scholarships.

Contact: Linda Buchman; (713) 464-1511 Ext. 2286; linda.buchman@springbranchisd.com

Stephen F. Austin State University-Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals

In January 2005, the Department of Elementary Education at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), in partnership with 22 Texas community colleges, 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. This program gives teacher education candidates the opportunity to complete both degrees and earn a Texas teaching certificate while remaining in the schools and classrooms where they serve and work as paraprofessionals. This scholarship covers the tuition and required fees of the program. Participants in this program take all of their courses online, and complete their field experience requirements in the local elementary schools where they work. SFASU began using webcam technology in fall 2007. This new technology innovation has become a very useful and integral component of the training and evaluation process for both candidates and SFASU instructors. This program is helping to alleviate the teacher shortages that exist, especially in rural and urban areas. Contact: John Jacobson; (936) 468-2901; jjacobson@sfasu.edu

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center-Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program

The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTHSC) School of Nursing Second Degree 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 (BSN) 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 regions). The clinical component is completed in a regional hospital under the supervision of a BSN-prepared staff nurse who serves as the student's Clinical Coach for the entire year. Since the program's inception in fall 2005, the program has graduated 98 students with a 91 percent licensure exam pass rate. This educational model promotes two of the goals from *Closing the Gaps*, Participation and Success. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has equated participation to increasing capacity and success to increasing retention and graduation rates. This model achieves both goals.

Contact: Cathie Collins; (806) 743-2730 Ext. 244; cathie.collins@ttuhsc.edu

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College-Student Employment Initiative

The Student Employment Initiative Program is part of the institutional student retention and time to graduate strategy. This is a commuter campus, where most students are employed either full- or part-time while enrolled. By creating on-campus employment opportunities that are related to their fields of study, the program enables them 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, a total of 451 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. Creating meaningful work opportunities for the students on campus has had the following impacts: positively affects the retention of program participants; positively affects the

retention of the students they work with; gives students an opportunity to work on campus and create critical campus connections; allows for expanded support services for other students by utilizing SEI participants; and positively impacts students' time to graduate.
Contact: Juan Rodriguez; (956) 882-5627; juan.a.rodriguez@utb.edu

The University of Texas at El Paso-UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) has worked closely with El Paso Community College (EPCC) to raise the educational aspirations and academic attainment of young people in the historically undereducated region they serve. One of the most successful strategies has been the UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program begun in 1997. The program has enabled 253 talented EPCC students to pursue undergraduate degrees at UTEP, with an outstanding 95 percent retention rate. One hundred seventy-one of these Transfer Scholars have completed their degrees, 116 with honors, and 69 are currently enrolled in UTEP degree programs.
Contact: Sandra Hurley; (915) 747-5725; shurley@utep.edu

University of North Texas-University-Wide Enrollment Management

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. Since *Closing the Gaps* counting began in the year 2000, purposeful enrollment planning and management across the campus has led the University of North Texas to rank at the top for increasing enrollments and increasing degrees awarded. UNT 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.
Contact: Troy Johnson; (940) 565-4602; troy.johnson@unt.edu

2008 Finalists

Alamo Community College District-St. Philip's College-The Advisors in Residence Program

Contact: Burton Crow; (210) 531-33-3; bcrow@mail.accd.edu

Angelo State University-Office of Supplemental Instruction (SI)

Contact: Sara Weertz; (325) 942-2710 Ext. 387; sara.weertz@angelo.edu

Dallas County Community College District-LeCroy Center-State of Texas Academic Resources Link (STARLINK)

Contact: Henry Hartman; (972) 669-6501; hhartman@dcccd.edu

E3 Alliance-E3 Alliance: Education Equals Economics

Contact: Susan Dawson; (512) 223-7240; sdawson@e3alliance.org

KIPP Houston-KIPP Houston

Contact: Lupita Montes; (832) 328-1051; lmontes@kipphouston.org

South Plains College/Texas Tech University-College of Education Partnership

Contact: Annette Smith; (806) 716-2173; adsmith@southplainscollege.edu

South Texas College-Valley Scholars Program

Contact: Marie Olivarez; (956) 872-1952; marieo@southtexascollege.edu

Spring Branch Independent School District-*Collegiate Challenge Program*

Contact: Linda Buchman; (713) 464-1511 Ext. 2286; linda.buchman@springbranchisd.com

Stephen F. Austin State University-*Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals*

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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center-*Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program*

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The University of Texas at El Paso-*UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program*

Contact: Sandra Hurley; (915) 747-5725; shurley@utep.edu

The University of Texas at San Antonio (in collaboration with Southwest Research Institute)-*Ph.D. Program in Physics*

Contact: Miguel Yacaman; (210) 458-6954; Miguel.Yacaman@utsa.edu

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio-*Norma Martinez-Rogers*

Contact: Kay Avant; (210) 567-5881; avantk@uthscsa.edu

The University of Texas-Pan American-*Alonzo G. Cantu*

Contact: Lydia Aleman; (956) 318-5301; aleman@utpa.edu

University of Houston-*Girls Reaching and Demonstrating Excellence (GRADE) Camp*

Contact: Stuart Long; (713) 743-4445; long@uh.edu

University of North Texas-*University-Wide Enrollment Management*

Contact: Troy Johnson; (940) 565-4602; troy.johnson@unt.edu

University of North Texas-*Next-Generation Course Redesign Project*

Contact: Philip Turner; (940) 396-7669; philip.turner@unt.edu

West Texas A&M University-*Readership WT-A Common Reading Experience*

Contact: Russell Lowery-Hart; (806) 651-2931; rhart@wtamu.edu