



The University of Texas at San Antonio™



INCREASING INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

The University of Texas at San Antonio, founded on the hopes and dreams of generations with the promise of social mobility and opportunity, is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through research and discovery, teaching and learning, community engagement and public service. UTSA, a multicultural discovery enterprise institution with more than 34,000 students, 134,000 alumni, and is the largest university in the San Antonio metropolitan region with four campuses across the city, UTSA is poised to expand to over 45,000 students by 2028, to realize the vision to be a premier public research university, providing access to educational excellence and preparing citizen leaders for the global environment.

Framing the Issue

As the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) charts a course for the future and looks to expand educational opportunities to unlock socioeconomic mobility for future generations. It is critical to increase higher education access and success to create opportunities for all students but most especially underrepresented minorities (URM).

Demographics

Although the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projections expect that the number of undergraduate students will increase between 2017 and 2028, the growth is expected to be relatively small, inching up from 16.8 to 17.2 million, a growth of only 3% (McFarland et al., 2019). Previous enrollment patterns from 2009 to 2017 provide clues to the future of higher education. During that time, the non-Hispanic White undergraduate student population declined by 13% and non-Hispanic Black students fell by 1.3% while the enrollment of Latinos rose by 48% (Saenz, 2020). The racial and ethnic composition of the nation's undergraduate population shifted sharply between 2000 and 2017. The non-Hispanic White percentage share of all undergraduates dropped from 66.3% in 2000 to 54.8% in 2017, while the Latino portion rose from 11.8% to 19.8% (Saenz, 2020). Texas projections indicate that by 2025, Latinos will account for 49%, non-Hispanic Blacks will comprise 12% of all high school graduates. Interestingly, non-Hispanic Whites will account for just 25% of high school graduates (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2020).

National and Regional Challenges

Historically, URM students have encountered a myriad of challenges when seeking higher education opportunities. Many URM students have limited economic resources, making it difficult to meet college tuition costs (Flink, 2018). To compound matters, many are first-generation college students, who cannot rely on their parents to help them navigate the higher education system (Flink, 2018). Moreover, approximately half of Latino students who enroll in higher education attend 2-year community colleges (Krogstad, 2016), thus creating an additional barrier to transition to a 4-year institution to pursue a bachelor's degree (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Crisp & Nuñez, 2014). Student debt is increasingly problematic for students in general, but particularly for persons with limited resources such as URMs. The lack of financial resources or financial aid can ensnare URM students in student loan debt and make it difficult

to transfer from community colleges to 4-year institutions (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Lack of financial resources or work and/or familial responsibilities often require URM students to work more or longer hours, especially off-campus jobs, and can hinder enrollment and persistence (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Nora (2003) refers to these issues as “pull” factors because work responsibilities and lack of financial resources tend to pull URM students away from matriculation and graduation. To this end, serving an URM population requires steering away from a deficit-based narrative and instead focus on the cultural wealth and experiential knowledge that those students utilize to rise above their socioeconomic circumstances on their path to becoming college graduates (Rendon, Nora & Kanagala, 2014). URM students flourish when others believe in them, and are provided opportunities for affirmation, support and encouragement (Rendon, 1994). Going forward, we will identify many of these challenges.

Dual Credit

There are major changes occurring at the secondary schools in Texas. Of the nearly 1.5 million high school students in Texas who participated in some kind of dual enrollment in fall 2015, over 133,000 were receiving dual credit, a number that has more than tripled over the last 10 years. "Dual enrollment" refers to any partnership between an institute of higher education and a local education agency enabling high school students to enroll in postsecondary classes and earn transfer credit. "Dual credit" is a type of dual enrollment in which juniors and seniors receive both high school and college credit for the same course. Unlike exam-based courses for college credit like Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), taken largely by high-achieving students, dual credit students are students who work to earn college credit upon course completion.

Math Proficiency

Traditional educator preparation for elementary and middle schoolteachers requires building the critical foundational STEM knowledge and skills. However, most schoolteachers lack comprehensive preparation in these areas. Research indicates that most pre-service teachers who are seeking elementary certification rarely complete more than two math courses required for graduation from the university (National Research Council, 2010). Further, results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that approximately 75% of 8th grade students in the United States are not proficient in math when they complete 8th grade. This gap is greater for URM and for students who are economically disadvantaged.

Community College Transfers

As shown in Figure 1, 28% of Bexar high school graduates will enroll in a four-year college for the first time in their first year following high school. First-time, four-year college enrollment will grow by 1, 2, and 3 percentage points in years two, three and four, respectively. Similarly, 36% of high school graduates will enroll in a two-year college for the first time in their first year following high school. First-time, two-year college enrollment will grow by 7, 3, and 1 percentage points in years two, three and four, respectively.

Timing of First-time College Enrollment by Years Following Expected High School Graduation and by Type of College, HS-Entry Cohorts 2006-2015

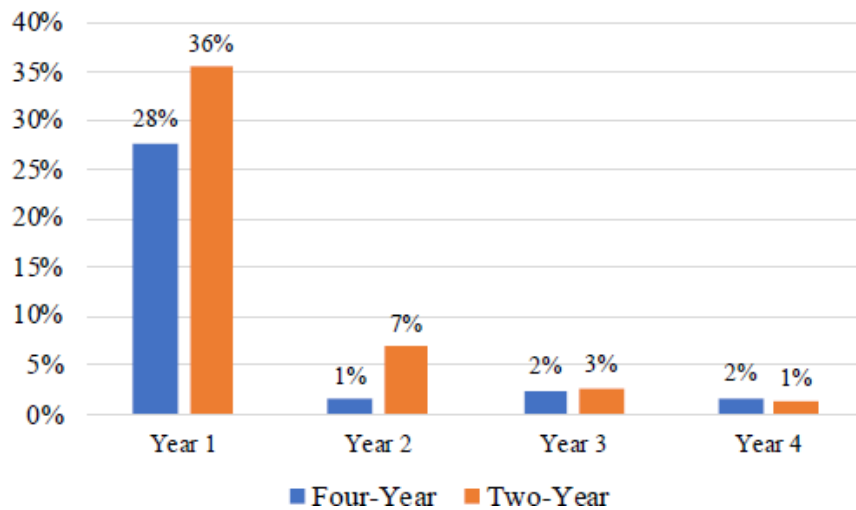
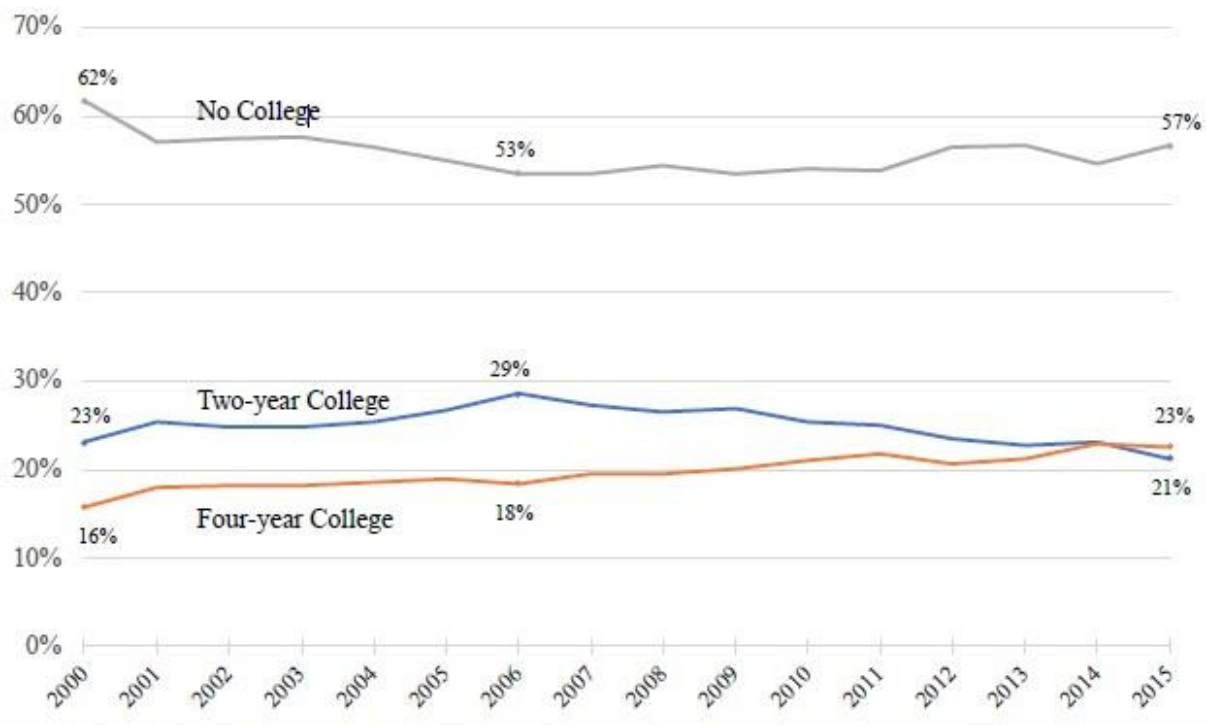


Figure 1

Bexar County Postsecondary Enrollment Trends

The trend in postsecondary enrollment in Bexar County has been relatively flat from the 2000 to the 2015 ninth-grade cohorts, as shown in Figure 2. However, four-year college enrollment steadily increased over the same period. The 2015 cohort was the first in Bexar County history to have a larger share of students that decided to start their postsecondary education at a four-year college rather than two-year college, as shown in Figure 2.

Postsecondary Enrollment Trends of Bexar County 9th-Grade Cohorts 2000 to 2015



Note: Estimates calculated using student-level Texas Education Agency and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board data.

Figure 2

UTSA's Current Landscape

Access to a quality education is at the core of UTSA's mission. We have made strides develop programs, improve processes, expand pipelines, and increase retention all with a central focus of student success. The purpose of this project is to conduct a comprehensive inventory of programs, processes, initiatives, policies and procedures across UTSA. The information gleaned through this project will inform recommendations and strategies developed by the University to remove impediments, develop programs and retention strategies, to increase access and advance student success.

Process

To accomplish this charge and further understand the "access" landscape this Team developed eight subcommittees each with an independent focus to align with the overall mission of understanding the many avenues that URM student's access UTSA. The subcommittees were:

1. Institutional Infrastructure
2. Community College, Adult, and Professional Access
3. Community Engagement and Access
4. Assessment and Evaluation
5. Mathematical Achievement Across the Spectrum to Increase College Access

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6. Policy and Process (System Level)
 7. Cultural Competence and Culturally Responsive Practices

Each subcommittee executed multiple research strategies that led to identifying independent and intersecting programs, processes, and initiatives involving UTSA in regard to student access and success. The strategy to execute this process was designed to provide a snapshot into the overall landscape on what UTSA is doing regard to access and success.

UTSA's Student Access Efforts

Stemming from the subcommittees research, below are themes in the areas of departments, programs, processes, and initiatives that identify and communicate the overall landscape of UTSA involvement that support access and Student success. We also understand that without a more comprehensive survey process this is not the complete list of activities taking place at UTSA.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Success is an infrastructure element that maintains a bevy of student success initiatives. Among these are the hiring and training of peer educators that provide valuable expertise to our URM student population. At UTSA, the Tomas Rivera Center houses many of the most robust student success initiatives. Key amongst those initiatives are: Supplemental Instruction, Tutoring Services, and Academic Coaching. The First Year Experience Program (FYE) houses between 70-80 undergraduate peer mentors that are assigned to sections of Academic Inquiry and Scholarship (AIS 1273). Also, the First Generation and Transfer Student Center houses the First to Go and Graduate (F2G&G) and Roadrunner Transition Experience (RTE) initiatives dedicated to supporting students that self-identify as either first generation or transfer. Collectively, these peer mentor programs are housed in the unit of Student Development, Leadership and Belonging (SDLB).

Rowdy Corp and The Library Peer Coach are exemplar programs that also utilize the near-peer mentor mode. The Library Peer Coach program allows for peer-to-peer support for learning about UTSA Libraries resources such as databases and tutorials. The Rowdy Corps program consists of students enrolled in the community-based work study program. If a student satisfactorily participates in the Rowdy Corps for at least one-year, they can provide peer support for students and serve as student-community/civic ambassadors to enhance community-engaged experiential learning opportunities at UTSA.

Since a large percentage of students begin their college experience elsewhere, the transfer process and experience at UTSA is a key component to access and success. The First Generation and Transfer Student Center and the Roadrunner Transition Experience are initiatives designed to provide peer mentorship and an assortment of other services aimed at increasing engagement and sense of belonging our UTSA transfer students. In 2020, the RTE piloted a University Peer Mentorship model (UPM) that utilized the Learning Management System, Blackboard to coordinate services and facilitate communication between students, staff, and peer mentors. Moreover, the RTE is now directly partnered with Alamo Runners and the On-Trac program. Both of which are dual enrollment agreements with the Alamo Colleges that are

intended to facilitate the transition between local community colleges and full-time status at UTSA.

While there are a wealth of community engagement initiatives across the campus, few are centralized. However, the Westside Community Partnerships (WCP) are an exception to the general rule. The WCP is a Presidential Initiative and place-based strategy designed to, among other things, help recruit, retain and graduate undergraduate students from San Antonio's Westside. Included in the initiative is the Westside Scholarship Fund which is part of a larger effort to create pathways for educational excellence. Since the demise of UTSA's Vice President for Community Service, much of the community engagement mission at UTSA has become decentralized. Many units have their own community engagement strategy and there is very little coordination across units. Often intra-university conflicts arise when engaging with local government, schools, foundations and nonprofits. When each unit has its own community engagement strategy each is free to pursue institutional goals in a manner consistent with its own culture and tends to prioritize relationships according to unit goals with little thought to institutional priorities. In a recent survey of Urban Serving Institutions, half of the institutions surveyed have created a campus-wide internal database or documentation system for recording and tracking its community partnerships and engagement practices.

In regard to community college, adult, and professional access, UTSA has a long history with transfer students from local and regional colleges, it was necessary to cultivate deep relationships with San Antonio area Community Colleges and execute a myriad of agreements. These agreements help to facilitate common issues like transfer of credits, securing student advancement and forging adult education programs. These agreement have been paramount in maintaining robust pipelines for student access and success. These relationships function in a multifaceted way as they provide awareness and opportunity thus accelerating students path's to UTSA. Below are examples of UTSA's involvement in this area:

- Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers (TATE). Designed to offer students a seamless pathway to earn a four-year degree in engineering from UTSA's College of Engineering.
- Lone Star College (LSC) and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Designed to offer students a seamless pathway to earn a four-year degree in engineering from UTSA's College of Engineering.
- Northwest Vista (NVC) and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). Designed to offer students a seamless pathway to earn a four-year degree in engineering from UTSA's College of Engineering.
- Transfer Academy for Future Teachers (TAFT). designed to create a seamless educational experience between the institutions for students seeking to become teachers.
- Virtual Advising: Academic Advising for current and prospective students
- The Transfer and Transition Student Success Services office

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- Alamo On TRAC is a pathway program that allows Alamo College District students to co enroll at UTSA and provides a clear plan to becoming a Roadrunner
 - First-Gen and Transfer Center: The First-Generation & Transfer Student Center's (FGTSC) mission is to support a focused population of UTSA First-Generation & Transfer students in order to increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates. It is home to two Title V grant-based initiatives: First to Go and Graduate (F2G&G) and the Roadrunner Transition Experience (RTE).
 - RTE provides participating transfer students with a peer mentor that also self-identifies as a transfer student.
 - Alamo Runners: The FGTSC is also increasing its partnership with two dual enrollment programs with the Alamo Colleges: Alamo Runners and On-Trac. Alamo Runners (AR), which is funded by the PIVOT for Academic Success Title V Grant, serves as a bridge program between the Alamo Colleges and UTSA and intends to increase the percentage of students who transfer to UTSA and increase 2-year degree completion rates.
 - UTSA is working closely with local workforce initiatives to determine upskilling needs for the greater Bexar County region. Programming focuses on skill-clusters most relevant to the local job market. These clusters include: healthcare, information technology, customer support, administrative support and sales. Identified programming results in, or creates a pathway to, an industry-recognized certification. Programs that align with workforce needs must also have a minimal completion timeframe (less than one year) and are offered in a completely online modality. Current programming validated by local workforce boards include: Coding Bootcamps, Paralegal certificates, Lean and Six Sigma certifications, CompTIA IT certifications, Medical Billing and Coding certificates, and computer software applications training such as QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel.

UTSA has made great strides in recent years in the area of increasing cultural competence and culturally responsive practices throughout the University. These efforts involve providing resources to building awareness around diversity and inclusion, with the aspirational goal of developing University system wide cultural competence. The strategy to achieve this goal will involve University collaboration and incentivizing and the utilization of existing resources and institutionalize metrics assess cultural competence in our students, staff, and faculty. Below is an assessment of UTSA's culturally competent and responsive practices that provide support to increase a campus sense of belonging and the promotion of a welcoming and inclusive campus climate.

- The Office of Inclusive Excellence provides resources and staff to address concerns related to diversity and inclusion as well as to develop strategies to move the University forward.
- The Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board provides a forum for affinity groups to exchange information and provide input to UTSA administrators. Many resources for faculty, staff, and students who would like to become culturally competent now exist.
- The Diversity Inventory provides information as to how the UTSA community perceives our environment and practices as they relate to cultural competence.
- Mandatory compliance training on Diversity & Inclusion and managing implicit bias

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- Inclusive Excellence Ecosystem provides a roadmap toward moving the University down the path of Inclusive Excellence
 - Provost's Equity Advocacy Initiative that places an intentional focus is needed to create truly inclusive learning environments where all UTSA students will thrive now and be well prepared for their bold future after college to serve as the next generation of leaders to advance San Antonio, the State of Texas and our nation.
 - Association for Public and Land Grant University Project—Equity in higher Education. Increase college access and boost student success rates
 - Aspire Alliance – ensuring STEM faculty utilize inclusive teaching practices and increase the diversity of the STEM professoriate
 - Formal curriculum – departments and programs such as REGSS, various COLFA departments, various COEHD departments, etc.
 - Centers and Institutes – Women's Studies Institute, Mexico Center, etc. Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, Dreamer's Resource Center, Urban Educational Institute, IE Resource Center (<https://www.utsa.edu/inclusiveexcellence/resources/index.html>). Importantly, the MCEJ rebranded itself to incorporate a strand of social justice in its work and it has begun to offer voluntary trainings on racial microaggressions to various units on campus.
 - University Initiatives – Westside Community Partnerships, etc. Mexican American Studies Academy, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, MLK March and Cesar Chavez March, Civil Rights Tour, Presidential Inclusive Excellence Scholarship, Voluntary Cultural Competence training
 - Informal – support for student identity affiliated organizations, Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, Dreamers Resource Center, etc., Ballet Folklórico de UTSA, Mariachi Los Paisano
 - Student support: Through the office of the Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, they have developed a council made up of leadership from all the student identity affiliated groups as a body that can help identify common concerns and facilitate collective action and collaboration to address shared goals.
 - Various Pathways programs (grant and non-grant funded): Mellon, Institute of Educational Science P 20, McNair, RISE, MARC, First-Gen Office, etc...
 - Library resources in special collections, programming, co-curricular initiatives, displays for Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, etc.
 - Campus artwork as informal curriculum - Luiz Jimenez sculptures, Santa Barraza piece on indigenous scientific knowledge, paintings, and photography throughout
 - Efforts to hire a diverse faculty (31% AY 20-21) - also recommended to build on this foundation
 - Juneteenth recognition and programming
 - My Brother's Keeper – men of color mentoring
 - Centralizing a University-wide effort to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month. This will serve as a model for future cultural awareness months.
 - The COEHD has developed a mission and vision to guide its preparation of teacher candidates so that it produces educators that are “culturally efficacious agents of change: Knowledgeable, community-based, and professional. It is rooted in an

understanding of the assets of the community, the desire to be equitable and to disrupt systems of power, and a sense of responsibility to the community COEHD serves.

Although there is more work to be done, this provides an overall landscape look at the programs, processes and initiatives that UTSA is engaged with designed to increase student access.

National Models of Excellence

While the specific contextual factors of UTSA and San Antonio are unique and recommendations and plans must be developed in a way that is culturally and contextually situated, there are national models of excellence that can inform practice. For the purposes of this initial report, a representative example of successful programs will be highlighted here. Each subcommittee report contains a section with national models of excellence pertaining to each of their specific areas of focus and are available as an appendix to this summary report.

With its focus on increasing access, Tactical Team 6 found that building relationships and strategic partnerships with districts and community organizations is critical to successful Pk-12 outreach. Customized partnerships that respect the needs and capacity of individual organizations, along with a true university/ISD partnership that provides district professional development, teacher preparation pathways, partnerships, and residency models, collaboration on federal, state, and local grants, and building awareness around the relationship between Pk-12 experiences and post-secondary success can be developed in ways that provide data and analysis that help the partners make data informed decisions that center student and community success.

1. Pre-K Outreach, Programming, and Educator Preparation

- Purdue University K-12 Outreach: “The College of Science K-12 Outreach programs provide science and mathematics professional development programs for K-12 teachers, establish long-term partnerships with school districts, and engage students in standards-based activities.”
- In 2018, Excelencia in Education recognized El Paso Community College for its work in increasing college enrollment and persistence. The recognition highlighted how students in EPCC’s Dual Credit and Early College programs have demonstrated higher than average graduation and completion rates as they continue to 4-year institutions.
- Drexel University School of Education Community Outreach Programs and Services: “Drexel University’s School of Education is committed to strengthening relationships that contribute to our communities through our educational community outreach programs. We accomplish this through our School Work Studio program and West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood initiatives.
- University of Chicago K-12 Educational Outreach Programs: “The K-12 educational outreach programs of the Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering (PME) promote

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- such fluency by providing hands-on and student-centered learning experiences for middle and high school students.
- Leap to Teacher: UFT/ NYCDOE/CUNY collaboration: Leap to Teacher is a program that provides academic and administrative support services to paraprofessionals working for the DOE to pursue their education further and advance their careers in teaching or any other field of study. Students can enroll in the undergraduate (bachelor's) or graduate (master's) programs at four of CUNY's senior colleges, Brooklyn College, College of Staten Island, Lehman College and Queens College.
 - NYC Men Teach: "Part of the Young Men's Initiative", NYC Men Teach is a partnership between the Office of the Mayor, the New York City Department of Education and CUNY which aims to improve the diversity of the NYC teaching workforce by adding 1,000 male teachers of color into the teacher pipeline, a goal it surpassed by 2018

2. Institutional Infrastructure:

- Project Males – The University of Texas at Austin - Project Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success (MALES) mission advances equitable educational outcomes for students of color at the local, state, and national level. They do this in part by implementing an effective mentoring program with a focus on Latino students through a dynamic inter-generational near-peer mentoring approach. Project MALES outcomes are tied to graduation rates, leadership development, and community engagement to enhance the academic success of undergraduate mentors of color at the University of Texas (UT) Austin, a predominantly white institution. - <https://diversity.utexas.edu/projectmales/>.
- KIPP Alumni @ UT – UT Austin – Through the office of Student Success Initiatives, UT Austin has developed a first generation initiative that provides intentional support to incoming first-year, first generation students from KIPP charter schools throughout the state of Texas. Their efforts focus on ensuring that these students have a successful transition to college through mentorship, workshops, events and a variety of services that will increase engagement and sense of belonging.
- San Antonio College Honors Academy Program – San Antonio College (SAC) - The San Antonio College Honors Academy Program provides underserved community college students—a majority of whom are Latino—honors-designated core courses, comprehensive academic services, one-on-one guidance by dedicated professors/advisors, scholarship and transfer support. The Honors Academy Program seeks to increase the number of underserved students who receive an associate degree and transfer to a four-year university. (<https://www.alamo.edu/sac/honors-academy/>)
- Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI) - Boston College - The Latinx Leadership Initiative (LLI) trains and supports Latino, bilingual MSW and PhD students to transform how the social work profession works with Latinx communities in the United States. LLI's goal is to increase the number of Latino social workers in the U.S. and develop social

work leaders equipped to work effectively with the Latino community. -
<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/ssw/msw-program/program.html>

3. Community College, Adult, and Professional Access

- University of Maryland Global Campus- www.umgc.edu:
- Fast Paths to Credit- A program where adult professionals have several options to create fast paths to a degree. Program allows professional work and life experiences to count towards college credit. They developed different ways for students to gain college credit by saving time and money.
- Credit for Prior Learning- There are two programs students can apply for designed to translate experiential learning in college credit: Course Challenge and Portfolio. Course Challenge you earn credit by passing the equivalent of a final exam, or students can create a portfolio outlining college-level learning they have gained through their work/community experiences. Documentation must be provided.
- Credit for Workplace Learning – Apply classroom theory to real-world professional projects and earn credit for upper-level courses. To participate in the program, you'll enter a learning agreement with your employer and a faculty mentor by submitting a learning proposal. You'll submit academic assignments related to your Workplace Learning experience and earn up to 6 credits each semester. There is criteria that needs to be met.
- Credit for Military Education & Training- Students (Active Military/VA) have the opportunity to transfer credits for studies they obtained at a military service school. Students need to submit Military Transcripts for review to determine transfer credit based on the recommendations from the American Council on Education. If this option doesn't work, they can try the other options mentioned.
- Credit for Industry Certifications and Professional Courses – Where you can turn your industry credentials into college credit.
- Credit for Vocational & Technical Training – Turn hands-on experience into college credit.
- The Texas A&M-Blinn TEAM Program is a collaborative, co-enrollment partnership between Texas A&M University and the Blinn College District. Students are selected for TEAM by Texas A&M University, through their freshman admissions process. Selected students then co-enroll at Blinn and Texas A&M. TEAM students are enrolled in one or two academic courses at Texas A&M each semester and take remainder of their courses at the Blinn College. First-year TEAM students will take their Blinn classes at the RELLIS Campus. To view the full terms and conditions for the Blinn TEAM program, please click here.
- SUNY Empire State College was awarded a grant from Lumina Foundation to develop a nationally recognized incremental higher education credentialing system that addresses the needs of today's lifelong learners. The yearlong *Credential As You Go* initiative aims to develop a nationally recognized,

incremental higher education credentialing system that expands upon existing certificates, undergraduate degrees, and graduate degrees to empower more people to earn high-quality postsecondary credentials as they continue to learn throughout their lives and careers.

4. Community Engagement and Access

The University of Pittsburgh has made its partnerships in and with the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Homewood a centerpiece of its place-based community and economic engagement strategy. Pitt has taken a multifaceted approach to cultivating talent in Homewood, promoting innovation, and creating an environment fostering economic prosperity through its neighborhood-based Community Engagement Center and K12 outreach. Some example outcomes include:

- Pitt's School of Education's Justice Scholars Program, which has enrolled more than 40 high school students into college bearing classes, qualitative research experiences and service-learning opportunities all focused on social justice; and
- a manufacturing career training center that trains 80 individuals to become machinists each year with a 95 percent job placement rate. Guided by a Neighborhood Advisory Council and a visible, long-term commitment of partnerships, the University of Pittsburgh's work in Homewood is an exemplar of equitable community and economic engagement.
- To help improve college readiness and cultivate diversity in STEM disciplines, Purdue University opened its first location of Purdue Polytechnic High School (PPHS) in 2017. Key takeaways include:
- PPHS works in tandem with local industry leaders like Subaru, Salesforce, and Eskandari to create industry projects. These projects include a field visit to an industry partner site where students learn about the challenges partners are trying to solve and support and mentorship throughout the project cycle; and
- Purdue University also helps train teachers at the high school to facilitate college-level courses that help place students on track for academic success when they reach college. Graduates from Purdue Polytechnic High School score significantly better than benchmarked peers on college readiness assessments.

5. Assessment and Evaluation: See appendix

6. Mathematical Achievement Across the Spectrum to Increase College Access: TBD

7. Policy and Process (System Level)

8. Cultural Competence and Culturally Responsive Practices (See appendix)

Recommendations for UTSA

Below are global recommendations taken from recommendations from each of the subcommittees that may have a transformational effect on Increasing Inclusive Access to Higher Education and our Communities. The Appendices will allow for your review in detail, the recommendations from each subcommittee.

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- Restructure EC-6 and 4-8 educator preparation programs so that candidates are gaining deep knowledge of the STEM subjects they will ultimately be required to teach.
 - Develop collaborative integrated CPK courses (COEHD and COS/COE)
 - Encourage EC-6 and 4-8 STEM teacher candidates to take at least three math courses collaboratively designed specifically for future teachers, as well as one math methods course that covers subject-specific instructional strategies.
 - Create STEM Education academies in partnership with local districts to increase capacity in this area.
 - Develop signature academic pathway programs for each college, building on the successful PREP model.
 - Link UTSA community engagement efforts to required service learning components, and link university and Pk-12 students through community engagement efforts.
 - Solidify UTSA's commitment to promote the public good through partnerships and application of the university's expertise and resources to address challenges and disparities across the community.
 - Connect academic units to the community in order to deepen student learning as a result of sustainable community engagement.
 - Create a program modeled on NYC Teach to increase teachers of color and build capacity in the Pk-12 educational ecosystem in San Antonio.
 - Conduct a comprehensive large-scale inventory/report on the assortment of peer mentor initiatives at UTSA.
 - Embed professional development and training of UTSA peer mentors to include a community-based component where peer mentors are able to apply their skills and expertise towards mentoring and building relationships with prospective local high school students.
 - Take advantage of synergies at UTSA and improve the transfer student experience at UTSA.
 - Create a community based work study pathway that allows work study students at ACCD to continue in their roles at designated community-based organization sites.
 - Design and implement an online digital toolkit to create and market a digital platform that provides resources for mentoring opportunities across the university.
 - Build consensus for a shared definition for cultural competence that recognizes a shared, nuanced, and robust understanding of cultural competence across UTSA.
 - Design and implement teaching and learning strategies to operationalize cultural competence so that it permeates our engagement with students.
 - Develop a comprehensive strategy to engage families of potential first-generation students early to plant the seed that a four-year degree is possible.
 - Grow UTSA Bold Promise (financial aid program) to transfer students as a continuation of what is currently available with Alamo Promise.
 - Expand Honors College to include transfer students.

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- Create pipelines to UTSA from historically underserved high schools in San Antonio with a Westside Ambassador Fellowship Program where UTSA student teams work together as agents of civic change on the Westside and on campus.
 - Create a strategy to bridge the Digital Divide at UTSA with devices and connectivity.
 - Develop an Empowerment Center, which provides services to women and non-traditional students including single parents, displaced homemakers, first-generation college students, residents of public housing, dislocated workers, and other individuals needing support to succeed in a college environment.
 - Provide guidance to be less restrictive and more accommodating when issues arise during Criminal Background checks for students and mandating and building capacity for more restorative options for campus police.
 - Continue building out dual enrollment transfer pathways in collaboration with existing transfer support services at UTSA.
 - Develop clear lines of collaboration between existing units (Transfer Recruitment, T2S3, Academic Innovations) that can support our local community of adult learners who need additional training.
 - Develop a robust data collection system for adult learners entering the pipeline via adult education opportunities (certificates, badges, etc.).
 - Assign adult education participants, e.g., paralegal program, a peer mentor.
 - Assign an advisor to work with adult participants to encourage them to follow the certification process.
 - Offering students the opportunity to pair their bachelor's degree with an industry-recognized credential can make them more appealing to employers and improve their postsecondary experience. In addition, the credential should reflect the current employment trends in the Bexar county region (see attached regional data).
 - Develop fully online degree pathways in collaboration with Alamo colleges. This includes incorporating the Alamo Transfer Advising Guides (TAGS), shared advising, student support services, industry partnerships, etc. (Expand to other colleges throughout the state.)
 - Build a collaborative model with the University Career Center to measure impact by using artificial intelligence and data science to enhance skills and expertise with its partnership with VMock.

Conclusion

Given the changing landscape in higher education, it is critical to unlock the vast potential of all students but especially underrepresented minorities. However, increasing student access is a very complex initiative that involves the infusion of programs, policies, processes, the fostering of current and new community relationships, and the removing of impediments that have an adverse effect on student enrollment to UTSA. This complexity led to Tactical Team 6's strategy of capturing and memorializing what practices UTSA is currently engaged, while referencing best practices at aspirant institutions and making recommendations around the areas of Institutional Infrastructure; Community College, Adult, and Professional Access, Community Engagement, Assessment, Evaluation, Mathematical Achievement, Policy, Process, Cultural Competence, and Culturally Responsive Practices.

In addition, the report provides a cross campus inventory on current UTSA practices and thus provides a comprehensive foundation to inform UTSA's leadership in the design and implementation of a myriad of inclusive access strategies while looking critically at what gaps remain. Ultimately, a mix of old and new initiatives will need to be augmented, implemented and continuously evaluated to reach the shared goal increasing inclusive access at UTSA.



Tactical Team 6: Appendix committee reports

Tactical Team 6: Final Report Community Engagement Committee

Subcommittee Group Name: Community Engagement

1. Subcommittee scope/challenges or barriers identified/questions addressed.

Overall, subcommittee identified an inclusive access strategy at UTSA that attempts to adapt students to their new environment and little to adapt the institution to the students. The question is how UTSA will adopt an inclusive access strategy that is welcoming to URM students.

2. The landscape at UTSA related to the scope

The community engagement mission at UTSA is decentralized while the research and teaching missions are highly centralized. Practically every unit has its own community engagement strategy and there is very little coordination across units. Often intra-university conflicts arise when engaging with local government, schools and nonprofits. Often each college has a community engagement strategy with little oversight or consideration for institutional goals. In a recent survey of USU schools half of the surveyed have created a campus-wide internal database or documentation system for recording and tracking its community partnerships and engagement practices.

3. National models of excellence that have successfully addressed the identified challenges promising practices.

UTSA is a recent recipient of the seal of *Excelencia* that marks a commitment to go beyond enrollment to serve our majority Latino student population.

4. Recommendations for UTSA

- a) There are many students that had to place their pursuit of higher education on hold due to pandemic; UTSA should consider **expansion of Bold Promise** to capture students that graduated from high school longer than a year ago.
- b) Rather than reinvent the wheel, recommit to best-practices like **Pre-freshman Engineering Program (PREP)** which identifies middle and high school students interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and use a place-based strategy that helps prepare those most at-risk for advanced studies and careers in those fields.
- c) Westside Community Partnerships and RowdyCorp could coordinate the **Westside Ambassador Fellowship Program**. Through this program, student teams work together as agents of civic change on the Westside and on campus.
- d) UTSA's own internal survey shows that a small, but not inconsequential number of students, struggle for connectivity. Make efforts to bridge the **Digital Divide** at UTSA with devices and connectivity.
- e) **Empowerment Center**, which provides services to women and non-traditional students including single parents, displaced homemakers, first-generation college students, residents of public housing, dislocated workers, and other individuals needing support to succeed in a college environment.

Tactical Team 6: *Final Report Community Engagement Committee continued*

- f) Provide guidance to be less restrictive and more accommodating when issues arise during **Criminal Background checks** for students and mandating and building capacity for more **restorative** options for campus police.
 - g) Connecting local high schools to UTSA. Could we have a yearlong class taught in **high school on college readiness**?
5. Annotated bibliography/resource guide (4-8 resources that inform the discussion on the topic)

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice Final Report continued

Subcommittee Group Name--Increasing Inclusive Access to Higher Education in our Communities Subcommittee – Cultural Competency and Culturally Relevant Practices. (Sonya M. Alemán, Myron Anderson, Jerry González, & Derek Robertson)
Whereas UTSA has made great strides in recent years to provide resources for building awareness around diversity and inclusion, the goal of system wide cultural competence is mostly aspirational until we can implement strategies across the university to incentivize the utilization of existing resources and institutionalize metrics for cultural competence in our students, staff, and faculty. This subcommittee assessed UTSA's culturally competent and responsive practices to advance educational pipeline and retention goals and to make appropriate recommendations where improvements are needed.

6. Subcommittee scope/challenges or barriers identified/questions addressed.

- a. Scope—we solicited perspectives from a wide range of university partners including the Vice President of Inclusive Excellence; Teaching & Learning Services; Community Transfer and Outreach Recruitment; Aspire; VP for Strategic Enrollment; Interim Dean of COLFA, Sean Kelly; University College Program Director, Karen Dass; REGSS Faculty member, Dr. Jackie Cuevas; Belinda Flores Associate Dean of Professional Preparation and Partnerships, College of Education and Human Development; and Brandi Scott, Director of the Multicultural Student Center for Equity and Justice, and Student Activities. We also referenced examples of both best practices and mistakes made at other institutions. Committee members also brought to bear examples and recommendations based on our own leadership experiences both at UTSA and other settings.
- b. Challenges and barriers
 - i. Building a comprehensive inventory of UTSA departments, programs, and research that foreground cultural competence and culturally responsive practices related to student recruitment and success.
 - ii. Capturing a comprehensive and diverse student perspective.
 - iii. Setting a higher bar for cultural competence than just being inclusive.
 - iv. Creating a campus-wide faculty survey regarding relevant classroom pedagogy.
 - v. Implementing and operationalizing a broad strategy across campus that meaningfully incorporates faculty, students, and staff – and how do we measure success of implementation, including signposts along the path?

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
Final Report continued

- vi. Curating a shared understanding of cultural competence across the university.
- vii. Sustainability of current and future efforts.
- c. Questions Addressed
 - i. What kind of co-curricular programs contribute to cultural competence?
 - ii. What specific programs and departments utilize culturally competent pedagogies?
 - iii. What practices do we enlist in student recruitment that are culturally competent?
 - iv. What resources are available to assist students, faculty, and staff to learn about cultural competence?
 - v. To what extent do these resources get utilized?

7. The landscape at UTSA related to the scope

UTSA has made great gains in promoting multicultural awareness under Taylor Eighmy. The Office of Inclusive Excellence provides resources and staff to address concerns related to diversity and inclusion as well as to develop strategies to move the University forward. The Board for Inclusive Excellence provides a forum for affinity groups to exchange information and provide input to UTSA administrators. Many resources for faculty, staff, and students who would like to become culturally competent now exist. Those who choose to access those resources may well develop cultural competence and culturally informed practices, however the idea of cultural competence is mostly aspirational until we can implement strategies across the university to incentivize utilization of existing resources and have a way to measure cultural competence in our students, staff, and faculty.

The Diversity Inventory coming out in December will provide more information as to how the UTSA community perceives our environment and practices as they relate to cultural competence.

- a. Some points of progress include:
 - i. Creating Office with a VP of Inclusive Excellence
 - ii. University Advisory Board for Inclusive Excellence
 - iii. Mandatory compliance training on Diversity & Inclusion and managing implicit bias
 - iv. Inclusive Excellence Ecosystem
 - v. Provost's Equity Initiative
 - vi. Association for Public and Land Grant University Project—Equity in higher Education. Increase college access and boost student success rates

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
Final Report continued

- vii. Aspire Alliance – ensuring STEM faculty utilize inclusive teaching practices and increase the diversity of the STEM professoriate
- viii. Formal curriculum – departments and programs such as REGSS, various COLFA departments, various COEHD departments, etc.
- ix. Centers and Institutes – Women's Studies Institute, Mexico Center, etc. Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, Dreamer's Resource Center, Urban Educational Institute, IE Resource Center
Importantly, the MCEJ rebranded itself to incorporate a strand of social justice in its work and it has begun to offer voluntary trainings on racial microaggressions to various units on campus.
- x. University Initiatives – Westside Community Partnerships, etc. Mexican American Studies Academy, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, MLK March and Cesar Chavez March, Civil Rights Tour, Presidential Inclusive Excellence Scholarship, Voluntary Cultural Competence training
- xi. Informal – support for student identity affiliated organizations, Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, Dreamers Resource Center, etc., Ballet Folklórico de UTSA, Mariachi Los Paisanos
- xii. Student support: Through the office of the Multicultural Center for Equity and Justice, they have developed a council made up of leadership from all the student identity affiliated groups as a body that can help identify common concerns and facilitate collective action and collaboration to address shared goals.
- xiii. Various Pathways programs (grant and non-grant funded): Mellon, Institute of Educational Science P 20, McNair, RISE, MARC, First-Gen Office, etc...
- xiv. Library resources in special collections, programming, co-curricular initiatives, displays for Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, etc.
- xv. Campus artwork as informal curriculum - Luiz Jimenez sculptures, Santa Barraza piece on indigenous scientific knowledge, paintings, and photography throughout
- xvi. Efforts to hire a diverse faculty (31% AY 20-21) - also recommended to build on this foundation
- xvii. Juneteenth recognition and programming
- xviii. My Brother's Keeper – men of color mentoring
- xix. Successful Hispanic Heritage month in September and October of 2020. This will serve as a model for future cultural awareness months.

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
Final Report continued

- xx. The COEHD has developed a mission and vision to guide its preparation of teacher candidates so that it produces educators that are “culturally efficacious agents of change: Knowledgeable, community-based, and professional. It is rooted in an understanding of the assets of the community, the desire to be equitable and to disrupt systems of power, and a sense of responsibility to the community COEHD serves.

8. National models of excellence that have successfully addressed the identified challenges or promising practices. Who is setting a model for UTSA aspirationally?

There currently is no standard model for cultural competence that meets all of UTSA’s challenges and aspirations. Some institutions are making good headway as evidenced by recognition in diversity focused publications throughout the country. Below are some institutions that are doing well in at least some aspects of promoting cultural competence.

Best Practices^[LTL]_{SEP}, Trends, and Recommendations in Higher Education

- 1 Institute of Evidence Based Change, Four Steps towards Cultural Competency for Colleges and Universities
2. Association of American Colleges & Universities, Resources to promote Cultural Competence
3. University of Miami, A Call for Cultural Competence:
4. National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University:
5. Stanford University, Cultural Competence Blueprint:
6. Everfi Training on Cultural Competence:
7. How to Develop Culturally Competent Educators, Oregon University Systems:
8. American Psychological Association Article about 5 ways that students can get multicultural training and experience on their own. How to become culturally competent:

9. Recommendations for UTSA

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
Final Report continued

Shared definition for cultural competence:

Drawing from the work of Chun and Evans (2016), we recognize that a shared, nuanced, and robust understanding of cultural competence across the institution is necessary. In their report for ASHE, Chun and Evans argue for the alternative term “diversity competence,” as this term more aptly addresses the “sociohistorical implications of inequality, social stratification, oppression and privilege” that college graduates should understand and be ready to address in multicultural working environments (p.18). Given that most of the stakeholders we interviewed referenced various levels programming, curriculum, policies, and practices rooted in diversity, inclusion, equity, racial/social justice, power and/or privilege, we recommend the UTSA adopt this articulation of cultural competence moving forward.

Teaching and Learning Services—Strategies are needed to operationalize Cultural Competence so that it is experienced throughout UTSA but, most importantly, in our engagement with students.

- I. Cultural competence could be included in classroom observations rubric.
 - II. Include questions regarding inclusiveness and cultural competence in student evaluations.
 - III. Incentivize cultural competence training for staff, faculty, and students.
 - IV. Incentive trainings and implementation of culturally informed pedagogies.
- We recommend Gloria Anzaldúa and Paolo Freire's work as a starting point.

Community Outreach and Transfer Recruitment

To paraphrase a colleague and fellow committee member, “You can’t accomplish the things that you can’t first imagine.” Building from this logic, we posit that many prospective students from underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, and post-traditional backgrounds may lack access to higher education pathways yet have the potential to enrich the university learning environment. How can we reach out to families of potential first generation students early to plant the seed that a four-year degree is possible, how can we successfully recruit and graduate transfer students, and how can UTSA become an arbiter of higher education access across the city? Many transfer students may be coming from non-traditional backgrounds and may face particularly daunting challenges to begin their academic training anew in a research university. Thus, culturally competent administrators and staff members can more effectively engage and serve these students.

- I. UTSA should consider creative fee adjustments to ensure that students possess the widest access possible while sustaining current programs that create a culturally competent environment.

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
Final Report continued

Bold Promise (financial aid program) is only available to freshmen, we could extend this to transfer students as a continuation of what they get at Alamo College.

- II. Honors College is just for freshmen. We could extend this to transfer students
- III. Create pipelines for historically underserved communities. For example, an extremely low percentage of graduating seniors from San Antonio's West Side enter UTSA.

UTSA can revise how transfer classes are accepted as a small step to opening access. For example, when a transfer student repeats a class that they did not pass the first time, UTSA averages the grade of those two courses whereas the Alamo Colleges and other universities such as TAMU-SA will disregard the non-passing grade and accept only the passing grade. UTSA can make this change in line with the best practices of other institutions.

- I. Consider accepting only the replacement grades when a course has been repeated.

*Re-admits—When the student leaves not in good academic standing, it is problematic when they want to return because some of our colleges do not review their request to return in a timely manner. Different colleges have different timelines and processes. We do not have a uniform way to address the re-admit process associated support services. We should have a basic benchmark as a minimum. (This issue was not in our charge but came up in our interviews).

Other general recommendations:

- I. Create evaluation processes that incentivize cultural competence—annual evaluation, student evaluations, mini grants, endowed chairs, and faculty positions with this work embedded. Locate ways in which it can be embedded in teaching, research, and service.
- II. Include cultural competency training in the HR curriculum so that staff is oriented towards this goal, as well.
- III. Provide more adequate compensation for UTSA employees who would like to expand their education. UTSA staff and contract employees are poorly compensated in the form of educational benefits. Education effectively builds cultural competency.
- IV. Develop learning communities of faculty and staff that meet regularly throughout a semester. For example, in summer of 2020 a group of faculty, staff, and students created a book club for antiracism and social justice.

Tactical Teams 6: Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Practice
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- V. Incentivize utilization of existing resources. Online library of trainings is available to staff and faculty, but these are not well publicized or utilized.
 - VI. Implement a power, privilege, and social justice core course(s) that all students take before they graduate.
 - VII. Provide more group learning experiences related to cultural competence and social justice. Existing diversity training is often done on a solitary basis. Group learning is a more potent medium for promoting growth around issues of diversity and inclusion.
 - VIII. Build on DACA office on main campus and establish DACA office on downtown campus. More robustly support the DACA office.
 - IX. Graduate level fellowships for students of color and first-generation students.
 - X. Continue efforts to hire a diverse faculty that reflect our student body
 - XI. Create vision and mission statements for each college that are rooted in the values and principles of cultural competence, using the COEHD vision and mission as a model.
 - XII. Use the findings from the fall 2020 campus climate survey and the Diversity Inventory to determine areas regarding cultural competency that need additional resources and support in a transparent process that garners buy-in from all units across the university.
9. **Annotated bibliography/resource guide** (4-8 resources that inform the discussion on the topic)
- a. Recruitment and Retention Initiatives from Belinda Harmon, Senior Director of Community Outreach & Transfer Recruitment
 - b. Excelencia in Education
 - c. Edna Chun, Alvin Evans (2016). **Rethinking Cultural Competence in Higher Education: An Ecological Framework for Student Development**. ASHE Higher Education Report: Volume 42, Number 4. Kelly Ward, Lisa E. Wolf-Wendel, Series Editors
 - d. Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands/La frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
 - e. Freire, P. (2009). From pedagogy of the oppressed. *Race/ethnicity: multidisciplinary global contexts*, 2(2), 163-174.

Tactical Team 6: Community College, Adult and Professional Access Subcommittee scope/challenges or barriers identified/questions addressed.

Where are we at with community college and adult learners seeking a degree or a professional certificate?

Strengths:

- Transfer students go through the funnel and receive academic resources such as degree planning, advising, testing needs, etc. The colleges are providing resources to these students in order to ensure their successful transfer.
- A lot of transfer students (Alamo colleges is an example) are adapted to hybrid and online learning. This was in play before COVID and includes a large group of adult learners from the military.
- UTSA has taken the initiative to provide resources to faculty to help them work with populations that are vulnerable due to the shift to technology, which impacts a large group of adult learners.
- Offering a flex schedule to adult learners has proven to be successful – weekend, evening, etc. Offering career training courses that allow the learner to work toward an accredited certification has helped a lot of students.
- Quick five- to six-week courses prove to be important to adult learners (EE offers short-term certifications).
- Students in foster care receive additional resources at both the community colleges and UTSA. End result, there has been an increased awareness of the needs of foster care youth.
- Opportunities for students to earn credit by exam or course challenge.

Challenges:

- Some adult learners do not have basic computer skills, and this has led to difficulty keeping up with coursework and finding required class information.
- Some adult learners do not seek out tutoring opportunities – reading, writing, and math.
- Not enough electronic resources has an impact on vulnerable populations (computers, Wi-Fi access, etc.).
- The adult learner comes into the educational pipeline at many different levels, e.g., employed, unemployed, skilled, unskilled, etc.
- The adult learner has life responsibilities (families, work, health) that may inhibit his or her ability to meet basic requirements to be successful in class.
- We do not have enough online offerings that could help adult learners with family needs fulfill degree requirements.
- Due to the pandemic, we are not prepared for the student who has some credit but no degree. We need to develop a line of communication that is seamless for students who have been out for a number of years. Currently, we have Upgrade with SAEP and this resource needs to be better communicated to the appropriate parties at UTSA.
- Transfer of credits from a vocational program to a four-year degree prove to be impossible. The only school in Bexar county that takes these credits is A&M SA.
- UTSA does not have a centralized process when it comes to working with community college and adult learners.
- We do not have the appropriate data sets to track our adult learners.

Tactical Team 6: Community College, Adult and Professional Access continued

The landscape at UTSA related to the scope

Community College relationships:

- f. Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers (TATE): Lone Star College (LSC) and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) have partnered together to offer students a seamless pathway to earn a four-year degree in engineering from UTSA's College of Engineering. LSC engineering students can participate in the UTSA Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers (TATE) program, where students will be co-enrolled at both institutions, take engineering courses taught by UTSA faculty at LSC-CyFair. Upon completion of the program, students will transfer to UTSA to obtain their bachelor's degree in any of the six UTSA engineering degree programs.

Northwest Vista (NVC) and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) have also partnered together to offer students a seamless pathway to earn a four-year degree in engineering from UTSA's College of Engineering.

Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Teachers (TAFT): Similar to the TAFT programs, the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the Alamo Colleges District (ACD) are excited to announce the establishment of the Transfer Academy for Future Teachers (TAFT). This program was designed to create a seamless educational experience between the institutions for students seeking to become teachers.

- g. Virtual advising: Academic advising for current and prospective students is being handled via individual appointments scheduled via Zoom or WebEx.
- h. The Transfer and Transition Student Success Services office: Transfer and Transition Student Success Services (T²S³) is here to empower, support and assist transfer students before, during, and after their transfer to the university by providing timely, accurate information and a seamless transition. They provide tools and resources to support students in transition by:
- Providing tailored individual appointments with student success transfer advisors
 - Assisting transfer students with navigating the process after admission to registration
 - Developing and maintaining transfer guides
 - Providing advising services to students taking prerequisites for transition to graduate or professional programs
 - Providing innovative solutions to challenges
- Alamo On TRAC is a pathway program that allows Alamo College District students to co-enroll at UTSA and provides a clear plan to becoming a Roadrunner. Students are selected for the program through applying to

UTSA through freshman admission for the fall semester and accepting the offer to participate in the On TRAC program. Students start at one of the Alamo Colleges Campuses in the Fall and then dually enroll in classes in Spring at UTSA and Alamo Colleges, after successful completion of the program students matriculate to UTSA after 1 year. On TRAC students have a dedicated Student Success Transfer Advisor at UTSA and access to resources (student organizations, housing, rec center, etc.) at both Alamo Colleges and UTSA. In addition, they are eligible for 6 semester credit hours for free at Alamo Colleges the following summer and the UTSA Distinguished Transfer Scholarships. Since August 2018 , 72 students accepted the offer with 51% actually participating in the program and over 60% of the participants meeting program requirements and fully transferred to UTSA. For the Fall 2020 cohort we had 100 students accept the offer.

- i. First-Gen and Transfer Center: The First-Generation & Transfer Student Center's (FGTSC) mission is to support a focused population of UTSA First-Generation & Transfer students in order to increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates. It is home to two Title V grant-based initiatives: First to Go and Graduate (F2G&G) and the Roadrunner Transition Experience (RTE). F2G&G provides first generation students with a first-generation peer mentor and faculty coach. RTE provides participating transfer students with a peer mentor that also self-identifies as a transfer student. The FGTSC partners with a cross-section of UTSA departments to promote student development and engagement through a series of signature experiences designed to increase sense of belonging and community while supporting and celebrating the contributions of our first generation and transfer students.
- j. Alamo Runners: The FGTSC is also increasing its partnership with two dual enrollment programs with the Alamo Colleges: Alamo Runners and On-Trac. Alamo Runners (AR), which is funded by the PIVOT for Academic Success Title V Grant, serves as a bridge program between the Alamo Colleges and UTSA and intends to increase the percentage of students who transfer to UTSA and increase 2-year degree completion rates. Eligible participants for AR were previously First-Time In College (FTIC) students admitted to UTSA, however chose to begin their postsecondary careers at one of the five ACCD campuses. Through a dual enrollment agreement, AR participants can become UTSA full-time students once they have accumulated up to 45 hours of coursework.

Adult Education programming:

- k. UTSA is working closely with local workforce initiatives to determine upskilling needs for the greater Bexar County region. Programming focuses on skill-clusters most relevant to the local job market. These clusters include: healthcare, information technology, customer support, administrative support and sales. Identified programming results in, or creates a pathway to, an industry-recognized certification. Programs that align with workforce needs must also have a minimal completion

Tactical Team 6: Community College, Adult and Professional Access continued

- I. Timeframe (less than one year) and are offered in a completely online modality. Current programming validated by local workforce boards include: Coding Bootcamps, Paralegal certificates, Lean and Six Sigma certifications, CompTIA IT certifications, Medical Billing and Coding certificates, and computer software applications training such as QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel.

National models of excellence that have successfully addressed the identified challenges promising practices.

University of Maryland Global Campus- www.umgc.edu:

- m. Fast Paths to Credit- A program where adult professionals have several options to create fast paths to a degree. Program allows professional work and life experiences to count towards college credit. They developed different ways for students to gain college credit by saving time and money.
- n. Credit for Prior Learning- There are two programs students can apply for designed to translate experiential learning in college credit: Course Challenge and Portfolio. Course Challenge you earn credit by passing the equivalent of a final exam, or students can create a portfolio outlining college-level learning they have gained through their work/community experiences. Documentation must be provided.
- o. Credit for Workplace Learning – Apply classroom theory to real-world professional projects and earn credit for upper-level courses. To participate in the program, you'll enter a learning agreement with your employer and a faculty mentor by submitting a learning proposal. You'll submit academic assignments related to your Workplace Learning experience and earn up to 6 credits each semester. There is criteria that needs to be met.
- p. Credit for Military Education & Training- Students (Active Military/VA) have the opportunity to transfer credits for studies they obtained at a military service school. Students need to submit Military Transcripts for review to determine transfer credit based on the recommendations from the American Council on Education. If this option doesn't work, they can try the other options mentioned.
- q. Credit for Industry Certifications and Professional Courses – Where you can turn your industry credentials into college credit.
- r. Credit for Vocational & Technical Training – Turn hands-on experience into college credit.
- s. The Texas A&M-Blinn TEAM Program is a collaborative, co-enrollment partnership between Texas A&M University and the Blinn College District. Students are selected for TEAM by Texas A&M University, through their freshman admissions process. Selected students then co-enroll at Blinn and Texas A&M. TEAM students are enrolled in one or two academic courses at Texas A&M each semester and take remainder of their courses at the Blinn College. First-year TEAM students will take their Blinn classes at the RELLIS Campus. To view the full terms and conditions for the Blinn TEAM program, please click [here](#).

Tactical Team 6: Community College, Adult and Professional Access continued

- t. SUNY Empire State College was awarded a grant from Lumina Foundation to develop a nationally recognized incremental higher education credentialing system that addresses the needs of today's lifelong learners. The yearlong *Credential As You Go* initiative aims to develop a nationally recognized, incremental higher education credentialing system that expands upon existing certificates, undergraduate degrees, and graduate degrees to empower more people to earn high-quality postsecondary credentials as they continue to learn throughout their lives and careers.

Recommendations for UTSA:

- u. Continue building out dual enrollment transfer pathways in collaboration with existing transfer support services at UTSA. This will lead to new content areas as well as new external partnerships.
- v. Develop clear lines of collaboration between existing units (Transfer Recruitment, T2S3, Academic Innovations) that can support our local community of adult learners who need additional training. (Tools: Visual flyer, video-IT, pathways, resources {navigate system}, potential careers)
- w. Develop a robust data collection system for adult learners entering the pipeline via adult education opportunities (certificates, badges, etc.).
- x. Assign adult education participants, e.g., paralegal program, a peer mentor.
- y. Assign an advisor to work with adult participants to encourage them to follow the certification process.
- z. Offering students the opportunity to pair their bachelor's degree with an industry-recognized credential can make them more appealing to employers and improve their postsecondary experience. In addition, the credential should reflect the current employment trends in the Bexar county region (see attached regional data).
- aa. Develop fully online degree pathways in collaboration with Alamo colleges. This includes incorporating the Alamo Transfer Advising Guides (TAGS), shared advising, student support services, industry partnerships, etc. (Expand to other colleges throughout the state.)
- bb. Build a collaborative model with the University Career Center to measure impact by using artificial intelligence and data science to enhance skills and expertise with its partnership with VMock. The employability enhancement program is crafted for students and alumni to bridge the gap between skills possessed by them and the abilities that are looked for by the employers.

Tactical Team 6: Community College, Adult and Professional Access continued

Annotated bibliography/resource guide (4-8 resources that inform the discussion on the topic):

<https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Advising-Non-Traditional-Students-Beyond-Class-Schedules-and-Degree-Requirements.aspx> Advising techniques

<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Providing-adult-learners-with-strategies-for-self-advocation.aspx> Great information about misconceptions of adult learners and provides some strategies

<https://folio.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/10244/270/ReturntolearningApril2007.pdf> (page 15-17)

<https://www.cael.org/news-and-resources/art-chickering-and-the-adult-learner-movement-reflections-on-the-modern-american-college-and-its-connection-to-caels-work-today>

<https://www.cael.org/hubfs/Publications/AL-360-CASE-STUDY-2018.pdf>

<https://evollution.com/programming/credentials/developing-skills-that-lead-to-jobs-designing-the-new-normal-with-a-four-point>

<https://evollution.com/programming/credentials/the-fastest-most-scalable-path-to-work-readiness-for-college-students/>

Published Chapter in the 2016 peer-reviewed monograph, Transition and Transformation – Fostering Transfer Student Success – “The Transfer Academy for Tomorrow’s Engineers”