

**2014
Texas Higher Education
Star Awards**



**Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board**

November 21, 2014

14th Annual Texas Higher Education Star Awards

Presented by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Star Award, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2001, recognizes exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, the Texas higher education plan adopted by the Coordinating Board in October 2000. The plan establishes four goals – to close the gaps in student participation, student success, academic excellence, and research.

(See *Closing the Gaps by 2015* at: <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/closingthegaps>)

Criteria for the 2014 Star Award

1. Programs, projects, and activities must:
 - have been in operation for at least three years;
 - demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of student participation, student success, academic excellence, or research that are attributable to the program, project, or activity;
 - demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student; and
 - clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence over time through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.
2. Groups and organizations must:
 - have been focused on helping to meet the goals of *Closing the Gaps* for at least three years (such as promoting a college-going culture);
 - demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of student participation, student success, academic excellence, or research that are attributable to the efforts of the group or organization; and
 - clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence over time through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.
3. Partnerships must:
 - have been in existence for at least three years;
 - demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of student participation, student success, academic excellence, or research that are attributable to the partnership;
 - demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student; and
 - clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence over time through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated.

Each year, the Coordinating Board receives applications submitted from throughout Texas. After an initial review by a Coordinating Board staff committee, a select group of applicants are named finalists.

A nine-member Texas Higher Education Star Award Selection Committee includes three members of the Coordinating Board, three Texas business and community leaders, and three out-of-state education experts. Winners are chosen from this review committee's highest rankings.

Texas Higher Education 2014 Star Award Selection Committee

Coordinating Board Members

- **Ambassador Sada Cumber**, Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **Robert "Bobby" Jenkins, Jr.**, Vice Chair, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **David D. Teuscher, M.D.**, Secretary, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Texas Business and Community Leaders

- **Laurie Bricker**, Vice President, Municipal Securities Group, Jefferies & Company, Inc., Houston, Texas
- **Charles R. Matthews, Ed.D.**, Trustee, College for All Texans Foundation Board, Aquilla, Texas
- **Michael Paris**, Vice President–Workforce Development, Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Wichita Falls, Texas

Out-of-State Higher Education Experts

- **Dale Campbell, Ph.D.**, Professor and Director, Institute of Higher Education & FUTURES Bellwether College Consortium, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
- **Marshall A. Hill, Ph.D.**, Executive Director, National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, WICHE, Boulder, Colorado
- **Christopher J. Rasmussen, Ph.D.**, Vice President for Research & Policy Analysis, Midwestern Higher Education Compact, Minneapolis, Minnesota

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Recipients



Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Student Success

Lee College

and

Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District

San Antonio College GED-to-College Transition Program

San Antonio College Services for Women & Non-Traditional Students

and

San Antonio Independent School District

Texas A&M – Blinn TEAM Program

Texas A&M University

and

Blinn College

Developmental Math Program

The University of Texas at El Paso



2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Student Success

Lee College and Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District

Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Student Success (GCPASS) creates a P-20 aligned education pipeline all the way through workforce entry. The primary goals of the program are to:

- Increase college readiness among high school graduates
- Ease student transitions between high school and college
- Increase the number of high school graduates who enroll in college
- Increase student success in community college developmental and gateway courses
- Create a college-going culture within the community

To provide best practices for student engagement and success, GCPASS uses evidence-based, high-impact practices identified from work with the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, Achieving the Dream Leader College activities, and other state and national student success initiatives. Multiple inter-institutional teams are designed to increase stakeholder engagement and student success. These include a Steering Team, a "Cradle to Career" community network, a Parental Involvement Task Force, four "Professional Alignment Councils" (comprised of high school teachers and college faculty members), and a GCPASS College Transition Team. A modest shared budget and the sharing of student success data demonstrate the proven long-term commitment by the partners.

With respect to participation, the number of Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District (GCCISD) high school students taking the SAT has increased from 471 students in 2010-11 to 1,231 students in 2013-14. From 2012 to 2014 there has been a 530 percent increase in the number of students who are participating in dual credit sections. Finally, with respect to success, GCCISD has demonstrated a substantial increase in the number and percentage of students who have completed college-level gateway English and Math course sections.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Christy Ponce, Vice President of Student Success, Workforce and Resource Development, at CPonce@Lee.edu or (281) 425-6302.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Drop Rate Improvement Program (DRIP)

Odessa College

Odessa College's Drop Rate Improvement Program ("DRIP") was created in spring 2011 and was officially launched in the Arts and Sciences division of Odessa College in fall 2011. The intended goal was to improve student persistence as measured by increasing the percentage of students who, during any given semester and including both online and face-to-face classes, completed the course or courses they were taking. DRIP and the process it uses to impact student persistence are based on original research at Odessa College that provides data-driven suggestions to faculty for improving faculty-student engagement.

The program's success in improving student persistence in a single semester to record levels for the Arts and Sciences division led to the immediate expansion of the program to all divisions of the college in spring 2012. Since then, class drop-outs have fallen to historic lows, and the course completion rate throughout the college is now over 90 percent, including first-time-in-college students.

One intriguing outcome of DRIP is that not only has student persistence measurably increased for all students, but student success rates (the percentage of students who get a "C" or better grade during any given semester) has also increased for all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, or economic status (e.g., Pell grant recipients); for first-time-in-college-students, these rates are now greater than 70 percent.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Donald Wood, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, at dwood@odessa.edu or (432) 335-6340.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

San Antonio College GED-to-College Transition Program

San Antonio College Services for Women & Non-Traditional Students and San Antonio Independent School District

The GED-to-College Transition Program is administered by San Antonio College's Department of Services for Women and Non-Traditional Students (SWANS). This innovative program partners with the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) to go beyond assisting non-traditional students to earn a GED. Its blend of supportive services, including free GED vouchers, GED classes, college preparation instruction, financial assistance, academic advisement, career counseling, and assistance with the college enrollment process, enables GED earners to successfully transition to college, and be prepared for the skilled workforce.

Of the 152 participants who have enrolled in the GED-to-College Transition Program since its inception, 84 percent have completed the class. The GED pass rate for these students is 86 percent. By comparison, 69 percent of the 401,000 people in the U.S. who completed the GED in 2012 passed; in Texas, 68 percent of those taking the exam passed the GED.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Helen Vera, Director, at mvera@alamo.edu or (210) 486-0455.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Texas A&M - Blinn TEAM Program

Texas A&M University and Blinn College

The "Texas A&M - Blinn Transfer Enrollment at A&M" (TEAM) Program is a collaborative, co-enrollment partnership between Texas A&M University and Blinn College. Each year since 2001, this partnership has allowed the admission of hundreds of additional qualified students into the Texas A&M University (TAMU) freshman class than otherwise would have been possible due to TAMU's enrollment limitations.

Participating students are initially admitted to TAMU on a part-time basis and may earn full admission by several methods. Blinn TEAM students are enrolled in one academic course at TAMU each semester and are enrolled in the remainder of their courses at the Bryan Campus of Blinn College. Students who complete 45 semester credit hours (SCH) at Blinn College and 15 SCH at TAMU within a two-year period, while maintaining a 3.0 grade point average at each school, are automatically admitted to TAMU.

In fall 2001, 351 applicants, who initially were denied admission to TAMU, were enrolled as the first cohort of "TEAM Aggies." After several years, the program was gradually expanded. For the fall 2014 semester, 1,175 incoming freshmen have confirmed their acceptance of TEAM. This cohort will result in the total number of TEAM participants surpassing 8,000 since the program's implementation. Of the thousands of former TEAM students who entered between 2001 and 2008, more than three-fourths matriculated. Of those, 88 percent graduated, 11 percent with honors.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Kriss H. Boyd, Executive Director, Transition Academic Programs, at k-boyd@tamu.edu or (979) 845-5916.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

First Year Experience Program

Texas A&M International University

Texas A&M International University's First Year Experience Program provides exemplary and innovative academic support programs for students. The program, begun in 2007, incorporates several high-impact, best practices that positively impact students, particularly those most at risk – Hispanic, first-generation, low-income students. The program includes freshmen seminars for all freshmen, fall and spring "common reads," learning communities, individual 30-minute weekly peer mentoring sessions, and a First Year Conference. Additional programs include supplemental instruction for developmental and gateway courses, honors freshmen seminars, Café Profs (i.e., round table discussions with professors), service learning, and study abroad opportunities.

Data reflect substantial progress in terms of increased grade point averages in courses such as College Algebra that include supplemental instruction sessions. Further, since the inception of First Year Experience Program, the university has had the highest persistence rate of the regional universities of the Texas A&M System (excluding College Station). For fall 2012 and fall 2011, Texas A&M International University had a 73 percent and a 72 percent first-year persistence rate, respectively. The 2013 persistence rate was 82 percent.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Conchita C. Hickey, Dean, University College, at chickey@tamiu.edu or (956) 326-2801.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Office of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs

Texas A&M University – Commerce

The mission of the Office of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs is to raise a greater awareness on the importance of higher education among groups and individuals at high schools, community colleges, and in the general community, with a special focus on Hispanic students. Office personnel advise prospective Hispanic students and their families and is responsible for coordinating and implementing various outreach activities, new student orientation, retention initiatives, and educational programs.

The overall goals of the program are to 1) increase the percentage of Hispanic student enrollment to 25 percent; and 2) increase the access and success of Hispanic students. From fall 2008 to fall 2013, the Hispanic undergraduate enrollment has seen an increase of 528 students, for a total growth of 110 percent. In the years since the Office of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs initiative started, the one-year persistence rate of first-time, degree-seeking, Hispanic undergraduates has increased by 3.5 percent from 2009 to 2013. The six-year graduation rate has seen an 8.5 percent increase for the institution since the 2006 entering cohort; for the Hispanic six-year graduation rate, that increase was 16.7 percent. By leveraging the many support services, resources, and programmatic elements already available to students as part of the university, the Office of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs serves an Hispanic undergraduate enrollment of 1,008 students for an approximate per student cost of \$134.

For additional information, please contact: Luis Franco, Director of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs, at Luis.Franco@tamuc.edu or (903) 366-6910.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

University of Houston - Downtown and Project GRAD Partnership

University of Houston - Downtown and Project GRAD

Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams (GRAD) Houston is a non-profit 501(c) 3 education reform model which has been at work in five feeder patterns within the Houston Independent School District (HISD), serving 64 schools and more than 44,000 economically disadvantaged children – 23 percent of the school district's total school population and approximately 24 percent of its total at-risk population. More than 90 percent of Project GRAD students are low-income, and 91 percent are minority.

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) has an extensive history of collaboration with Project GRAD since GRAD's inception in 1989, including offering matched scholarships and support for Project GRAD scholars attending the university. The primary goal of the UHD/Project GRAD Partnership is to assist students, particularly those from underserved backgrounds and institutions, in enrolling and participating in higher education. A secondary goal is to help these students persist and succeed in higher education, resulting in the completion of a degree program. Program assessment tools include tracking standardized test scores in reading, writing, and math, and compiling the college enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates of Project GRAD scholars.

To date, 6,021 students have enrolled in various colleges with the Project GRAD Scholarship since it began. The fall-to-fall retention rates of first-time-in-college (FTIC) Project GRAD students enrolled at UHD continue to increase and exceed the retention rates of FTIC non-Project GRAD students at UHD. For example, 65 percent of the UHD Project GRAD students who entered as FTIC (99) in fall 2011 re-enrolled (64) in fall 2012. Of the 128 Project GRAD students who enrolled at UHD as FTIC in fall 2012, 74 percent re-enrolled (95) in fall 2013. This retention rate of 74 percent is 10.9 percent higher than that for non-Project GRAD students entering UHD as FTIC in the fall 2012 cohort. GRAD scholars also are on track to achieve a 59 percent college completion rate—a success rate that is more than double the success rate of low-income students in Texas. Since 1992, Project GRAD has had 1,713 scholars graduate from college as of December 2013. Of these, 432 are UHD graduates.

For additional information, please contact: Dr. Chris Birchak, Dean, University College, at birchakc@uhd.edu or (713) 221-8480.

2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Developmental Math Program

The University of Texas at El Paso

The University of Texas at El Paso's Developmental Math Department's two primary goals are to provide an opportunity for efficient student completion of developmental math requirements and to prepare students for success in college-level math. The Department takes a multi-faceted approach, with options for several individualized paths for students to help them successfully complete Developmental Math. The department uses an iterative approach to continuously improve and innovate the methods, processes, and procedures for teaching this critical course. By creating student-centric programs, pass rates in Developmental Math have increased by approximately 39 percent for Beginning Algebra and 34 percent for Intermediate Algebra from 2009 to the present.

For additional information, please contact: Denise Lujan, Director of Developmental Math, at cdlujan@utep.edu or (915) 747-6521.

Texas Higher Education Star Awards Past Recipients

2013

Brookhaven College Counseling Center SkillsShops
Brookhaven College

**Students Advancing Through Involvement in Research Student Talent Expansion
Program (STAIRSTEP)**
Lamar University

Temple College – Texas Bioscience Institute
Temple College

2012

Alamo Area Academies
Alamo Colleges

Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy
South Texas College

UT Arlington-Academic Partnerships BSN Completion Program
The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Academic Partnerships

Gateway Project
West Texas A&M University

2011

In-House Online Tutoring
Houston Community College System

IDEA Public Schools
IDEA Public Schools

Students Together, Involving, Networking, and Guiding (STING)
The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College

Gateways to Excellence in Math and Science (GEMS)
The University of Texas at Dallas

UTMB Integrated Medical Curriculum
The University of Texas Medical Branch

Uplift Education
Uplift Education

2010

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, and Lone Star College-CyFair

2009

Mathematics Outreach Center

Amarillo College

College, Career & Technology Academy

South Texas College and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District

TAMU-Commerce/Mesquite Independent School District Partnership

TAMU-Commerce and Mesquite Independent School District

Partnering for Teachers

Texas Woman's University and Dallas ISD

Late Intervention Program

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Providing Access to Success: Emerald Eagle Scholars Program

University of North Texas

2008

Online Teacher Preparation Program for Paraprofessionals

Stephen F. Austin State University

UTEP-EPCC Transfer Scholarship Program

The University of Texas at El Paso

Second Degree Accelerated BSN Program

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Collegiate Challenge Program

Spring Branch Independent School District

University-wide Enrollment Management

University of North Texas

College of Education Partnership
South Plains College/Texas Tech University

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

2007

LULAC Parent/Child Scholarship Program
Alamo Community College District-San Antonio College

Developmental Education Initiative Title V Project
El Paso Community College

UT TeleCampus
The University of Texas System

Student Money Management Center
University of North Texas

2006

College Connection Program
Austin Community College

Academic Assistance and Resource Center
Stephen F. Austin State University

SureStart Program
Tarrant County College District

Chemistry Peer Leader Program
The University of Texas at El Paso

YES College Preparatory Schools
YES College Preparatory Schools

2005

Graduates and Completers Projects
Houston Community College System

Summer Bridge Program
North Harris Montgomery Community College District-North Harris College

Navarro College Partnership
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS)
University of Houston

Model Institutions for Excellence Initiative

University of Texas at El Paso

Gulf Coast Consortia/Keck Center

University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

2004

Community Link

Amarillo College

College Assistance Migrant Program

St. Edward's University

College of Science & Technology Scholars Academy at UH-D

University of Houston-Downtown

Law School Preparation Institute

The University of Texas at El Paso

2003

Community Education Centers

Alamo Community College District

Strategies for Success

Alamo Community College District – San Antonio College

Rising Star Program

Dallas County Community College District

The Academy for Collegiate Excellence and Student Success

Prairie View A&M University

Pathways to Success in Science

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

South Plains Nursing Education Community Coalition

Texas Tech Health Sciences Center, South Plains College, Lubbock Christian University, and Covenant School of Nursing, in partnership with University Medical Center, Covenant Health System, WorkSource of the South Plains, and American State Bank

Entering Student Program

The University of Texas at El Paso

Increasing the Success of the Most Economically Disadvantaged Students

West Texas A&M University

2002

Premedical Honors College

Baylor College of Medicine

The Monitored Probation Early Intervention Program

Lamar University

HomeGrown Teacher Education Program

San Jacinto College-North Campus

Nursing Success Program

Texas Woman's University

The Mother-Daughter Program

The University of Texas at El Paso

Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program

The University of Texas at San Antonio

University Scholars

The University of Texas-Pan American

2001

First-Year Learning Communities Program

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Virtual College of Texas

Texas Association of Community Colleges

Mathworks Summer Program

Texas State University-San Marcos

The University Writing Center

Texas Tech University

Jesse H. Jones Academic Institute

University of Houston-Downtown