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TEXAS LAUNCHES ADULT DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM 'GRAD TX'

*Eight Texas public universities provide program designed
for adults to finish their bachelor's degrees*

AUSTIN, TX (August 2, 2011) —The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) announced today the launch of Grad TX (pronounced “Grad Texas”), a program designed to help adults return to college and finish their bachelor’s degrees. Offered by eight Texas universities, Grad TX targets the over 40,000 adults in Texas who “stopped out” of college with 90 or more credit hours, but have not finished the 120 credit hour requirement to receive a bachelor’s degree.

The program’s website www.GradTX.org features an online transfer tool that allows returning students to enter completed coursework and preview how their credits would count toward a bachelor’s degree at a participating university. The website also connects returning students to counselors at each university who specialize in meeting the unique needs of returning students, such as determining how work experience could count toward a bachelor’s degree and helping returning students graduate faster. Grad TX includes information about paying for college and financial aid, as well as a section addressing the needs of Veterans.

“The THECB, working closely with our state colleges and universities, is focused on significantly increasing the number of college graduates,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes. “Encouraging and assisting our adult population to get back on track for a college degree is critical for Texas to become a national leader and global competitor.”



In addition to better preparing people for their career choices, a college degree leads to greater financial independence. According to a recent study by the *Center on Education and the Workforce*, the United States can reverse the growth of income inequality by increasing the number of college graduates. In 2010, the average weekly wage for workers without a college degree was \$712. Workers with a bachelor's degree earned an average of \$1,038.

THECB selected eight Texas universities to be part of the launch of this new program that offers specialized programs with online, compressed, and regular course offerings for returning students. The eight universities include:

- Lamar University
- Midwestern State University
- Texas A&M University Commerce
- Texas Tech University
- University of Houston-Downtown
- University of Houston-Clear Lake
- University of North Texas System
- University of Texas at Brownsville

The Grad TX website features stories of adult students at the universities featured in the programs.

Teneka Duke, who received her BAAS in Business Administration from Texas A&M Commerce explains in her story, "When I had 21 hours left, I went to see an advisor who told me about the BAAS program. It was a perfect fit for me. I was able to apply my work experience and it enabled me to finish my degree in two semesters instead of two more years at the pace I was going."

Hilda Flores, a graduate of UT Brownsville with a BAAS in Applied Business Technology, applauds her program in her story, "I didn't have to start way from the beginning. I was able to build on what I already had [the associate's degree] so that I was able to go back to get my BAAS... and now I'm a program coordinator. I couldn't have gotten that position without my bachelor's degree."



“There are more than three million Texas residents like Ms. Duke and Ms. Flores who have partial college credit, but not a college degree,” explains Dr. Van Davis, Director of Special Projects. “Grad TX puts a bachelor’s degree within reach for many Texans.”

Grad TX is part of the Generation TX movement to get all Texas students on the path to success in college and their careers. Grad TX specifically focuses on returning adult students who want to advance their career by earning a bachelor’s degree. Grad TX is a project of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) with initial funding provided through a federal College Access Challenge Grant.

For more information, please visit www.gradtx.edu.

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