

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

NEW EXCEPTIONAL ITEM REQUEST COLLEGE COMPLETION UTSA



The UTSA College Completion program will address critical gaps in the student experience to advance UTSA's rapidly improving retention and graduation rates.

FUNDING REQUEST

\$495,000 per year | \$990,000 over biennium

OVERVIEW

UTSA has set aggressive 5-year goals to further improve first-year retention and graduation rates as one of the university's top priorities. As a Hispanic and urban-serving institution, cultivating an environment of student belonging and connectedness is key to this effort. Funding for **College Completion UTSA** will support high-impact initiatives designed to enhance the student experience through student-faculty engagement, experiential learning and effective communications. This is a new exceptional item that has not been funded before.

THE CHALLENGE

UTSA's student population is made up of more than 40% first-generation students, with more than 10,000 undergraduate students receiving Pell Grants and approximately 71% of incoming students receiving some form of grant or scholarship. These characteristics often are reflected in students having a low sense of belonging to the university, which can lead to them not reaching out in time for assistance. They also tend to have fewer faculty mentors and internships to help lead them toward fruitful careers post-graduation.

THE IMPACT

The initiatives under **College Completion UTSA** will enhance student connectedness and provide greater quality and quantity of faculty-student mentoring. Once more, these programs will facilitate student participation in experiential internship learning opportunities to position them for future careers. Funding support for this effort will make a significant difference in UTSA's ability to increase matriculation, retention and graduation rates for more first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students.

[More](#) 

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COLLEGE COMPLETION INITIATIVES

Experiential Learning Internship Grants

- » Grants will permit students to accept unpaid internships that directly serve under-resourced or non-profit urban-serving community partners.

Faculty-Student Engagement Fund

- » Fund will provide resources to enable faculty to enhance students' sense of belonging and provide more career mentoring.

Chatbot Artificial Intelligence System

- » The system will provide students with immediate responses to online questions and remove barriers for asking sensitive questions.

COLLEGE COMPLETIONS STRATEGIES

- » New university division dedicated to student success
- » UTSA LEAD Summer Academy for incoming student preparation
- » Academic advising campaigns
- » SOAR program to help freshmen to bridge to sophomore year
- » Block scheduling to facilitate students' ability to hold a job while they obtain their degree
- » Academic pathways course to build academic skills needed to succeed beyond the first year
- » Peer mentoring program
- » Success marker academic progress reports
- » Grants to assist students with fiscal holds on their accounts
- » Math Emporium core curriculum model to assist students with math readiness
- » A Coordinated Care Network to provide students with holistic academic support

BENEFITS TO SAN ANTONIO AND TEXAS

College Completion UTSA will enable the university to better serve the state's first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students pursuing their dream of a college degree. The funds will allow UTSA to address some of barriers and disadvantages facing these students, increasing the likelihood that they will complete their degrees and ultimately fueling social mobility and skilled workforce production for our state.