

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

(1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region?

N/A

(2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work?

N/A

(3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles?

N/A

(4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico?

N/A

(5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs?

N/A

(6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose?

N/A

(7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities?

N/A

(8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings?

N/A

(9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken?

N/A

(10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

N/A

(11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are them?

Closing the Gaps by 2015

The Texas Higher Education Plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015* was adopted in October 2000 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) with strong support of the state's educational, business, and political communities. The plan is directed at closing educational gaps within Texas and between Texas and other states. Efforts are organized under four major goals: to close the gaps in participation, student success, excellence, and research. Each goal includes strategies for attainment, as well as intermediate targets for assessing progress at regular intervals.

Closing the Gaps was designed to be implemented through a dynamic process, allowing for changes to incorporate new data and findings as appropriate. As a result, the Coordinating Board in October 2005 adopted some revised goals and targets in response to student achievements, new population projections, and the need for clarifications. For example, the participation goal was increased to reflect the state's rapid population growth, especially among Hispanics.

Progress toward the Closing the Gaps goals will produce significant public and private benefits for Texas and its citizens. Increased cooperation between public and higher education will ensure that students are better prepared for collegiate work and more aware of opportunities to pursue education beyond high school. More students will enroll in higher education and persist in their studies until they reach their academic or technical objectives, thereby increasing their personal economic potential and strengthening the state's economic base. Increasing the level of excellence in education programs will bring enhanced stature to the state, help attract businesses and innovative faculty, and generate research funding. The positive personal, social, and economic consequences of achieving Closing the Gaps goals will greatly enhance the overall quality of life for both current and subsequent generations of Texans.

(12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

Closing the Gaps Efforts

Because the Hispanic population in Texas is growing so rapidly, a good portion of our efforts to increase enrollment in higher education will focus on improving Hispanic educational attainment. As a result, the THECB has focused its college outreach efforts on regions, including South Texas, where the Hispanic population is growing especially fast.

The THECB has hired 5 full-time P-16 Field Specialists in South Texas to serve as local liaisons between their respective regions and the THECB. The P-16 Field Specialists are located in the following areas: Corpus Christi (1); Harlingen (1); Edinburg (1); and San Antonio (2). A part-time P-16 Field Specialist will also eventually be located in El Paso.

The main responsibility of the P-16 Field Specialists is to promote the expansion of Go Centers. Go Centers are local, community-managed prospective college student centers that focus on creating a school-wide college-going culture and promoting college awareness in the

surrounding community. Traditional Go Centers are located in educational settings. They generally are located on high school campuses, but also are on middle school and/or college/university campuses. Satellite Go Centers are located in non-educational settings. These include public libraries, local workforce centers, or community centers. Mobile Go Centers are mobile units outfitted with computers, printers, and internet connectivity. They travel to a variety of nontraditional settings (i.e., festivals, sporting events, supermarket or mall parking lots, and schools that do not have Go Centers). A Mobile Go Center serves San Antonio and Edinburg. Laredo recently was awarded a grant from the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation to develop a Mobile Go Center.

Each Go Center has a G Force which is comprised of high school and college students and/or volunteers to offer the college-going message. Many of the G-Force college students receive modest scholarships funded through the College for All Texans Foundation. The G-Force college students are responsible for mentoring and tutoring high school students, as well as actively engaging in promotional activities developed to draw students to the Go Centers. The G-Force works under the guidance of a G-Force Sponsor. Through the Internet and on-site resources, each Go Center provides access to a wide range of information about college and careers. Several border institutions have received funds to support their Collegiate G-Force college students with scholarships/stipends.

In the summer of 2006, a Bridge Program was conducted by Texas A&M International University for 263 incoming high school juniors. Students were housed at Texas A&M International's Residential Learning Community under the supervision of residential assistants who offered mentoring and tutoring to all participants. Participants included students from Laredo Independent School District as well as United Independent School District.

Border County Doctoral Faculty Education Loan Repayment Program

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board administers one program specific to the Texas/Mexico border region: the Border County Doctoral Faculty Education Loan Repayment Program. The program awards loan repayment funds to qualified doctoral faculty with instructional duties and who are employed at an eligible institution. Recipients must work full-time for one academic year to receive the maximum annual award of \$5,000. Awards are made at the end of the year of service. Eligible institutions are located in counties that border Mexico. The Coordinating Board began accepting applications for the program in fall 1999. Since the inception of the program, 335 awards totaling \$1.6 million dollars have been made. Participating institutions include the University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso Community College, Texas A&M International University, Laredo Community College, South Texas Community College, Sul Ross State University, Texas State Technical College-Harlingen, the University of Texas at Brownsville, Texas Southmost College, and The University of Texas Pan American.

(13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services?

N/A

(14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region.

N/A

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency's activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

Please see Questions 11 and 12.