

Texas Higher Education 2010 Star Award Recipients

Learning Frameworks

Brazosport College

College of Nursing Undergraduate Nursing Weekend Program

Texas Woman's University T. Boone Pickens Institute
of Health Sciences, Dallas Center

Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP)

Created by Senate Bill 940 of the 77th Texas Legislature

Modeling Excellence in Collaborative Teacher Education

University of Houston Downtown
Lone Star College-Kingwood
Lone Star College-CyFair

Texas Higher Education 2010 Star Award Finalists

The BioSpot

Alamo Colleges – San Antonio College

- The BioSpot is an interactive tutoring/mentoring facility which serves multiple purposes. The focus of the BioSpot, established in 2007 at Alamo Colleges – San Antonio College, is to engage Biology students, show them that Biology faculty are available, and provide useful resources as a path by which students become more invested in their own success. The BioSpot was developed because the Biology faculty expressed interest in utilizing a facility to engage students, and give the department a “university” feel. Student demand for more services also impacted the decision to develop the BioSpot.
- Faculty spend two hours of office time in the center each week to provide tutoring and mentoring for students. Students also may schedule private tutoring sessions with the departmental tutor, and they have access to the computer lab to work independently using supplemental materials provided by publishers, as well as individual faculty members. Students have access to a copier and all sorts of reserved materials, including practice exams, placed in the center by instructors. Private rooms for collaborative learning are available for checkout by students.
- The newest expansion of the BioSpot is the “Biology University” website (<http://www.biology-university.org/>) which offers students the ability to access course content, study materials, ask questions, schedule tutoring, etc. The link to this site is “blasted” to every student taking a biology course at the beginning of each semester as an outreach to those students who might not otherwise come to the facility in person.
- BioSpot is cost-effective and easily maintainable through departmental budgeting. The best cost savings comes from the use of faculty time in the facility where each hour of time spent equates to multiple student contacts, which is a great improvement over traditional office hours.
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Licensed Vocational Nursing Program

Alamo Colleges – St. Philip's College

- The St. Philip's College Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) Program is keenly attuned to student success through ongoing assessment and improvement of the program curriculum to increase the likelihood that graduating students will pass the state licensing examination (NCLEX-PN) on their first attempt, while simultaneously addressing the diversity-related needs of the community by increasing the numbers of minorities graduating from the program.
- Since 1949, St. Philip's College has been training and graduating LVNs to support healthcare in San Antonio and the greater Bexar County community. In 1998, an extension campus was created in New Braunfels to provide opportunities for nursing students in the New Braunfels community.
- During the period of 2005 through 2009, St. Philip's College LVN Program achieved excellence in key measures recognized as critical community colleges accountability measures by the State of Texas. In 2009, both the LVN Program at the San Antonio Campus and the extension program at the New Braunfels campus were commended by the Texas Board of Nursing for licensure pass rates exceeding 90 percent.
- The achievements of St. Philip's College LVN Program are the result of faculty involvement, curriculum assessment, emphasis on quality improvement, and deployment of sound interventions, with no additional increases in faculty and staff-related expenditures.
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Learning Frameworks

Brazosport College

- In fall of 2006, Brazosport College became part of the Achieving the Dream initiative, and the Learning Frameworks course is one of the strategies including in the priorities for this initiative. The Learning Frameworks strategy was selected because of concern about retention and completion rates of students enrolled in developmental coursework at the college. The intended outcomes are to increase learning outcomes achievement, semester-to-semester persistence, success in developmental coursework, and completion of certificates and degrees.
- The Learning Frameworks course has had a positive impact on the success of thousands of students, including high school students, developmental education college students, as well as industry employees.
- Students who successfully complete the Learning Frameworks course are more likely to succeed in developmental coursework, more likely to succeed in gatekeeper courses, more likely to be retained, and less likely to withdraw.
- Learning Frameworks is a positive contribution that continually seeks to promote the well-being and success of future students in the State of Texas.
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African American Male Professional Connections Mentoring Program

Lamar University

- The African American Male Professional Connections Mentoring Program (AAMP) was designed as an undergraduate retention program for African American male students at Lamar University.
- AAMP was created to increase the persistence to graduation of African American males at Lamar University. Of the students participating in AAMP for the fall 2009 semester, 81.92 percent re-enrolled for Spring 2010.
- AAMP utilizes Lamar University alumni and community members as mentors to minority students. These mentors are successful in their professions and model strategies for success to students. The program is designed to help students acclimate to college life, experience connectedness to the campus, and clarify academic and career goals. The program also offers opportunities to develop professional career connections.
- The AAMP university-wide program is jointly administered by the Student Advising and Retention Services and Office of Alumni Affairs. In addition to mentoring, it provides professional networking, goal setting, leadership training, and a host of other experiences to help students develop the skills and connections necessary to successfully market themselves and achieve their dreams after college.
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M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership Program

Lamar University

- Lamar University began The M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership Program in Spring 2008 to provide classroom teachers the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills so that they could become leaders and mentors on their campuses in non-administrative roles.
- The M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership Program addresses two important needs in the state: to provide a master's degree program that is both affordable and accessible.
- The program is offered through a distance learning platform enabling teachers across the state, especially those not living in an area close to a university, to pursue a master's degree. This platform also provides accessibility and support to busy professionals with family obligations by allowing them the opportunity to complete their studies at home or in a convenient location. At the end of the program, teachers have the knowledge and skills to effect changes on their campus that can result in improved student achievement.
- To date, 290 students have graduated from the M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership Program, 18.3 percent minority candidates and 90 percent females.
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College of Nursing, Undergraduate Nursing Weekend Program

Texas Woman's University T. Boone Pickens Institute
of Health Sciences, Dallas Center

- Texas Woman's University (TWU) Weekend/Online Baccalaureate Nursing Program is a higher education program that implements a new model for undergraduate nursing education by using distance education and weekend scheduling to increase nursing school enrollment with an emphasis on the recruitment of racial and ethnic minority students and students from underserved areas.
- The program has been operating since the fall semester of 2008, with the first class of new nurses graduated from the program in May 2010. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of students who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but find themselves facing hardships in their current positions of employment, up to and including job loss. Didactic nursing courses are offered 100 percent online, and clinical experiences are scheduled on the weekends to extend the educational opportunities for disadvantaged, unemployed, and underemployed citizens to achieve a baccalaureate nursing degree.
- For the first class of nursing students admitted to the Weekend Nursing Program, Saturday and Sunday clinical experiences were taught by master's-prepared nursing faculty provided by the partnering hospital, Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas, Texas. The partnering hospital provided classroom facilities, practice sites, preceptors, and the master's-prepared on-site faculty who qualified for TWU adjunct faculty status.
- At a time when there is a need to strengthen the nursing workforce in preparation for the care of an aging population, the Weekend/Online Baccalaureate Nursing Program provides an innovative and growth-oriented approach to meeting this need.
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Strategies for Academic Success, College of Sciences
Undergraduate Advising Center

The University of Texas at San Antonio

- The Strategies for Academic Success (SAS) program, conceived, implemented, and managed by the College of Sciences Undergraduate Advising Center (COSUAC) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) was implemented to address barriers to participation and success among students on academic probation within the college. The Center aggressively outreaches to students on academic probation in an attempt to ensure that they are not dismissed, and can continue their studies at the university.
- Initially, the program required students to meet with an advisor to identify the root causes of their academic struggles, and devise an action plan accordingly. Students also signed a contract stating that they understood both the rules of the SAS program and university policy relating to probation.
- To enable more students to complete the program, an online element was introduced to allow students to complete actions online. In fall 2009, these actions were streamlined into a series of tracks, such as Time Management and Study Skills, in response to areas of student needs. In spring 2010, students also were able to complete the Self Assessment and Contract online.
- The SAS program has had a positive impact on students' ability to remain enrolled at the university and increased the likelihood that they will raise their GPA and be successful at the university. The dismissal rate among students in the SAS program has been consistently dropping since fall 2008.
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Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP)

Created by Senate Bill 940 of the 77th Texas Legislature

- Established by the Texas Legislature in 2002, the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) is a first-and-only-of-its-kind initiative in the nation. The pioneering program has created a unique partnership of 31 public and 34 private colleges and universities, as well as all eight public medical schools and the one private medical school located in Texas. Collectively, the JAMP partnership of Texas higher education institutions is working to increase access to medical careers for Texas students who have been underrepresented in medicine.
- JAMP, coordinated through the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS), is designed to address disparities and to provide broad-based academic, financial and developmental assistance to Texas students from all economically-underrepresented racial and ethnic groups who hope to become physicians.
- Students who completed the undergraduate portion of JAMP began entering medical school in 2006, with an initial group of 34 students accepted. Cohorts of 45, 42, 43, and 64 students, respectively, were accepted in the years 2007-2010. In 2010, 24 students from the first entering cohort graduated from medical school. These graduates are preparing to continue their learning in residency programs (seven additional students from this initial group will graduate from medical school in 2011). Follow-up data collection with students from this first cohort indicates that each student viewed JAMP as instrumental to her or his success to date in pursuing the dream of becoming a doctor.
- Building on the vision of the Texas Legislature, with strong leadership from the JAMP Council comprised of key medical school faculty; the eager involvement of faculty, including JAMP faculty directors on each campus; and genuine commitment and dedication from the core staff in the TMDSAS, JAMP has made great strides in seven years. Savings are being realized through economies of scale by not recreating infrastructure to support enrichment efforts at every college and university across the state.
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Modeling Excellence in Collaborative Teacher Education

University of Houston Downtown, Lone Star College-Kingwood,
and Lone Star College-CyFair

- The Modeling Excellence in Collaborative Teacher Education teacher certification partnership redefines seamless transition from the community college to the university. By enhancing the University of Houston Downtown (UHD) /Lone Star College (LSC) joint admissions program already in place, this Teacher Education Collaborative focuses on recruiting paraprofessionals already known to the school district, as well as high school seniors and local adults who might not otherwise enter higher education due to work and family constraints.
- The program, offered entirely on each of the LSC-Cy-Fair and LSC-Kingwood College campuses, enables students to earn credits toward the Lone Star College's Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) while seamlessly transferring to the UH-Downtown's Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (BAIS) with Teacher Certification. This collaborative is anchored by a process that jointly admits students to programs at both institutions simultaneously.
- The program reduces the cost to the student in becoming a certified teacher. The integrated transfer, joint admissions, and local presentation all enable the person interested in teaching to do so as inexpensively as possible.
- The UHD/LSC-Cy Fair and UHD/LSC-Kingwood collaborative for teacher education are equal partners seeking a common goal (maximizing production of excellent teachers), with an understanding that vigilant quality control is key.
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Eagle Ambassador Program

University of North Texas

- In the fall of 1998, the University of North Texas (UNT) launched a new student recruitment marketing strategy – the Eagle Ambassador program – with the ultimate goal to increase participation in higher education and success by providing a positive, interactive, informative and personalized tour experience to encourage prospective students from diverse ethnic backgrounds to apply to UNT.
- The prospective student and parent-focused program comprises a diverse group of UNT students from different majors, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities, who serve as Eagle Ambassadors. Since the Eagle Ambassador program's inception, they have encouraged and provided a positive campus experience for almost 150,000 tour participants, many from first-generation and underrepresented groups. The Ambassadors offer tours in English and Spanish to ensure that all prospective students and their families enjoy a welcoming tour campus experience.
- Eagle Ambassadors receive an annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 and are paid on average \$8.25 per hour. UNT's 21 Ambassadors work on average 17 hours weekly.
- The Eagle Ambassador program is cost-effective, and it has significantly contributed to increases in the university's application and retention rates.
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