

First Generation College Student Initiatives

**A Report on the Initial Phase of the First Generation
College Student Grants Program**

Fiscal Year 2004

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Division of Participation and Success
July 2004**

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The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Mission of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions and other entities to provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

Philosophy of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will promote access to quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access is unacceptable. The Board will be open, ethical, responsive, and committed to public service. The Board will approach its work with a sense of purpose and responsibility to the people of Texas and is committed to the best use of public monies. The Coordinating Board will engage in actions that add value to Texas and to higher education; the agency will avoid efforts that do not add value or that are duplicated by other entities.

Background

In May 2002, Governor Rick Perry announced plans for several higher education initiatives, including the recruitment, preparation, enrollment, and retention of first generation college students. First generation college students are students who would be the first in their families to complete higher education through two- and four-year postsecondary institutions. During 2003, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Coordinating Board (THECB) worked together to develop and implement plans to address the First Generation Initiatives set forth by the Governor's office. The joint plans include complementary and supportive structures necessary for first generation, low-income students to succeed in high school and college. The joint plans also include collaboration between institutions of higher education, public school districts, and local Workforce Development Boards, to maximize student success.

TWC, TEA, and THECB submitted a joint application for funding to the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grants Fund to support the First Generation College Student Initiative. In June 2003, the Department of Labor notified TWC that the joint proposal had been funded at \$3 million per year for two years, with \$1.5 million for TWC, \$1.2 million for THECB, and \$300,000 for TEA during each of the two years (2003-2004 and 2004-2005 academic years). THECB is using its allocation to award competitive subgrants to institutions of higher education for supplemental scholarships to enroll and retain first generation college students from targeted Texas high schools with low-college going rates; for conducting College Enrollment Workshops in targeted high schools in support of the Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program; and for GO Centers in selected high schools in pilot areas.

Accomplishments of the Initial Phase of the First Generation College Student Initiatives, 2003-2004

TWC, TEA, and THECB used the funding received from the U. S. Departments of Labor's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grant to begin a series of pilot programs throughout the state. Twelve local Workforce Development Areas (workforce areas) were identified as initial targeted regions, based on several factors, including the number of disadvantaged youth in the areas and the number of high school seniors who do not go on to higher education. This strategy not only supports the Governor's goals, but also supports Texas House Bill 400 (Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program authorized in the 2001 Texas legislative session and continued in the 2003 Texas legislative session), which was intended to increase the college enrollment of students from public high schools that rank in the lowest 10 percent based on graduates' college-going rates.

Both state-level and local entities are collaborating to recruit, counsel, and help prepare disadvantaged youth who are identified as first generation students (i.e., the custodial parent or parents do not have a two-year or four-year college degree). Joint efforts are targeting youth in

grades 9-12 who attend high schools that are in the lowest 10 percent of all the public high schools in the state with regard to the numbers of seniors that continue on into postsecondary education in the year following graduation. Texas has approximately 90 high schools with both low college-going rates and high percentages of disadvantaged youth who are first generation students. These students are being reached as early as possible to provide information and support on pursuing higher education opportunities and to ensure that they complete the coursework necessary to apply to a postsecondary institution. After participants are enrolled in a postsecondary education program, continued support, follow-up, and scholarship opportunities are being provided to ensure that they will be successful in achieving their goals.

TWC, TEA, and THECB recognize that disadvantaged, first generation students are one of the hardest to serve populations, but strongly believe that a cohesive approach will have a significant impact on improving the outcomes for these students. A cohesive effort, while critical to an individual student's academic and workforce success, has even broader implications for the state as a whole. By preparing and supporting Texas young people throughout their secondary and postsecondary schooling, the State is investing in the strength of tomorrow's workforce and in the educational and economic growth of the future.

Below is a chart showing the participating grant partners, a brief description of the activities to be administered by each partner, and the amount of WIA Incentive Grant funds provided for the activities and services annually, for the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 academic years:

WIA Incentive Grant Project		
Grant Partner	Activity Component(s)	Funds Requested
Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Provide certification training to teachers to qualify them to teach Career Orientation Programs in middle schools and high schools.	\$300,000
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)	Provide on-site College Enrollment Workshops for students in grades 9 – 12 and their parents; provide competitive subgrants to accredited public or private institutions of higher education that enroll and retain first generation college students from high schools with low college-going rates; and implement on-site "GO" Centers to provide follow-up assistance to students and parents for academic and financial aid information.	\$1.2 million
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Provide subgrants to consortia in selected workforce areas to implement innovative first generation model programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels.	\$1.5 million
TOTAL FUNDS		\$3 million

The 12 pilot areas in the state which are the highest priority for the 2003-2005 period include the following workforce areas:

- Cameron County
- Deep East Texas
- Gulf Coast
- South East Texas
- South Plains
- Upper Rio Grande
- Alamo
- Dallas County
- North Central Texas
- Panhandle
- Tarrant County
- North East Texas

These sites represent urban, rural, and border areas throughout the state, and contain high concentrations of high schools with low college-going rates. In addition, they were identified based on the following criteria:

- They contain high schools that are in the lowest 10 percent of all the public high schools with regard to the numbers of seniors that continue on into public post-secondary education in the year following graduation;
- They have high concentrations of disadvantaged youth and high percentages of first-generation students; and
- They have established partnerships that exist between the Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), selected school districts, higher education institutions, and employers, which ensure the efficacy of the projects.

Coordinating Board staff members have arranged and provide on-site College Enrollment Workshops for students in grades 9-12 and their parents at targeted high schools in the pilot areas, as well as at other high-needs high schools across the state. These workshops provide the students and their parents with the opportunity to fully complete applications for direct enrollment in the local community colleges and to apply for financial aid assistance (e.g., the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA and the Common Application for Texas Public Universities). The workshops also assist students in registering for college entrance examinations, including the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT).

To ensure broader coverage of this effort, the Coordinating Board also solicited the assistance of accredited, regionally located community and technical colleges, state colleges, and universities. The Coordinating Board issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in the fall of 2003 to award competitive subgrants to these institutions to provide additional on-site College Enrollment Workshops in all pilot areas. Awards were made to institutions to conduct workshops for the 2003-2004 academic year. A roster of institutions receiving First Generation College Student Grant awards is provided as Appendix A of this report. This group of grantees includes 10 2-year institutions, and 10 4-year institutions, and 12 of the 20 grantees are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as Hispanic-serving institutions.

Each of the 20 institutions receiving First Generation College Student Grants are also using those funds to provide \$500 per year supplemental scholarships to their entering first generation, low-income students, as required by the RFP and grant contract. As a further condition of the grant award, the institution must provide comprehensive support services to their first generation students, including but not limited to: tutoring services, mentoring services, advising services, and related individualized attention to ensure that the students persist from their first to their second year of studies.

In addition to these workshops and the supplemental scholarships, the Coordinating Board has used a portion of these federal funds to establish on-site "GO" Centers in selected high schools in the targeted areas as part of the statewide *College for Texans* campaign to encourage more Texans to pursue higher education. The "GO" centers provide follow-up assistance to secondary school students and parents who need academic and financial aid information to facilitate a seamless transition from high school to college. Over 40 GO Centers have been established across the state, including all targeted Workforce Development Board regions. The GO Centers promote the students' completion of the Recommended High School Program (rather than the minimum plan for the diploma) to boost students' readiness for success in higher education and the workforce.

More than 57,000 students are enrolled in high schools with campus-based GO Centers. Appendix B of this report shows some early encouraging trends as a result of these and other initiatives. For example, the percentage of students completing the Recommended High School Program statewide is up substantially for 2002 and 2003, compared to prior years. In addition, the increase in the percentage of graduates completing the Recommended Program is up most dramatically in those regions with greater numbers of GO Centers (such as the Upper Rio Grande area) than in regions with fewer GO Centers.

Conclusions

The impact of these initiatives is difficult to judge so soon after implementation. However, Coordinating Board staff anticipates that the on-site College Enrollment Workshops, the GO Centers at high schools in targeted areas, and the First Generation College Student Grants to institutions will lead to an increase of up to 50,000 students who enrolled in Texas higher education by 2005. This outcome is consistent with the first goal of the state's higher education plan, "*Closing the Gaps by 2015.*" The goal calls for the state to close the gaps in participation across Texas to add an additional 500,000 students by 2015.

In addition, Coordinating Board staff expects that institutions providing supplemental scholarships to first generation, low-income students (using their federal First Generation College Student Grants) will increase the persistence and subsequent graduation rates of these students. Qualifying institutions must provide comprehensive campus-based student support services, thus increasing the likelihood that students will complete their higher education goals. This outcome is consistent with the second goal of the strategic plan for higher education in Texas, which calls for increasing by 50 percent the number of associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, certificates, and other recognizable measures of student success by 2015.

Finally, because the Coordinating Board met all of its performance goals for the 2003-2004 U. S. Department of Labor grant award, an additional \$1.2 million or more will be provided by the federal government for 2005-2006. If the Coordinating Board meets again all of its performance goals for its 2004-2005 grant award, another \$1.2 million or more will be provided automatically for 2006-2007. The Coordinating Board staff is pleased to be able to continue its work on these First Generation College Student Initiatives in the coming years.

APPENDIX A

2003-2004 First Generation Grant College Student Grant Program Awards

Angelina College-First Generation PILOTS (Pathfinders in Learning Opportunities and Tradition-Setting), Project Director James N. Twohig, \$30,000.

Cedar Valley College (DCCCD)-First Generation College Student Grant Program, Project Director Pamela R. Gist, \$30,000.

Collin County Community College District-Expanding Post-Secondary Access and Participation, Project Director Roberta Jackson, \$30,000.

College of the Mainland-COM First Generation Student Support Program, Project Director Rick Gearing, \$30,000.

El Centro College-Family's First Program, Project Director Felicitas Alfaro, \$30,000.

Lamar University-Foundations of Excellence in the First Year Experience: GO Scholarships, Project Director James Rush, \$30,000

Northeast Texas Community College-First Generation College Students UNITE, Project Director Sherry Keye, \$30,000.

San Antonio College-WINGS: Working toward Independence Network of Guiding Students, Project Director Jon R. Anderson, \$30,000

South Plains College-Retention through Advisement and Involvement, Project Director Marla Cottenoir, \$30,000

St. Phillips College-St. Philip's College First Generation College Student Program, Project Director C. L. Leonard, \$30,000.

Sul Ross State University-STay Ahead and Ready (STAR Program), Project Director Nadine Jenkins, \$30,000.

Texas A&M International University-TAMIU First Generation College Students Grant Program, Project Director Thomas G. Corti, \$30,000.

Texas Tech University-PEGASUS: Pioneers in Education: Generations Achieving Scholarship and Unprecedented Success, Project Director Elizabeth Teagan, \$30,000.

Texas Woman's University-TWU First Generation College Student Program, Project Director Richard Nicolas, \$30,000.

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College-Operation Green Light, Project Director Linda Fossen, \$30,000.

The University of Texas-Pan American-First Generation Cameron County Student Success Initiative (CCSSI), Project Director Felipe Salinas, \$30,000.

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin- Leveraging and Indication for First Time Students (LIFTS), Project Director Susan Lara, \$30,000.

The University of Texas at San Antonio(UTSA)-Enhancing UTSA's Access College and Excel (ACE) Retention Program, Project Director Patricia Glenn, \$30,000.

University of North Texas-First To Go, First To Know Recruitment & Retention Program, Project Director Patrick J. Vasquez, \$30,000.

West Texas A&M University-College Success Institute, Project Director Troy Johnson, \$30,000.

APPENDIX B



College for Texans Campaign Activities by ESC Region

Statewide Totals	
2003 Community Based Organization (CBO) Grants: 249	2004 CBO Grants: 278
2003 Go Theatre Teams: 11	
2003 High School Go Centers: 40	2004 Collegiate Go Center Grants: 63
Recommended High School Program/Distinguished Achievement Program Graduates (Class of 2000): 38.6%	
Recommended High School Program/Distinguished Achievement Program Graduates (Class of 2002): 58.2%	
<i>RHSP/DAP data from the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2000-01 and 2001-02. Numbers given are the percentages of all graduates for that year who graduated under the Recommended or Distinguished programs.</i>	

Region 1: Edinburg	
2003 CBO Grants: 9	2004 CBO Grants: 26
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 8	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 5
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 55.7%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 74.0%	
Region 2: Corpus Christi	
2003 CBO Grants: 7	2004 CBO Grants: 11
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 2	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 4
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 45.5%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 67.1%	
Region 3: Victoria	
2003 CBO Grants: 3	2004 CBO Grants: 5
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 2
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 37.4%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 55.4%	
Region 4: Houston	
2003 CBO Grants: 26	2004 CBO Grants: 35
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 2	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 10
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 29.0%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 50.4%	
Region 5: Beaumont	
2003 CBO Grants: 7	2004 CBO Grants: 11
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 1	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 36.8%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 52.2%	
Region 6: Huntsville	
2003 CBO Grants: 4	2004 CBO Grants: 3
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 2
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 48.6%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 55.5%	
Region 7: Kilgore	
2003 CBO Grants: 12	2004 CBO Grants: 16
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 9	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 38.7%	

RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 53.2%	
Region 8: Mt. Pleasant	
2003 CBO Grants: 11	2004 CBO Grants: 1
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 2
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 33.0%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 56.1%	
Region 9: Wichita Falls	
2003 CBO Grants: 2	2004 CBO Grants: 12
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 1
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 41.5%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 54.9%	
Region 10: Dallas	
2003 CBO Grants: 9	2004 CBO Grants: 14
Go Theatre Teams: 2 (Shared with Fort Worth)	
Go Centers: 6	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 8
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 39.7%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 59.4%	
Region 11: Fort Worth	
2003 CBO Grants: 5	2004 CBO Grants: 23
Go Theatre Teams: 2 (Shared with Dallas)	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 4
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 48.9%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 62.7%	
Region 12: Waco	
2003 CBO Grants: 0	2004 CBO Grants: 7
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 34.7%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 53.0%	
Region 13: Austin	
2003 CBO Grants: 36	2004 CBO Grants: 21
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 2	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 37.3%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 56.4%	
Region 14: Abilene	
2003 CBO Grants: 6	2004 CBO Grants: 5
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 1
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 38.1%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 54.9%	

Region 15: San Angelo	
2003 CBO Grants: 8	2004 CBO Grants: 17
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 1
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 34.3%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 51.0%	
Region 16: Amarillo	
2003 CBO Grants: 30	2004 CBO Grants: 18
Go Theatre Teams: 2 (Shared with Lubbock)	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 2
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 48.4%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 56.0%	
Region 17: Lubbock	
2003 CBO Grants: 26	2004 CBO Grants: 22
Go Theatre Teams: 2 (Shared with Amarillo)	
Go Centers: 7	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 1
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 30.7%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 53.9%	
Region 18: Midland	
2003 CBO Grants: 27	2004 CBO Grants: 13
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 0	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 2
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 41.5%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 57.6%	
Region 19: El Paso	
2003 CBO Grants: 5	2004 CBO Grants: 8
Go Theatre Teams: 1	
Go Centers: 2	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 47.0%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 82.7%	
Region 20: San Antonio	
2003 CBO Grants: 11	2004 CBO Grants: 10
Go Theatre Teams: 0	
Go Centers: 2	Collegiate Go Center Grants: 3
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2000): 26.2%	
RHSP/DAP Graduates (Class of 2002): 55.7%	

Related reports and data available from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's
Division of Participation and Success:

A Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategy, April 2002

*Public High School Graduates Enrolled in Texas Public Higher Education, by County,
1995 – 2000 Graduates*

Student Performance and the Recommended High School Program, February 2003

*Partnership Plans to Increase College-going Rates and the Pilot Program for College
Enrollment Workshops, July 2002*

*Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategic Plan: Report on 2002 Submissions,
January 2003*

*Higher Education Assistance (HEA) Pilot Program: A Report on the Implementation and
Effectiveness of the HEA Pilot Program, July 2003*

This document is available on the
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
World Wide Web Site
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

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