

College for All Texans Foundation awards \$651,248 in Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Expansion Grants

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Tarleton State University, South Texas College, and Texas A&M University-Commerce have been awarded \$651,248 in grants, as recipients of the Texas Affordable Baccalaureate statewide expansion. The funds awarded will support the planning, development and implementation processes of the institutions' new affordable baccalaureate programs. The grants were made possible by multiple philanthropic organizations and were selected through a competitive application and review process.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will use the funds to create an affordable baccalaureate program in mechanical engineering technology that will take three years to complete. The program will incorporate competency-based curriculum to prepare workers with a skillset that is needed to work in the refinery and process industry as projected by workforce needs. The program will also provide an opportunity to engineering technology associate degree holders to pursue opportunities and career paths as engineering technologists, helping to close the gap between the Coastal Bend Workforce Development Area and the rest of the country.

Tarleton State University will use its grant funds to evaluate and implement alternative credit courses to reduce costs and time-to-degree for students in its bachelor of science in applied science program. By combining a hybrid-delivery model with an alternative credit model for general education courses, the new program will provide a path to an affordable baccalaureate degree for non-traditional students who have completed technical or occupational specializations from a community college or technical school, or during military training.

South Texas College will partner with Austin Community College (ACC) to create coursework, support services, and an articulation agreement for a 100 percent online, competency-based bachelor of applied technology (BAT) degree in computer information technology (CIT). All of the existing competency-based courses in ACC's associate of applied science (AAS) in computer programming will seamlessly transfer into South Texas College's newly developed, competency-based BAT in CIT, giving students an affordable fast-track to some of the most in-demand information technology (IT) occupations in Texas and beyond.

Texas A&M University-Commerce will develop a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice as a hybrid competency-based online program for certified first responders, military personnel, and adult learners with criminal justice employment experience. The proposed competency-based criminal justice degree is designed to assist this nontraditional professional population by providing a more affordable option for degree completion. Because employability of students is of vital importance, the curriculum will be designed so that competencies and learning outcomes are tied to specific courses for lower division courses. By providing a lower-cost, competency-based format, students can work at a pace that is most appropriate for their level of ability in a forum that allows for self-paced learning in an online learning platform.

The TAB grant program supports *60x30TX*, the state's higher education goals for completion, marketable skills, managing student debt, and ensuring that at least 60 percent of Texans age 25-34 will have a college degree or certificate by 2030.

For more information, visit www.thecb.state.tx.us/tabgrant