



The Issues: Higher Education

Closing the Gaps and Increasing Student Enrollment in Texas

Higher Education: The Facts

In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) adopted a plan called *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. With Texas' rapidly growing population and the diversification of its economy, it is important that it makes the necessary strides to improve and advance the state's 146 public and independent institutions of higher education.

In the plan adopted in 2000 and modified in 2005, the THECB laid out four distinct goals:

- Participation - To increase the participation in higher education by adding an additional 630,000 more students compared to the 2000 enrollment numbers.
- Excellence - To increase the number of nationally recognized programs or services offered at colleges or universities in Texas.
- Research - By 2015, increase the level of federal science and engineering research and development obligations to Texas institutions to 6.5 percent of the obligations administered to the institutes of higher education across the country.
- Success - To award 210,000 undergraduate degrees, certificates, and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs.

In the State of Texas, higher education is education and economic development. It is estimated that if Texas is able to achieve the goals set by *Closing the Gaps*, the state's economy will see an increase of **\$489 billion in total spending, \$194 billion in gross state product, and \$122 billion in personal income levels, as well as the creation of 1,023,00 new jobs by 2030.**

To help meet these goals, Texas has 146 public and independent institutions of higher education. Currently there are:

- 38 public four-year universities and upper-division centers;
- 39 independent four-year college and universities;
- 50 public community college districts (with multiple campuses); and,
- A number of public health institutes, two-year colleges and independent junior colleges.

It is anticipated that the State of **Texas will receive \$8.08 on every \$1 the state invests into higher education.**

According to recent statistics released by THECB, student enrollment in Texas institutions of higher education has increased by 485,932 students or 48.7 percent, totaling 1.50 million students in the fall of 2010. Fall 2010 enrollment increased by 84,500 when compared to the previous year. This represents the second largest enrollment increase. With these increases in enrollment, the state is well positioned to meet its goal of adding 630,000 students by 2015.



Texas A&M University Corpus Christi is doing its part to increase student enrollment numbers in the State of Texas. In the fall of 2010, Texas A&M University-CC enrolled 10,032 students, marking the first time the University broke their 10,000 student enrollment threshold. Texas A&M University-CC has again grown by enrolling approximately 10,204 students for the 2011 school year. Recently, Texas A&M University-CC ranked 21st among regional public universities in the West and 2nd in the State of Texas, according to the *U.S. News and World Report's* rankings.

As our communities, economies and State continue to grow and adapt, so will our institutions of higher education.

If you have questions regarding any of the information mentioned in this article, please do not hesitate to call Todd Hunter's Capitol or District Office. As always, the offices are available at any time to assist with your questions, concerns or comments.

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