

## Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board announces the 2016 Star Award winner

**October 26, 2016, Austin, Texas** -- Today at its annual State of Higher Education luncheon, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board announced the 2016 Star Award winner for exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of 60x30TX, the state's strategic plan for higher education.

This year's winner is Texas A&M University-Commerce: Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program, the state's first competency-based bachelor-level degree from a public institution. This unique, low-cost degree enables Texas students the opportunity to acquire a high-quality bachelor of applied science degree with an emphasis in organizational leadership. This degree provides the skills employers have identified as necessary for the 21st century, at the same time allowing students to accelerate time to completion and potentially save considerable money as they pursue their higher education dreams.



"There were many excellent Texas programs to choose from among this year's six Star Award finalists, but the judges unanimously agreed that the innovative Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program and its potential to positively impact a great number of students across the state made Texas A&M University-Commerce the decisive Star Award winner this year," said Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes. "The Coordinating Board is proud to recognize this institution and this program. The success of our 60x30TX plan will depend on our ability to deliver high quality education with affordable options."

The Coordinating Board received 39 nominations and 35 applications for this year's Star Award program.

In addition to Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program, 2016 finalists were:

- El Paso Community College and Texas Tech University (Partnership): Architecture
- Tarleton State University: Intern 2 Learn
- University of Houston-Clear Lake: Success Through Education Programs (STEP)
- The University of Texas at Austin: University Leadership Network
- The University of Texas at Tyler: Insight Motivated Marketing (IMM 360) Curriculum

The Star Award program recognizes exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of 60x30TX:

- Increasing the postsecondary educational attainment level of the state's 25- to 34-year-old population.
- Increasing the number of students completing a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas (Completion Goal).
- Increasing the number of programs with identified marketable skills at Texas public institutions of higher education (Marketable Skills Goal).
- Implementing programs or cost efficiencies that help to ensure that undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages (Student Debt Goal).

The [Star Award](#) was established in 2001. Winners are selected by a review committee consisting of Coordinating Board members, out-of-state higher education experts, and Texas community leaders. Representatives of institutions, organizations and groups from all over Texas have been recognized for their efforts to develop and implement the state's most successful programs, projects, activities and partnerships.

##

**About the organizations:**

*The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader. [Follow on Twitter @TXHigherEdBoard](#)*