2012
Texas Higher Education
Star Awards

October 4, 2012

12th 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: www.thecb.state.tx.us.)

<u>Criteria for the 2012 Star Award</u>

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
2012 Star Award Selection Committee

Coordinating Board Members

- **Durga D. Agrawal**, **Ph.D.**, Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **James H. Lee,** Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **David D. Teuscher**, **M.D.**, Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Texas Business and Community Leaders

- **Glenda O. Barron**, **Ph.D.**, President, Temple College, Temple, Texas
- **Laurie Bricker**, Vice President, Municipal Securities Group, Jefferies & Company, Inc., Houston, 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, Educational Administration and Policy University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
- **Marshall A. Hill**, **Ph.D.**, Executive Director Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, Lincoln, Nebraska
- **David Spence**, **Ph.D.**, President, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Georgia

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Recipients

Alamo Colleges
Alamo Area Academies

South Texas College
Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy

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

West Texas A&M University
Gateway Project

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Alamo Area Academies

Alamo Colleges

Alamo Area Academies is a dual credit program that requires that students attend dedicated courses for half a day at one of the Alamo Colleges. Under this program, qualified high school juniors and seniors complete a required internship and earn one year of college credit (31-34 college semester credit hours), a Level I Certificate, and industry-recognized certifications, along with a standard high school diploma. There are four STEM certificate pathway programs: aerospace, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and nursing.

Annually, the Alamo Area Academies provide access to almost 300 mostly minority (71%) students to enroll in Applied STEM Technical Careers. Sixty percent of these students graduate with a degree or marketable skill certificate within two years. Moreover, 58 percent of students continue in higher education, and 42 percent graduate and enter into rewarding STEM careers. According to the San Antonio Manufacturers Association and the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, the Academies have become one of the most effective initiatives to produce the skilled workforce pipeline that high-tech industries need, and they improve students' labor market outcomes. These objectives, in turn, contribute directly to the *Closing the Gaps* goals for increasing minority participation and increasing graduation and completion rates in the Alamo Region.

The Alamo Area Academies program of studies requires that students participate in an industry paid internship in the summer between their junior and senior years. Academy students earn a minimum of $2,500 and are provided a real job, with real hands-on applications. The internship helps students to build technical skills and creates excitement for a future career in high-wage STEM careers. The Academies enjoy strong industry support because Alamo area employers recognize the economic development value of a program that produces a college-educated workforce with the targeted skills that participating high-tech, high-wage industries require.

In conclusion, the nationally recognized, unique, and successful Alamo Area Academies dual-credit program of studies could easily serve as a cost-effective model for other institutions and communities to implement in their efforts to achieve the *Closing the Gaps* goals. The Alamo Area Academies model is a "win-win-win" – a win for high-need students that gain unique college and career opportunities in high-growth, high-wage fields; a win for high-tech employers that badly need a qualified STEM workforce; and a win for the economic future and competitiveness for the State of Texas.

For additional information, please contact: Federico Zaragoza, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor, Economic and Workforce Development, at fzaragoza@alamo.edu or (210) 485-0015.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Career & College Connection for Economically Disadvantaged High School Students

Genesys Works - Houston

Genesys Works changes the trajectory of life for low-income students from one destined to a lifetime of low-wage occupations to one where they will fully participate in the economic mainstream as professionals. Through the Genesys Works experience, students who come from environments where entry into "the corporate world" seems unattainable realize that they, too, can succeed as professionals. They learn that pursuit of a college education is not only required but is the best path to a much better lifestyle.

Genesys Works is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that gives economically disadvantaged high school seniors the knowledge and opportunity to work and succeed in a corporate environment before they graduate from high school. The organization maintains a core belief that its innovative program model can transform the culture of its partner schools to one where students expect to succeed. As Genesys Works engages a significant number of students from each year's senior class, that group can be the guiding example that shows the student body the level of success that is possible in the world. That is why Genesys Works-Houston has set the goal of engaging 1,000 students per year by 2015. Leadership believes strongly that the annual, visible success of this group of seniors can influence the entire student body and instill a widespread belief that the pursuit of a professional career, as the logical next step after high school, is "the given," not the rare exception.

For additional information, please contact: Randy Penn, Director of Institutional Giving, at rpenn@genesysworks.org or (713) 337-0510.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Developmental Education Reconstruction

Lee College

Based on the high enrollment, low success rates in developmental courses before 2007, Lee College embarked on a complete overhaul of its developmental program that resulted in a 15 percent increase in student success and course completion rates.

Before the restructuring of the program, the college studied developmental education data and research on best practices. The college concluded from the research study that a centralized, developmental studies division would best benefit the institution's student population. Efforts were placed on hiring instructors with experience, interest, and coursework in remedial adult education. This select group of instructors then worked as a team to develop strategies and initiatives toward student success in developmental/remedial courses. In preparation for developing a multi-faceted approach, the faculty read and discussed Ruby Payne's *Framework on Poverty*, Ken Bain's *What the Best College Teachers Do*, and Carol Dweck's *Mindset*, as well as attended conferences on student success and read multiple articles in their teaching field. From this intensive study, a list of initiatives was developed. Achieving the Dream provided the framework and funding for many of these changes in the developmental program.

In an effort to reduce the number of developmental Math classes a student needs to take before reaching college-level Math classes, the developmental Math instructors began a pilot program to see if Basic Mathematics (Math 0310) students could meet the same standards as those in Pre-Algebra (Math 0315). The pass rate of Basic Mathematics students taught using the Pre-Algebra curriculum was 77 percent. This pass rate is comparable to the pass rate for the control group in Pre-Algebra. As a result, the college reduced the developmental Math sequence to three levels before College Algebra in fall 2012.

An integrated analysis (math, reading, and writing) of developmental education trends shows a significant increase in student course completions, a significant decrease in the number of sections offered, and a flat enrollment. The net benefits accrue to the students through higher completion rates and to the college through reduced instructional costs.

For additional information, please contact: Joyce Jacobs, Division Chair, at jjacobs@lee.edu or (281) 425-6411.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy

South Texas College

The Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy is a unique program where participating high school students are able to earn an Associate of Science degree in Biology before earning a high school diploma. The Dual Enrollment Medical Science Academy (DEMSA) was established at South Texas College (STC) in the fall of 2005 in direct response to the *Closing the Gaps by 2015* educational initiative. The DEMSA program is designed for 11th and 12th grade high school students. During their tenure in the DEMSA program, students explore medical careers through college coursework and prepare for bachelor's degrees and beyond in medical fields while completing an Associate of Science degree in Biology.

The DEMSA program requires students to follow a schedule of college academic classes that through curriculum adjustments, place an emphasis on the biological sciences. Students are exposed to a wide array of academic, personal, and college-knowledge workshops that take place on Fridays during the two academic years.

All DEMSA participants are required to be in study groups. This gives all students the opportunity to enhance one another's performance and stay motivated and committed to their academic work. South Texas College waives all student tuition and fees for DEMSA students. Participating school districts help sustain the program by providing $500 per student per semester to help defray the cost of instruction and materials. South Texas College is also able to generate funding through the students' contact hours. Additionally, the DEMSA Program has received approximately $498,000 over a six-year period from various grantors to support the DEMSA program.

The overriding goal for the DEMSA program is to increase the number of high school students who graduate with an associate's degree. Specific goals of the program are: (1) Enrollment, (2) Retention, (3) Completion, and (4) Transfer. This program serves students in the Texas Counties of Hidalgo and Starr, which have an 89.4 percent and 97.6 percent Hispanic population (U.S. Census Bureau: 2005) respectfully, and a low high school graduation rate for both counties. National, regional, state, and local data clearly demonstrate that Hispanics are an underrepresented ethnic minority in higher education. The region's high school graduation rates are some of the lowest in the state and the nation. Only 12.9 percent of Hidalgo County residents and 6.9 percent of Starr County residents have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. Therefore, it is critical to implement programs such as the DEMSA that encourage the completion of high school and the start of college early in a student's academic career, in such a manner that promotes positive academic and social returns with little or no financial burden on the family.

For additional information, please contact: Guadalupe Chavez, Director for High School Programs, at gchavez@southtexascollege.edu or (956) 872-3499.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

UT Arlington-Academic Partnerships BSN Completion Program

The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing/Academic Partnerships

The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing Academic Partnership RN to BSN program is closing the gaps in student participation, student success, and academic excellence. In 2008, in an effort to develop a highly scalable, accessible, and affordable opportunity for working registered nurses holding an associate's degree to continue their education and obtain their baccalaureate degree, The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing (UTACON) joined with the Dallas-based higher education service provider, Academic Partnerships, to transform its Bachelor of Science in Nursing completion program (RN-BSN) into an innovative, cost-effective, online program (AP RN to BSN). This unique public-private partnership has had a significant impact on *Closing the Gaps* goals for student participation and student success.

By design, both The University of Texas at Arlington (UT-Arlington) and the private service provider, Academic Partnerships, exercise their core competencies in the partnership. State universities such as UT-Arlington often do not have the infrastructure or expertise to recruit large numbers of students and expand their geographic reach. With their expertise in online instructional design, Academic Partnerships assisted the nursing and support course faculty in comprehensively transforming their courses for online delivery in a highly interactive, modular five-week format that fits the needs of working professionals.

The AP RN to BSN program is helping Texas meet its need for BSN-prepared nurses and is closing the gap for students returning to school to obtain their baccalaureate. Prior to the beginning of the AP RN to BSN program, UTACON graduated approximately 100 RN to BSN students per year. From its inception in November 2008 through December 2011, a total of 1,516 students have completed the program and acquired their BSN through the AP RN to BSN program. During Academic Year 2010-2011 (last year for which complete data are available), the program graduated 838 students. Of these graduates, 14.93 percent were African American and 10.3 percent were Hispanic. The AP RN to BSN graduates represent 45.84 percent of the total 1,826 RN-BSN students who graduated in Texas for this period. In spring 2012, a total of 3,669 RN to BSN students with a home state address of Texas were actively enrolled in the program. There are high progression to graduation rates, with students on average completing course work in approximately 18 months.

This innovative public-private partnership has allowed UT-Arlington to achieve remarkable growth and generate increased incremental revenue while retaining academic quality. It is a successful model of disruptive innovation in higher education that is being replicated beyond this particular program and university. Prior to establishing the partnership in November 2008, UTACON had less than 2,000 nursing students. Currently, there are more than 7,500 students enrolled in UT-Arlington's campus-based and AP nursing courses.

For additional information, please contact: Mary Mancini, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Chair Undergraduate Nursing Programs, at mancini@uta.edu or (817) 272-7344.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Academic Development Program

The University of Texas at San Antonio

One of the success strategies for the state listed under the success goal of *Closing the Gaps* is to "create incentives and requirements for seamless student transition among high schools and universities." The Academic Development Program at The University of Texas at San Antonio employs this success strategy by facilitating the transition of provisionally accepted students through the first year at the UTSA.

In fall 1995, planning began to create a program geared toward assisting incoming, provisionally admitted students at UTSA. The program would serve to aid provisionally admitted freshmen with the transition from high school to college, provide support to earn the grade point average needed to move to good standing, and retain students after one year, facilitating the progression to graduation. In June 1996, the Academic Development Program (ADP) was officially established and continues to be housed in the Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success. The ADP was originally funded by the South Texas Border Initiative to target students residing in the southern region of Texas, but has since been institutionalized. Initially, the program served an average of 65 provisional students through an optional five-week summer bridge program.

The aim of the ADP is to facilitate the transition between high school and UTSA for provisionally admitted students by providing support through dedicated academic advising, specialized programs, and enhanced campus affiliation. In doing so, ADP strives to increase student success and maximize student retention. Provisional students often come to the university academically and socially underprepared for the college experience. Students in the program are given the opportunity to adjust to college life while improving academic skills they will need to be successful. From orientation to program completion, the ADP offers multiple ways to assist in student success.

Since its inception, the ADP has undergone changes to accommodate the needs of the university and the needs of students. Although the ADP has expanded to about five times its original size, the goal of sustaining the integrity of the ADP by maintaining a sound, quality program remains paramount. The ADP staff recognizes that a constant attempt to improve services and adjust to the changes in student populations will be critical to the continued success of the ADP. When exceptional service is provided, ADP participants truly benefit. The goals of the program include aiding in freshman retention and positively impacting university graduation rates, and positively upholding the mission of the university to become a Tier One research institution.

For additional information, please contact: Venesa Matthews, Academic Advisor II, at venesa.matthews@utsa.edu or (210) 458-7252.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Success Through Education Programs

University of Houston – Clear Lake

Success Through Education Programs (STEP) is a collaborative initiative whose partners work together to identify first-generation, diverse, low-income students who have the potential to become highly qualified teachers. In 1993, faced with an alarming teacher shortage and lack of diversity in the workforce, the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) School of Education collaborated with Galveston Independent School District to address these mutual concerns.

From the roots of this successful collaboration, partnerships have expanded to four area school districts, six high schools, and four local community colleges. Each partner has significant percentages of minority, economically disadvantaged students. Many of these students will be the first in their family to graduate from college, another factor that widens the gap of attaining a college degree. These partners work together to close the gap: Galveston ISD, Galveston College, Goose Creek ISD, Lee College, Galena Park ISD, San Jacinto College-North, Houston ISD, and Houston Community College-Southeast.

STEP provides a seamless progression from high school, to community college, to UHCL by establishing a network of support and continuous advisement for six years. Upon graduation, many of these students return to teach in the elementary, middle, and high schools they attended as children.

STEP continues to provide a safety net for success by following students' progress throughout the teacher education program. One way to maintain contact with STEP students is through mid-term and final exam stress-buster events. For example, students are invited to meet in the advising office for words of encouragement and goody bags of nutritious snacks. This advising initiative provides an opportunity to informally check in with students about their progress and their concerns and is also an opportunity for peer-sharing. The extra support and guidance has been extremely successful with helping students to plan and to reach their goals for the next semester.

The key to STEPS' success is a group of dedicated educators who spend time developing personally meaningful relationships with first-generation college students, who often do not have access to the support system they need to be successful in college. Whereas money provides needed scholarships, resources, and support for the students, the most important thing is the personal contact with the students that assures them that their success is important to all of us. The 93.6 percent graduation rate clearly shows that STEP is contributing to the *Closing the Gaps* goals.

For additional information, please contact: Nancy Wright, STEP Faculty Liaison, at wrightn@uhcl.edu or (281) 283-3579.

2012 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Gateway Project

West Texas A&M University

The Gateway to WTAMU project (Gateway Project) began in fall 2008 as an initiative to improve the retention of first-year students at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) by improving the student experience in gateway first-year mathematics courses.

West Texas A&M University redesigned the traditional three-hour lecture of the developmental mathematics courses into a two-hour lecture plus two-hour lab format. The lab format was chosen based on underutilization of the available resources for help in mathematics by developmental mathematics students. The lab format brings the resources to the students in an engaging manner. An unanticipated benefit of this structure is the 50-minute lecture and lab periods Monday through Thursday create a 30-minute break before the next class period begins, encouraging student use of the Math Lab described below. The lecture portion of the course is taught by a member of the mathematics faculty, while the laboratory is run by graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants. Changing to a two-hour lecture format required the careful alignment of all objectives in developmental mathematics with skills required for success in core-level mathematics courses. Course objectives for Beginning and Intermediate Algebra were carefully selected to ensure student success in core mathematics courses.

The Gateway Project has positively impacted student success in developmental mathematics and College Algebra at WTAMU. In all courses since fall 2008, the number of students successfully completing a mathematics course has steadily increased. A notable success of the redesigned developmental program was the immediate decline in the number of students who needed to repeat Beginning Algebra in the spring semester. The number of students enrolled in Beginning Algebra in the spring of 2009 decreased by 59 percent compared to spring 2008. The lessons learned in 2009 have resulted in an 11 percent increase in student success rates in both Beginning and Intermediate Algebra.

The Gateway Project at WTAMU has increased student participation and success in entry-level mathematics courses at a minimal cost to the students and to the taxpayers of Texas. The increased success rate of students enrolled in these classes ensures that they are making adequate and timely progress toward degree completion.

For additional information, please contact: Nick Flynn, Ph.D., Department Head and Professor, Department of Math, Chemistry, and Physics, at nflynn@wtamu.edu or (806) 651-2542.

Texas Higher Education Star Awards
Past Recipients

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
Lone Star College-CyFair

2009

Mathematics Outreach Center
Amarillo College

College, Career & Technology Academy
South Texas College/Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District

Partnership
Texas A&M University-Commerce and Mesquite Independent School District

Partnering for Teachers
Texas Woman's University and Dallas Independent School District

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