

2017
Texas Higher Education
Star Awards



December 1, 2017

17th Annual Texas Higher Education Star Awards

Presented by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Star Award was originally established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2001 to recognize exceptional contributions toward achieving one or more of the goals of the former long-range Texas higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, which brought Texas from 2000 to 2015. The state's new higher education plan, *60x30TX*, adopted by the Coordinating Board on July 23, 2015, builds on the success of *Closing the Gaps* and is designed to establish a globally competitive workforce in Texas by 2030. (See *60x30TX* at: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/60x30TX>)

Criteria for the 2017 Star Award

Programs/projects/activities, groups/organizations, and partnerships must:

- demonstrate successful outcomes in areas of: (1) the educational attainment of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population; (2) student completion of a certificate or degree; (3) the number of programs with identified marketable skills; or (4) the implementation of programs or cost efficiencies that help to ensure that undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages;
- clearly demonstrate improvement and excellence through the use of benchmarks and other comparison data that allow progress to be monitored and evaluated and that are attributable to the efforts of the program/organization/partnership; and
- clearly demonstrate an efficient cost/benefit ratio per student.

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 2017 Star Award Selection Committee

Coordinating Board Members

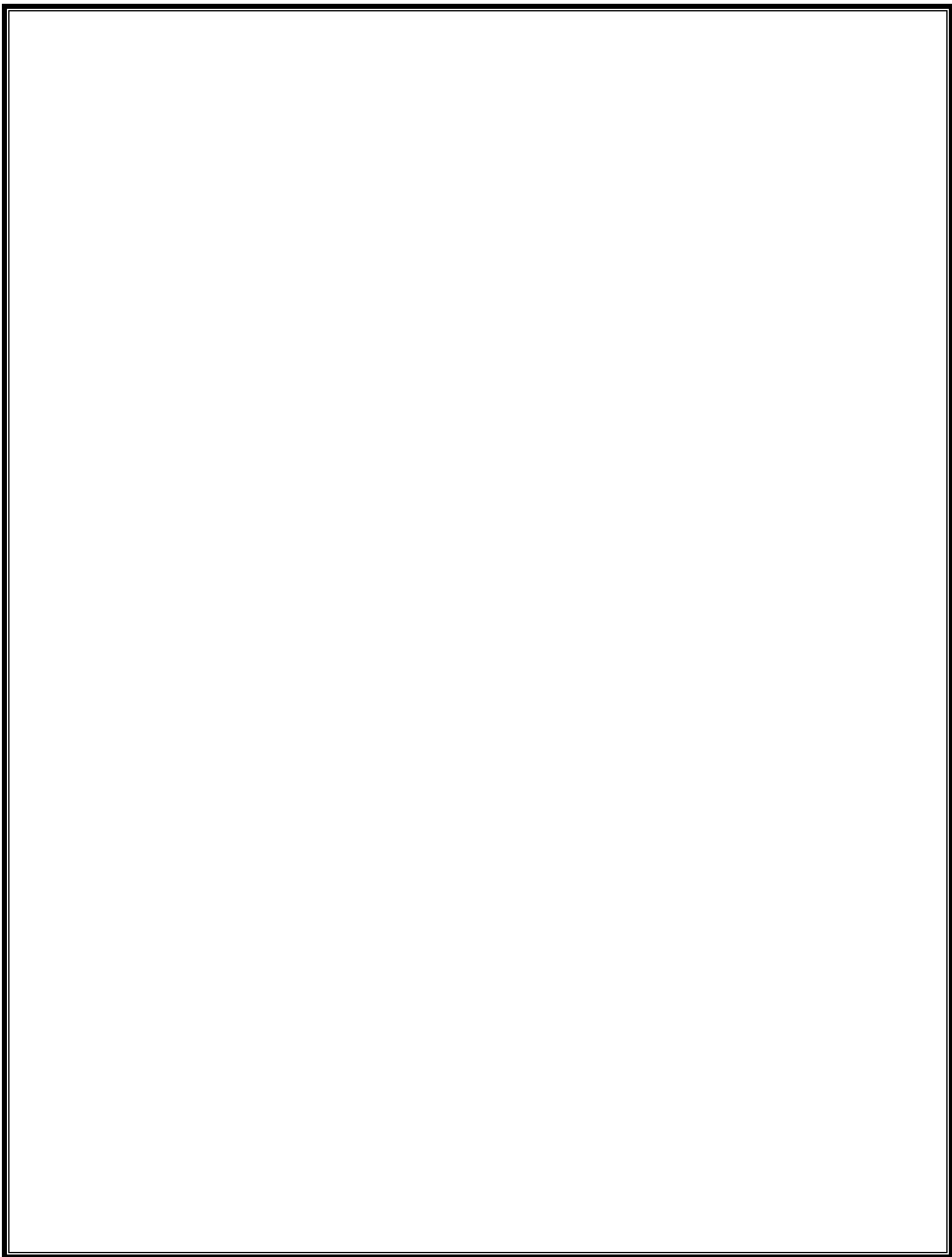
- **Arcilia C. Acosta**, Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **Stuart W. Stedman**, Vice Chair, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **John T. Steen**, Member, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Texas Business and Community Leaders

- **Laurie Bricker, M.Ed.**, Consultant, Houston, Texas
- **Charles R. Matthews, Ed.D.**, Trustee, College for All Texans Foundation Board, Aquilla, Texas
- **Michael Paris**, Executive Director, Paris Economic Development Corporation, Paris, 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
- **Brian T. Prescott, Ph.D.**, Associate Vice President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), Boulder, Colorado



2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Recipient



Accelerated Programmer Training

Austin Community College District

Eight-Week Terms: A Pathway to 60x30TX

Odessa College

UH in 4

University of Houston

The Gateway Course Innovation Initiative

University of Houston-Downtown





2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Accelerated Programmer Training

Austin Community College District

Austin Community College Districts (ACC) Accelerated Programmer Training program supports the Completion and potentially the Educated Population goals of *60x30TX*. The program offers students computer science and computer information technology degrees and certificates. Students receive credit for their current knowledge and skills through competency-based education and complete online courses at an accelerated pace. Industry partners guide curriculum and provide students with relevant experience through mock job interviews, mentoring, and internships. ACC staff support and motivate students to complete their credentials and provide services, including resume writing and virtual job fairs.

During its initial three years of operation, the program enrolled over 800 students which helped increase completed computer science certificates and degrees by 140 percent (from 75 in 2012-13 to 175 in 2015-16). The newly created Marketable Skills Awards are very popular, with 693 awards completed during the first two years of availability. The courses build into stackable credentials – from a Marketable Skills Award (four courses), into a certificate, and finally an associate degree. A student can expect to spend approximately \$5,100 (including in-district fees and books) to obtain a two-year degree of 60 semester credit hours. ACC is scaling knowledge gained from implementing this program into other areas within the college.

For additional information, please contact: Linda Smarzik, Dean of Computer Studies and Advanced Technology, at lsmarzik@austincc.edu or (512) 223-9214.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Pathways to Success for Students in Allied Health

Coastal Bend College

Coastal Bend College's (CBC) goal in making the nursing pathway accessible, affordable, and achievable simultaneously meets expectations of *60x30TX* by increasing certificate and degree completers of nursing programs. The nursing pathway is initiated with Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.), Fundamental Level I Certificate in Certified Nursing Assistant, Level I Certificate in Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN), and Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing (ADN). This pathway has four levels of achievement that, with additional coursework, leads to stackable certificates and ultimately leads to the Associates of Applied Science Degree in Nursing. In 2016/2017, CBC had 15 independent school district partners supporting the pipeline. As of May 2017, there were 255 students enrolled in the nursing pathway. Of the 255 C.N.A. pathway students, 32 received a Marketable Skills Achievement Award, 29 earned a Fundamental Level I Certificate in Certified Nursing Assistant, and 194 students enrolled in the Fundamental Certified Nursing Assistant Level I with an estimated graduation date of December 2017. Several of these students are committed to continuing the pathway to the ADN.

The challenge to be a successful course and National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) completer through the Texas Board of Nursing and become a certified LVN, comes with the intensive reading required in the nursing program. Hence, attrition has been a problem. To address this problem, nursing faculty and English worked together in fall 2014 to develop workshops called Contextualize Reading/LVN Intervention. The completion rate went from 80 percent in 2013/2014 to 85 percent in 2014/2015 to 87 percent in 2015/2016 to 88 percent in 2016/2017. Students' NCLEX scores of those who completed the seminar went from 85 percent in 2014-2015 to 92 percent in 2016-2017. The average cost for a student to complete the LVN program at CBC is \$9,277. The intervention in the LVN program also carried over to the RN program by increasing the capacity and doubling the enrollment and completers in the LVN-RN Bridge program (from 16 completers in 2014/15 to 34 in 2015/16, and from 15 NCLEX exam passers in 2014/15 to 29 passers in 2015/16, an increase in the output of RNs into the workforce of approximately 50 percent in one year).

For additional information, please contact: Julia Garcia, Dean of Workforce, at jgarcia@coastalbend.edu or (830) 569-4222 ext 1202.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Eight-Week Terms: A Pathway to 60x30TX

Odessa College

Implemented in AY 2014, Odessa College (OC) re-imagined the traditional 16-week term and for more than 80 percent of the courses OC offers – including all core courses – transformed them into 8-week terms, thus making 16-week terms the “exception” and 8-week terms the “new normal.” The direct and immediate benefits have been increased enrollment, increased rate of benchmark credit attainment toward a degree, and increased semester-to-semester persistence. Unduplicated enrollment for both First-Time-In-College (FTIC) students and for all students has increased each year under the new 8-week term format.

For socioeconomically disadvantaged part-time students, the transition to 8-week courses has allowed more students to access federal financial aid. The percent of FTIC students achieving 12 or more credit hours in their first semester has increased substantially since the transition to 8-week terms and is now 32 percent, up from a range of 22 percent to 25 percent in the four years preceding the transition. In fall 2015 and continuing in fall 2016, every disaggregated student cohort increased persistence from fall-to-spring semester – in many cases greater than 10 percentage points from the previous fall 2013 and fall 2014 cohorts. The transition to 8-week terms has done considerable good at minimal cost. The Aspen Institute awarded Odessa College its \$100,000 Rising Star Award in 2017.

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

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Automotive Technology

St. Philip's College

St. Philip's College is a historically Black college and a Hispanic-serving institution that offers an affordable education and financial support for people of low economic status. The Automotive Technology program, which began at St. Philip's College in 1957, is located in the Applied Science Building built in 1992. The program has 271 program majors (spring 2017); course enrollment is approximately 580 to 600 students (duplicate) per semester. The program maintains a network of partners-in-education: local high schools, small business owners, large vehicle manufacturer franchises, and major parts retailers.

The program offers three associate degrees (one general, two manufacturer specific), five Level 1 Certificates in Automotive Technology, and Continuing Education training by two vehicle manufacturers – Ford Motor Company and General Motors. The manufacturer-specific degree plans are offered in a block schedule format. Courses taken in any of the five certificate programs will transfer to the associate degree plan. The Level I Certificate programs range from 18 SCH to 29 SCH. To promote student completion, the program offers all automotive courses in the curriculum every fall and spring semester. The tuition and fees for the associate degree are approximately \$5,920 (based on fall 2017, in-district); and the Level 1 Certificate programs range from \$1,884 to \$3,020, depending upon the specialization area. The automotive program has a long history of community support that builds partnerships with organizations to promote success for students of all backgrounds and income levels, has many activities throughout the school year that involve and inspire students, and has good retention and completion rates as noted below. Students attaining a certificate or degree from the automotive technology program are usually employed upon graduation.

- 2012/13: 20 students earned an A.A.S. degree, 31 students earned certificates; 83% employed, self-employed, or continuing education.
- 2013/14: 26 students earned an A.A.S. degree, 55 students earned certificates; 94% employed, self-employed, or continuing education.
- 2014/15: 29 students earned an A.A.S. degree, 89 students earned certificates; 86% employed, self-employed, or continuing education.
- 2015/16: 28 students earned an A.A.S. degree, 140 students earned certificates.

For additional information, please contact: Chris Beardsall, Dean of Applied Science and Technology, at cbeardsall@alamo.edu or (210) 486-2082.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

Undergraduate Success Scholars

The University of Texas at Dallas

The Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) at the University of Texas at Dallas (UT-Dallas) created the Undergraduate Success Scholars (USS) program to close the gap of underrepresented minority (URM) persistence. The program employs data collection methods, provides a network of support for first-year students, and engages key partners across campus to lend their expertise to support participant educational attainment. The program provides a four-year formal guided pathway for select underrepresented minority undergraduates. Undergraduate Success Scholars create personalized success plans, receive mentorship, participate in cultural experiences, and contribute to the campus and external community through service.

The target population for the inaugural cohort was African American and Hispanic freshmen who were not receiving a merit-based scholarship from UT-Dallas. Of the 396 students invited, 77 students agreed to participate. The retention rate of the inaugural cohort was just under 90 percent, compared to 70 percent of the 319 others invited but who did not agree to participate. The retention rates of the first two cohorts are above the first-year retention rates of the overall first-time-in-college population, with the second cohort's retention rate comparable to that of the university's merit-based scholarship recipients at 90 percent. As of May 2017, 92 percent of the USS participants in AY 2017 have re-enrolled for fall 2017. Based on re-enrollment for fall at the conclusion of spring 2017, the retention rate of the third cohort will be above 93 percent. Data collected by the Office of Assessment show that 100 percent of active USS participants are on track to graduate in four years, compared to a projected four-year graduation rate of approximately 40 percent for students who are no longer active in the USS program. University GPA data reveal that the highest percent of URM students who earned a 2.0 GPA or above during the Spring 2017 semester were active USS participants. The data also show that the highest percent of students who improved their GPA from AY 2016 to AY 2017 were USS participants. In AY 2017, the USS program operating budget was \$35,000 to support 217 active students, or \$161 per student.

For additional information, please contact: Courtney Brecheen, Associate Dean, at courtneyb@utdallas.edu or (972) 883-6788.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

15 to Grad: Tuition Plan, Advising, & Outreach to Support 15 Hour Enrollment

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) 15 to GRAD program is a combination of an innovative tuition plan, advising and degree planning guidance, and outreach to students to encourage and support enrollment in 15 semester credit hours (SCH) per semester and speed degree completion. The UTRGV innovative tuition rate plan is designed to support timely graduation through two methods: 1) a four-year locked-in guaranteed rate allows students and families to plan cost of tuition with certainty; and 2) tuition and fees are capped at 12 credit hours of enrollment per semester. Undergraduate enrollment above 12 credit hours a semester is free to students to encourage them to enroll full-time and graduate in four years. The second component of the design is degree planning and guidance. Degree planning tools, in particular a four-year road map for each degree, support four-year graduation and 15-hour semester enrollment. Road maps with suggested course sequences are provided to all incoming students and persistently are available to them online. The third component of the plan includes a creative marketing and outreach plan designed to reach students during times and places where they will most likely see and respond to the message.

In the two years since UTRGV's launch, this program has supported a 10 percent increase in undergraduate student enrollment in 15 hours per semester (from Fall 2015 to Spring 2017 enrollment), saving each student an estimated \$1,100 in tuition and fee dollars every semester that they take advantage of the program. The program was designed ultimately to both significantly increase degree completion and to reduce student debt. Data from entering freshmen from Fall 2015 show that students enrolling in 15 SCH or more during their first semester are retained into their second year at 4 percent higher rates than other undergraduate students initially enrolled full time but for less than 15 hours (for 12-14 credit hours) and at 19 percent higher rates than those initially enrolled part time (11 or less credit hours). It is anticipated that these higher retention rates will translate into increased degree completion rates.

For additional information, please contact: Kristin Croyle, Vice President for Student Success, at kristin.croyle@utrgv.edu or (956) 665-7919.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

UH in 4

University of Houston

UH in 4 is a comprehensive high-impact initiative developed and delivered by the University of Houston's (UH) Office of the Provost to create an institutional culture consistent with four-year graduation expectations and deploy tools that enable students to graduate on time. Launched in 2014 to address timely completion barriers faced by University of Houston students, UH in 4 is an intentional evidence-based program that supports the *60x30TX* completion goal. Through a collaborative planning process prior to implementation, program elements were designed and an institutional culture consistent with four-year graduation expectations was fostered. As a result of these efforts, strong initial student participation in UH in 4 has grown, and increases in credit hour accumulation consistent with four-year degree completion have occurred. Moreover, these student success outcome improvements are most pronounced among traditionally underserved populations. Given implementation efficiencies and program component effectiveness, UH in 4 is a highly scalable program that saves students time and money by facilitating academic progress and performance needed for on-time graduation in four years. With a projected four-year graduation rate of 42 percent for the first UH in 4 graduating class, 12 percentage points higher than the year prior to UH in 4 implementation, this initiative is making a positive impact on students and contributing to higher education goals in Texas.

For additional information, please contact: Paula Myrick Short, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, at pmsshort@uh.edu or (832) 842-0550.

2017 Texas Higher Education Star Award Finalists

The Gateway Course Innovation Initiative

University of Houston-Downtown

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) Gateway Course Innovation Initiative is a multi-year project that aims to improve student success in high-enrollment, high-attrition undergraduate "gateway" courses. Sometimes known as "barrier" or "killer" courses, these often include several core courses that students take as freshmen or sophomores, or various foundational courses for major programs of study. Because students typically encounter these courses at vulnerable transition points in their academic careers, success or failure can have a disproportionate impact on persistence and completion.

The project has evolved in several stages, beginning in 2000 with a Title V grant that focused on improving outcomes for at-risk, underrepresented minority students. One of the most popular interventions of the grant was the infusion of Supplemental Instruction (SI, a peer tutoring model) into various large freshman courses, such as College Algebra, Composition, and U.S. History. The Title V program marked the beginning of a robust SI program at UHD, but also revealed the need for greater focus on curriculum and faculty development. Therefore, the focal elements of UHD's 2006 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) were expanding and sustaining the SI program, as well as faculty and curriculum development, to promote the use of active classroom engagement strategies. There was a particular emphasis on faculty and curriculum development with respect to three key freshman gateway courses which data revealed to be especially problematic: College Algebra, Composition II, and U.S. History I.

Students enrolled in the target gateway courses have been increasingly successful, as evidenced by an upward trend in C or better pass rates from year-to-year. The chief evidence for program productivity is the improvement in C or better pass rates for several targeted gateway courses (see Table 1 below). These improved grades are one important indicator of student learning, the primary goal in course redesign, which ultimately contributes to improved college completion.

Table 1: Comparison of baseline to current C or better rates for program target courses

Course Name	Course #	Baseline Semester	Baseline % ABC	Current % ABC	Baseline/Current Annual Enrollment
English Composition I	ENG 1301	Fall 2006	54	74	1634/1072
English Composition II	ENG 1302	Spring 2006	56	69	1503/1025
Integrated Read. & Writing	ENG 1300	Fall 2015	70	83	208/197
US History I	HIST 1305	Fall 2006	52	71	1446/1170
College Algebra	MATH 1301	Fall 2006	42	61	1841/1081
Contemporary Mathematics	MATH 1310	Fall 2013	53	65	623/198
Beginning Algebra	MATH 0300	Fall 2013	54	70	574/120
Intermediate Algebra	MATH 1300	Fall 2013	49	66	676/198
General Biology I	BIOL 1301	Fall 2011	38	65	388/394
General Chemistry I	CHEM 1307	Fall 2011	44	56	425/374
Federal Government	POLS 2305	Fall 2013	59	75	1768/1183

For additional information, please contact: Gregory Dement, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, at dementg@uhd.edu or (713) 221-8280.

Texas Higher Education Star Awards Past Recipients

2016

Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program
Texas A&M University–Commerce

2015

**The Education and Career Positioning System
– Linking Student Pathways to Careers**
Lone Star College–University Park

2014

Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Student Success
Lee College and Goose Creek Consolidated I.S.D.

San Antonio College GED-to-College Transition Program
San Antonio College Services for Women & Non-Traditional Students and San Antonio I.S.D.

Texas A&M – Blinn TEAM Program
Texas A&M University and Blinn College

Developmental Math Program
The University of Texas at El Paso

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

