



# **College of Education and P-16 Integration Strategic Plan Implementation Report**

May 2021

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## College of Education and P-16 Integration Strategic Plan Implementation Report

The development of CEP's strategic plan began with the creation of the Strategic Plan Committee in 2017. The following members gathered feedback from faculty, staff, and stakeholders to design a strategic plan for our college with the following core priorities: (1) student success; (2) educational opportunities; (3) enhancing the community of faculty; (4) building a research enterprise; (5) evidence-based decision making; and (6) community engagement. Committee members contributing to designing the CEP strategic plan were Jesus (Chuey) Abrego, Zulmaris Diaz, Veronica Kortan (Harlingen CISD), Ming-Tsan (Pierre) Lu, Paul Sale, Janine Schall, and Yih-Jiun (Jean) Shen.

In January 2020, Dean Alma Rodriguez organized a strategic plan implementation committee which consists of Jesus Abrego (Organization and School Leadership), Hsuying Ward (Human Development and School Services), Jean Shen (Counseling), Kip Hinton (Bilingual and Literacy Studies), Hossein Shirvani (Teaching and Learning), and Javier Cavazos (Dean's Office). Our charge was to document college activities and accomplishments to report on and evaluate the progress toward enacting our college priorities. This report is the first document to be provided that highlights progress toward implementing our strategic plan as well as performance measures for each core priority. Like the university's strategic planning review committee (SPRC), our committee is committed to ensure that CEP faculty and staff are engaged in implementing our strategic plan.

### CEP Strategic Plan Implementation and Evaluation Timeline

- January 2020—formed CEP strategic plan implementation committee to document progress and performance measures
- March 2020—CEP strategic plan implementation committee surveyed CEP faculty to identify current accomplishments
- August 2020—CEP strategic plan implementation committee worked to finalize report 1
- December 2020—Draft of report 1 sent to Dean Rodriguez
- January 2021—Draft of report submitted to CEP faculty
- May 2021—Create specific target metrics for each core priority and design an action plan to continue to implement our Strategic plan

## PRIORITY 1: STUDENT SUCCESS

The most important part of CEP's core priorities is student success. The goal is to provide innovative, accessible, and high-quality educational programs founded on the belief that scholarship and life experience are strengthened when integrated, that diversity in all its manifestation is a fundamental component of excellence in education, and partnerships that foster authentic social and community engagement are vital. Below is a description of CEP current initiatives and accomplishments.

### On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

#### STEP-UP (STUDENT TEACHER EDUCATOR PREPARATION-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP):

Dr. Steve Chamberlain leads this program which provides a year-long internship for teacher candidates with guided support from university faculty and school district teachers. During the year, candidates experience all the activities and procedures of a school year, develop strong relationships with their cooperating teacher and classroom students, and engage in induction opportunities with the school district. Candidates are provided with multiple opportunities to observe excellent classroom teachers, practice their planning and instructional skills, reflect on their practice, and integrate feedback into future planning and instruction.

#### TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF FUTURE EDUCATORS (TAFE) CHAPTER:

During 2019-2020, the Charles Butt scholars started a TAFE collegiate chapter at UTRGV with several of them serving as officers. TAFE with national affiliation to Educators Rising, is a student organization that encourages students to explore education-related careers primarily in high school settings. The chapter's inaugural officers include Nick Torres as president, Carolina De Anda as vice president, Mayra Hernandez as secretary, and Clarissa Guerra as events coordinator. The organization's faculty advisor is Dr. Criselda Garcia, Associate Dean for Initial Preparation Programs and Academic Affairs. As the new collegiate chapter was planned, TAFE's goal was to create a pipeline from high school to the university of high achieving students entering the teaching profession through strong visibility and advocacy of the profession. TAFE encourages exploration of careers in education along with the elevation of the teaching profession by promoting professional dispositions, leadership, and service to the Rio Grande Valley community. Focus of recruitment efforts are based on areas and needs of the region's teaching job market.

#### CHARLES BUTT SCHOLARS 2020-2021:

The third cohort of UTRGV Charles Butt Scholars were announced in spring 2020, making it the largest group of future teachers selected to receive the prestigious scholarship from the Raise Your Hand Foundation. The College of Education and P-16 Integration (CEP) proudly welcomed 16 new scholars! Since the inception of the student scholarship program, the university has received over \$376,000 in scholarship funds.

The new cohort consists of Denise Cerda, Joana Duran, Jacqueline Elizondo, Andrea Escalante, Eloisa Garcia, Iris Gonzalez, Juan Gutierrez, Divine Lippolt, Maria Lomas, Jackie Martinez, Patricia Mojica, Marina Nacianceno, Abigail Ollave, Paola Isabel Trevino, Aileen Valdez, and Azaria Vasquez. The Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers as part of Raising Texas Teachers initiative of Raise Your Hand Foundation was established to attract high achieving students to the teaching profession. Charles Butt Scholars receive up to \$8,000 in annual funding for up to four years, as well as ongoing professional development opportunities, mentorship from public school educators, and participation in a statewide aspiring teachers' network. To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be committed to teaching in a majority-economically disadvantaged school or in a shortage subject area (in a school where more than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch, or as a math, science, bilingual, or special education teacher) in a Texas public school. Through a competitive process, UTRGV was one of 11 Texas universities selected to receive the Charles Butt Scholarship for prospective teachers. The programs from across the state work closely with Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation to identify, implement, and scale promising practices in teacher preparation. With support from Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation, the preparation programs created a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) that have been engaged in continuous improvement for the past three years.

#### **RGV STEM EDUCATION CONFERENCE:**

The goal of this conference is to transform STEM education, from cradle to college, to ensure that all students have an opportunity for success in STEM. The conference hosts P-16 STEM practitioners, researchers, and K-12 students. The conference hosts a broad range of sessions, including practitioner workshops, nascent STEM education research, and critical discussions among researchers, practitioners, and K-12 students.

#### **LEARNING TO TEACH LAB:**

The LTT lab was created to support and challenge teacher candidates from admission to certification through resources and activities that engage them in practice-based teacher education, digital pedagogies, and successful certification, so that they may be 21st century classroom-ready by the time they graduate.

The LTT lab has the following components:

- o Practice-based Teacher Preparation with Mixed Reality Simulations
- o Digital Pedagogies
- o TExES Support Program
- o Professional Development for Teacher Educators

## Student Success Metrics

Performance Measures	AY 2015-2016	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018	AY 2018-2019	AY 2019-2020	%Change from AY18-19 to 19-20
Number of Undergraduate Degrees Awarded	322	256	276	273	360	+32%
Number of Undergraduates who Finish a program that leads to certification	417	374	413	404	372	-7.92%
Number of Graduate Degrees Awarded	456	343	359	336	376	+11.90%
Number of Doctoral Degrees Awarded	7	10	11	15	16	+6.67%
Number of Graduates who finish a program that leads to a certification	141	110	103	194	41	-78.87%

## Target Student Success Metrics/Outcomes

- By AY24-25, increase number of undergraduate degrees awarded by 10%
- By AY24-25, increase number of undergraduates who finish a program that leads to certification by 10%.
- By AY24-25, increase enrollment by 10% in critical needs majors such as English, Science, Social Studies, and Special Education
- By AY24-25, increase number of graduate degrees awarded by 10%
- By 24-25, increase number of doctoral degrees awarded by 10%
- By 24-25, increase number of doctoral graduates who complete their degree within 5 years.

## Action Plan to Increase Student Success and Achieve Target Outcomes

- Maintain current initiatives, including district and school-based partnerships, to foster student success
- Implement new initiatives and school-based partnerships to increase undergraduate and graduate student success
- Implement new initiatives to improve undergraduate students' performance on certification examinations
- Increase undergraduate research opportunities
- Increase doctoral students' time to complete degree and dissertation
- Explore the idea of mandatory workshops for teacher candidates to prepare for examinations

- Provide professional development in pedagogy, best teaching practices, student success factors, and higher education teaching and learning
- Offer additional trainings and workshops on curriculum revision

## PRIORITY 2: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Priority 2 involves expanding high quality and innovative instruction through curricular and technological advancement to remain at the forefront of the changing educational global reality. CEP is also committed to expanding educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students through new and revised programs, including accelerated online programs (AOP).

### On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

#### Mixed Reality Simulation (MRS):

An exciting new initiative has changed the way that we assist pre-service teachers with communication skills, teaching of instructional strategies, and classroom management. Teacher candidates can practice their skills and develop pedagogical expertise as well as classroom management techniques. Teacher candidates are also able to practice engaging in parent-teacher conferences.

#### Blueprinting of online and hybrid CEP courses:

In summer 2020, CEP faculty participated in UTRGV Blueprinting of courses to design a course curriculum that supports and aligns with overall program goals; develop a course blueprint that outlines and explains how course components align; discuss concepts related to best practices in online teaching and learning; develop course artifacts that align with best practices; and build a quality online course utilizing appropriate technologies to support all course objectives and diverse learners.

#### New All-Level/Secondary Education Minor:

We believe the CREATE data illustrating the percentages of newly hired high school teachers in the area show a need and market for increased EPP All-level and High School program graduates. To address this need, the EPP will begin to market a new minor in secondary education that students can attach to their academic major degree plan leading to initial teacher certification. With this option, academic majors have a pathway into the teaching profession at their junior or senior undergraduate degree level. Advantages include undergoing the traditional, rigorous, and clinically rich preparation route while being eligible to receive undergraduate tuition and financial supports such as grants, financial aid, and scholarships. Previously, the only pathway to secondary teaching were academic degree plans with embedded teacher certification coursework which students had to declare at freshman level. Allowing students another option to decide to enter the teaching profession later in their academic trajectory will grow the



number of middle, secondary, and all-level teacher certification program students in the EPP. Thus, English majors, for example, who do not consider teaching as an option until late in their major program can still add the secondary education minor to their degree and become certified to teach English. This minor will, therefore, provide substantial flexibility to students in their thinking about choosing a career in teaching. The 21-hour all level/secondary education minor was approved by the University beginning 2018-2019. The EPP has begun efforts to advertise the secondary education minor. Currently, a web site was developed, and communication campaigns in coordination with academic advisors took place in summer 2020. Outreach efforts include sharing information with high school counselors at schools and disseminating at recruitment events. While all secondary students will have the option of using the minor, the EPP will target its recruiting efforts to high needs subject areas as identified in the CREATE data: English, science, and social studies. In addition, students may add the education minor along with the existing specialization of special education to their degree plan.

### **New content specialization (Mathematics) in the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction:**

Starting Fall 2020, the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction has a new content specialization in Mathematics that is 100% online and provides the skill set needed to become a mathematics instructional leader to serve a diverse population in classroom and other settings. Students will learn how to develop an effective mathematics curriculum, understand research methods, access learning environments, and identify exciting topics in modern math. Graduates of the MED in C&I with a Concentration in Mathematics program may seek positions as instructional coordinators, curriculum leaders, instructional coaches, mathematics education mentors, educational consultants, mathematics specialists, and similar positions in school districts. The MED in C&I provides 15 credit hours in Mathematics. Graduates of the program who are seeking opportunities to teach dual credit courses in the high school setting will need one additional three-hour Mathematics course beyond the master's degree.

### **New content specialization (English) in the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction:**

Starting Fall 2020, the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction has a new content specialization in English that provides students with the skill set needed to become an English language instructional leader to serve a diverse population in classroom and other settings. Graduates of the MED in C&I with a Concentration in English program may seek positions as instructional coordinators, curriculum leaders, instructional coaches, language education mentors, educational consultants, language specialists, and similar positions in school districts. The MED in C&I provides 15 credit hours in English. Graduates of the program who are seeking opportunities to teach dual credit courses in the high school setting will need one additional three hour English course beyond the master's degree.



### Accelerated Online format option for Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching:

The Higher Education Teaching Graduate Certificate is designed for those who want to strengthen their teaching skills. Students will learn about online teaching and learning, how to engage diverse learners, and apply theory to create positive learning environments for student engagement and success.

### Accelerated Online format for Master of Education in Teacher Leadership:

Starting Fall 2020, the Department of Organization and School Leadership in collaboration with the Department of Teaching and Learning is offering the M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership in an Accelerated Online format. The program will prepare teachers as instructional leaders, coaches, and mentors based on national professional standards. The program also is designed to provide remunerated pathways for developing teachers' careers and ameliorating teacher retention.

### Educational Opportunities Metrics

Enrollment at the Graduate and Doctoral Levels	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	% Change from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020
Accelerated Online Program (AOP) Graduate	123	171	257	291	246	623	+153%
Graduate	796	482	469	412	411	407	-.97%
Doctoral and Certification	183	183	199	238	245	311	+27%

Mixed Reality Simulations	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
# of Faculty	16	17	12	33
# of Scenarios	1	13	1	2
# of Programs	14	18	13	32

Type of Program	# of Blueprinted Courses
Traditional (non-AOP)	29
AOP	63

## Target Student Success Metrics/Outcomes

- By AY24-25, increase AOP enrollment by 10% (baseline is Fall 2019)
- By AY24-25, increase graduate enrollment in traditional programs by 10%
- By AY24-25, increase doctoral student enrollment by 10%
- By AY24-25, increase certificate program enrollment by 10%

## Future Plans for Educational Opportunities

- Explore new PhD programs to increase the number of PhD graduates at UTRGV and help UTRGV move toward an emerging Research University
- Develop CACREP-accredited online Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling (Texas only) tracks in the Department of Counseling in response to the existing trends in higher education that were accelerated because of the COVID pandemic and the increasing mental health needs nationally
- Implement Educational Studies degree
- By Fall 2021, implement a 30-hour Master's in Educational Leadership Program inclusive of certification courses.
- By Spring 2022, develop an online track for the Superintendent Certification Program
- Develop a new Master's Program in Leadership
- By fall 2021, convert coursework in Ed.D. Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership to an online format.
- Develop a Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership
- By spring 2022, add the following specialization areas to the Ed.D. Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership: Teacher Leadership, Social Justice, Instructional Leadership, Gifted Education, Mind & Brain, Diversity & Multiculturalism, Education Policy, Adult Learning & Higher Education Certification
- Provide professional development on innovative instruction such as mixed reality simulations and technology in the classroom
- Explore 4 + 1 fast-track programs
- Offer more experiential learning activities for students
- **Implement Digital Mosaic** to increase the department of HDSS's digital footprint and use digital and traditional methods for recruiting students – emphasis on undergrads. In 2020-2021, HDSS will engage in revamping current and future online courses and programs. Given the changing landscape resulting from not only the pandemic but also the saturation of digital media by present and future UTRGV students, the faculty propose to increase departmental digital presence through a combination of utilizing existing departmental platforms (e.g., webpage, student organization, Facebook) and dedicating one student worker to curate digital media. Also proposed is hiring a designer to assist with design, structure, and focus on social media that has the highest ROI.

## PRIORITY 3: ENHANCING THE COMMUNITY OF FACULTY

Priority 3 focuses on attracting and retaining multiculturally responsive scholars, learning leaders, and education professionals who serve as change agents who make a difference by promoting social justice, embracing diversity in its broadest definition, inspiring thought leadership, and pursuing lifelong learning. The current initiatives and accomplishments, which are described below, are designed to provide professional development on topics related to linguistically and culturally diverse populations; create a trusting, welcoming, and friendly environment that values and respects the true essence of the diversity of opinion, and ideas; and increase the diversity of faculty members who are responsive to multicultural education and research.

### On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

#### CEP Transformation Community of Practice Scholar:

As part of the Teacher Preparation Transformation initiative and with the support of the Branch Ed grant, the College of Education and P-16 Integration identified three faculty champions to spearhead the transformation efforts in three areas of emphasis that reflect core ideas from the CEP teacher preparation framework: practice-based teacher education, culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogies, and technology for the 21st century. Dr. Veronica Estrada, Dr. Zulmaris Diaz, and Dr. Leticia de Leon, respectively, were selected as faculty champions. As part of their charge, they designed a faculty learning community entitled: CEP Transformation Community of Practice Scholar. This faculty learning community (FLC) invited tenured-track, tenured faculty, and lectures to join and provide opportunities to discuss, design and implement initiatives that targeted the three areas of emphasis prioritized in the CEP EPP Transformation initiative. Eleven faculty were selected to be part of the FLC: Pauli Badenhorst, Carmen Garcia-Caceres, Leslie Garrido, Raul Garza, Jacqueline Koonce, Karin Lewis, Denise Love, Noushin Nouri, Carmen Peña, Elena Venegas, and Zulema Williams.

The FLC involved an engagement cycle where faculty engaged in professional development with a supportive community that embrace learning, reflection, creative pedagogical risk taking, application, and collegiality. The overall goal was to engage in a collective process of professional development to design, implement, and reflect on culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and the integration of 21st century digital literacy skills in teacher preparation.

#### TeachingWorks:

TeachingWorks is an organization within the University of Michigan under the direction of Dr. Deborah Ball that provides professional development for teacher educators to design and implement practice-based teacher preparation for teachers *“that intertwines attention to high-leverage practices of teaching, challenging and powerful academic content and skills, and the pursuit of equitable learning opportunities for students. The mission of TeachingWorks is to ensure that all students have skillful teachers who are*

*committed to and able to support their growth" (TeachingWorks.org).* As part of the Branch Ed grant sponsored initiatives for the transformation of teacher preparation, The College of Education and P-16 Integration hosted two faculty professional development workshops led by TeachingWorks to support the teacher preparation transformation initiative that involves promoting practice-based teacher preparation. All faculty (tenured, tenure-track, lectures, One-Year Appointments (OYAs), and clinical supervisors) involved in preparing educators at the undergraduate or graduate level across colleges were invited to participate. In addition, Branch Ed Grant district partner, Harlingen Consolidated Independent School district, was also invited and participated in each workshop, including administrators, school principals, and teachers. The two intensive two-day workshops took place in Weslaco and involved approximately 40 participants each. The first workshop in Fall 2019 (October 3-4) provided attendees with an Introduction to Practice Based Teacher Education. The second workshop in Spring 2020 (January 30-31) focused on expanding the exploration and understanding of Practice-Based Teacher Education model from the perspective of culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

### **Carnegie Project on Education Doctorate (CPED):**

The College of Education and P-16 Integration doctoral programs were accepted into the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate. Dr. Laura Jewett in collaboration with Dr. Marie Simonsson leads the work to assist faculty from the Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership EdD programs to engage in parallel, redesign activities to identify key program issues, embark on faculty led-syllabus review, and to bring current and best practices literature to bear on these issues through collective inquiry.

### **College Wide Climate Committee:**

In Spring 2020, a committee composed of faculty and staff was formed to consider CEP faculty values related to determining fairness in response to the Climate Survey. Committee Members include: Dr. Roberto Zamora, Dr. Zamaris Diaz, Dr. George Padilla, Dr. James Telese, Dr. Chuey Abrego, Dr. Hsuying Ward, Dr. Michael Whitacre and Janie Monreal, Alberto Kerns, and Anna Aleman.

### **Coffee with the Dean:**

Started in Spring 2020, the Coffee with the Dean is a monthly opportunity for faculty and staff to meet with Dean Alma D. Rodriguez to have informal conversations about any topics. These conversations have enhanced the community of faculty by bringing people together and encouraging faculty to talk with Dean Rodriguez about all topics.

## Action Plan for Enhancing the Community of Faculty

- Identify specific target metrics such as number of professional development activities and impact from new initiatives in response to the annual college climate survey
- Provide professional development in social justice and diversity as well as linguistic diversity
- Provide more conversations to help faculty learn what others are doing in terms of research and service
- Create a system to track participation in professional development as well as the impact of participation in professional development

## PRIORITY 4: BUILDING A RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

One of UTRGV's goals is to become an emerging research university where faculty and students collaborate to conduct research impacting the Rio Grande Valley and beyond. Our goal in the CEP is to build a research enterprise, including research services, graduate programs, and undergraduate research opportunities, that empower the generation of knowledge, discovery, and creativity. Below is a description of our current initiatives and accomplishments.

### On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

#### Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Research Planning Grant:

Summer 2020. The Miguel Nevarez Endowed Chair, Dr. Jim Telese, funded this opportunity to foster rigorous research in the College of Education and P-16 Integration, community, or secondary schools. The following CEP faculty members participated in a faculty learning community where they designed and revised a research project aligned with teaching and learning.

- o Dr. Jair Aguilar, Assistant Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning
- o Dr. Carmen Garcia-Caceres, Director of Read3 Program and Lecturer III in Department of Teaching and Learning
- o Dr. Noushin Nouri, Assistant Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning
- o Dr. Ming-Tsan Lu, Associate Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning and Graduate Program Coordinator for MED in Curriculum and Instruction

#### CEP Grant Writing Fellows Program:

Summer 2020 and Fall 2020. The Miguel Nevarez Endowed chair, Dr. Jim Telese, funded this opportunity to foster rigorous research in the College of Education and P-16 Integration, community, or secondary schools. The program provided funding for 6 CEP faculty members to participate in workshops focused on the following areas in grant-writing: problem statement and needs assessments; goals, objectives, and logic

model; methods and literature review; project evaluation; and budget. All faculty members who participated as a grant writing fellow will submit a grant proposal to a funding agency such as National Science Foundation, Texas Education Agency, or National Institute of Health. Below are the faculty members who participated:

- o Dr. Jair Aguilar, Assistant Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning
- o Dr. Israel Aguilar, Assistant Professor in Department of Organizational School Leadership
- o Dr. Ming-Tsan Lu, Associate Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning and Graduate Program Coordinator for MED in Curriculum and Instruction
- o Dr. Noushin Nouri, Assistant Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning
- o Dr. Clarissa Salinas, Assistant Professor in Department of Counseling
- o Dr. Zhidong Zhang, Associate Professor in Department of Teaching and Learning

### CEP Graduate Research Assistantships:

The CEP supports faculty by providing graduate research assistants who assist faculty with their research. The assignment of GRAs is a competitive process based on faculty applicants who propose research projects. The expectation is for faculty to mentor a GRA with collaboration on at least one peer-reviewed publication. For Academic Year 2020-2021, eight faculty members worked with a GRA on the following projects:

- o Dr. Isela Almaguer. *Project SOAR: Spanish Opportunities that Accelerate Reading*
- o Dr. Jair Aguilar. *Elementary Problem-Solving Scenarios Development for Mixed-Reality Simulations: Fostering Productive Mathematical Talk Moves*
- o Dr. Jesus Abrego. *A Study on the Role of the Principal in Supporting Teacher Leaders and its Impact on Student Performance*
- o Dr. Michelle Abrego. *Building the Cultural Competence and Skills of Aspiring School Leaders to Engage Diverse Families*
- o Dr. Ming-Tsan Lu. *Investigating High-Impact Practices in a South Texas Hispanic Serving Institution*
- o Dr. Noushin Nouri. *Developing an Informed View of Nature of Science, Translanguaging, and Culturally-Sustaining Pedagogy via Role Reversal from a Participant to a Researcher*
- o Dr. Ralph Carlson. *Deriving Psychometric Properties for Assessment Scales*
- o Dr. Steve Chamberlain. *The Effects of Online Coaching Professional Development on STEP UP Candidate Performance*

### Hispanic Serving Institution Special Interest Research Groups (SIRGs) Initiative:

Dr. Janine Schall continues to lead the SIRG research initiative to support faculty teams as they explore various aspects of the overarching question: What does it mean to be a Hispanic-Serving College of Education, and how do we make this term meaningful for post-secondary education? In the most recent cycle 2020-2021, the CEP continued to focus on *what we do as a Hispanic Serving Institution and as faculty in an HSI to ensure the success of our student population*. The following projects were funded:



- o Returning SIRG: Drs. Alcione Ostorga, Christian Zuniga, and Kip Hinton. *Border Pedagogies for Teacher Preparation*
- o Returning SIRG: Drs. Israel Aguilar, Jesus Abrego, and Fred Guerra; Ms. Erica Benavides and Neda Ramirez. *Researching our identity as an HSI: A significant case study of how and what faculty, administrators, and staff do to improve student success.*
- o Returning SIRG: Drs. Maria Diaz and Jair Aguilar; Mr. Victor Vizcaino. *Latinx preservice bilingual elementary teachers: Exploring the intersections of mathematical proficiency, language use, self-efficacy, and problem-solving*
- o New SIRG: Drs. Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, Stephanie Alvarez, Freyca Calderon-Berumen, and Ana Lopez. *Enlazando/Rompiendo Fronteras con trabajo, orgullo y generosidad/ weaving/breaking borders with work, pride, and generosity*
- o New SIRG: Drs. Veronica Estrada, Carmen Pena, and Denise Love. *Implementing high leverage practices in virtual and F2F classroom environments at a Hispanic Serving Institution*
- o New SIRG: Drs. Angela Chapman, Zulmaris Diaz, Mirayda Torres-Avila, and Shizue Mito. *SABES: Spanish as a bridge to educational success*
- o New SIRG: Drs. Javier Cavazos, Pierre Lu, and Clarissa Salinas. *Discovering Latinx graduate students' perceptions of online teaching at an HSI*

### CEP Research Conversations:

Dr. Javier Cavazos, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, oversees CEP research conversations which are designed for faculty to discuss and collaborate on research. In fall 2020, the following conversations took place:

- o Presenter. Dr. Javier Cavazos. *How to write a lot.*
- o Presenter. Dr. James Whittenberg. *Become Familiar with APA 7th Edition Changes.*
- o Presenter. Dr. Jacob Neumann. *Identify the Best Journal for your Manuscript.*
- o Presenter. Drs. Alcione Ostorga, Chuey Abrego, and Irasema Salinas-Gonzalez. *How to write a book and secure a book contract.*

### CEP Research Profiles:

In fall 2020, the CEP launched a new website ([CEP Research Profiles](#)) to highlight faculty members' research accomplishments and current activities as well as the impact of research. The CEP Research Profiles showcases the generation and discovery of knowledge to the local, university, and professional community.

### Teacher Prep Transformation SIRGs:

The CEP was awarded a grant funded by the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED) to be part of the first cohort of the National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center. As part of the institutional transformation plan, the CEP announced a call for proposals for Teacher Preparation Transformation Special Interest Research Groups to support teams of faculty in conducting research that will further explore one of the following



areas: programming that builds teacher candidate competency, programming that demonstrates commitment to using data for continuous improvement, programming to ensure teacher educators are effective, or programming that is responsive to K-12 school systems and the communities they serve. The following projects were funded in AY20-21:

- o Drs. Ming-Tsan Lu, Noushin Nouri, and Jair Aguilar: *Investigating Hispanic Serving College of Education Pre-Service Teacher (PT) Students' Perceptions of Effective Technology Integration in the Classroom (ETIC)*
- o Drs. Javier Cavazos, Zulmaris Diaz, and Fred Guerra: *Exploring how Positive Psychology Characteristics Influence Bilingual/ESL Teacher Candidates' Mental Health and Testing Performance*
- o Drs. Criselda Garcia, Karin Lewis, Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, and Eunice Lerma: *Creating a Teacher Candidate (TC) Learning Community for Mentoring Latina/o Freshmen at an HSI*

### New Grants awards in AY19-20:

CEP faculty are committed to exploring grant opportunities. In 2019-2020, the following projects were funded.

- o Dr. Rosalinda Hernandez (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Alex Garcia (Co-Principal Investigator). *Student and Faculty Perceptions about Academic Instructional Coaches with Accelerated Online Courses*. Instructional Connections. \$9,986.00
- o Dr. Hilda Medrano (Principal Investigator). *Early Head Start*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. \$7,356,122.00
- o Dr. Hilda Medrano (Principal Investigator). *Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. \$279,926.00
- o Dr. Hilda Medrano (Principal Investigator). *Early Head Start*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. \$326,916.
- o Dr. Sandra Musanti (Principal Investigator), Dr. Veronica Estrada (Co-Principal Investigator), and Dr. Pauli Badenhorst (Co-Principal Investigator). *Towards a Practice-Based Community Engaged Pedagogy in HSI Teacher Preparation: Leveraging Voices from the Field*. BranchED. \$12,000.
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## Building a Research Enterprise Metrics

Performance Measures	AY 2016-17	AY2017-18	AY2018-19	AY2019-20	%change from AY18 - AY19-20
Number of Peer-Reviewed Publications	58	56	65	78	+20%
Number of Grants Submitted	20	5	13	31	+138%
Number of Grants Awarded	6	3	9	8	-13%
Amount of Grants Requested	\$26,158,113	\$9,239,007	\$18,413,599.00	\$13,499,236	-27%
Amount of Grants Awarded	\$7,510,606	\$7,938,923	\$16,259,660.00	\$9,747,874.00	-40%

## Target Research Metrics/Outcomes

- By AY24-25, increase number of total publications (peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters) to an average of 1.5 per faculty member (e.g., if there are 70 tenured or tenure track faculty with a research workload percentage of 20%, the goal is to have 105 publications)
- By AY24-25, increase number of grant submissions to 40.
- By AY24-25, increase number of grants awarded to 10.

## Future Plans

- Establish at least 2-3 research priority areas (RPAs) for which CEP faculty wish to be known for
- Define high quality journals in specific disciplines (e.g., impact factor, acceptance rate)
- Explore the possibility of creating informal centers/institutes related to the RPAs
- Establish a Council of Principal Investigators to provide support on grants development including research design, methodology, and project evaluation
- Establish a Research Advisory Board to provide support on research design and data analysis as related to peer-reviewed publications
- Increase undergraduate student research
- Increase the number and impact of writing teams with specific areas of focus
- Conduct additional research with local schools and communities

## PRIORITY 5: EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Priority 5 involves evidence-based decision-making and data literacy. Current initiatives focus on college-wide conversations to promote evidence-based decision-making and include data literacy. Faculty base decisions on data collected and analyzed from Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), EPP created assessments, and rubrics generated across the various college programs as

well as shared governance via the college-wide assessment committee that encourage a diverse group of faculty from across the college to incorporate various types of data to make informed decisions. Below are current initiatives.

## On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

### Curriculum Mapping Teamwork:

Supported by the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity grant, in spring 2019, the college began the process of addressing Objective A of curriculum mapping with program curriculum alignment of the teacher preparation program. By focusing on program-level programming and course-level alignment, a program matrix and course map templates were created and shared with program chairs and coordinators. Program leads and faculty champions met for the initial planning and mapping process in spring 2019. The educator preparation program matrix was designed to include alignments for institutional program student learning outcomes, state teacher standards, specialization standards, national standards, ISTE standards and InTASC standards. Course-level templates were designed to capture program alignments along with program key assessments as denoted on course syllabi. The purpose of sharing and revisiting curriculum mapping or course/program revisions was for plotting existing alignments to determine areas of need or redundancy. Consideration of the program's conceptual framework, the institutional Student Learning Outcomes and cross cutting themes across the program denoted through progression by semester were discussed and planned.

In spring 2020, the group reconvened to continue the program alignment work by reestablishing community agreements for completing the process, assessing challenges and establishing a standing committee for educator preparation program faculty with regular assembling for increasing collaboration and communication across the teacher preparation program with the overarching goal of designing experiences as a continuum of developing knowledge and competence through scaffold learning with attention to integrating diversity and equity competencies. Participants included: Michael Whitacre, Cynthia Galvan, Carmen Pena, Julie Pecina, Angela Chapman, Irasema Gonzalez, Sandra Musanti, Jim Telese, Dean Alma Rodriguez, Letty De Leon, Veronica Estrada, Zulmaris Diaz, Criselda Garcia, James Jupp, John Lowdermilk, and Janine Schall.

### Climate Survey Action Plan:

In spring 2019, Dr. Karin Lewis (CEP Champion) led an important effort to gather feedback from faculty and staff to improve communication. Committee members included Karin Lewis, Hilda Silva, Zhidong Zhang, Juan O. Garcia, Carmen Pena, Elena Venegas, and Victor Alvarado. As a result of their work and commitment to evidence-based decision-making, changes are in progress to improve communication within the college, which might include a communication flowchart, blackboard organization course shell with all meeting notes and agendas to improve transparency, and central calendar outlook with all college and department meetings. One important and immediate result and impact from the committee

was creating a culture of respect, collegiality, and kindness not only in communication but also in meetings. They implemented their idea, which is called creating a community agreement, in a CEP faculty meeting. The idea was to help all faculty members “be present” and respectful by setting ground rules and inviting faculty to respect each other.

### Summer 2020 CAEP Assessment Workgroup:

Dr. Jim Telese, Associate Dean for Assessment and Accreditation, led a series of workshops with CEP faculty members to discuss, create, and finalize the CEP unit assessment processes. Their work focused on establishing a process for continuous improvement, developing a process for creating assessments, and establishing a process for improving assessments' reliability and validity. The following faculty members participated: Jim Telese, Steve Chamberlain, Sandra Musanti, Jacob Neumann, Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, Mariaelena Corbeil, Erica Villarreal, James Jupp, Chuey Abrego, Javier Cavazos, Roberto Zamora, Nancy Razo, and Marie Simonsson.

### CEP Data Summit:

CEP has consistently provided faculty opportunities to review student performance data through its Collegewide Assessment Committee to engage in continuous improvement and promote evidence-based decision-making and data literacy. The annual CEP Data Summit is an opportunity to engage faculty in conversations on key assessments as well as review and reflect on data for continuous program improvement. Current members of the Committee include: Dr. James Telese, Dr. Ralph Carson, Dr. Emily Curiel, Dr. Jean Shen, Dr. Jaime Lopez, Dr. Chuey Abrego, Dr. Zhidong Zhang, Dr. Marie Simonsson, Dr. Javier Cavazos, Luis Azpeitia, Dr. Kip Austin Hinton and Erica Villarreal.

### Deans for Impact Common Indicator System Network:

The UTRGV CEP has been a trailblazer institution as a founding member of the DFI CIS network. This is a nation-wide network of educator preparation programs that identified common assessments for their teacher preparation programs in an effort to collect credible and actionable evidence with a focus on program improvement.

### TK20:

TK20 is UTRGV's data management system for all faculty to access and is used to submit reports for the 2017-2022 assessment period. It is designed to facilitate collecting and managing academic and non-academic assessment and accreditation activities focused on accountability, compliance, and institutional effectiveness.

### Teacher Preparation Data Model:

The UTRGV CEP is an early adopter of the Ed-Fi Teacher Preparation Data Model. Through a grant by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the

UTRGV CEP and IT department have built an Operational Data Store to connect multiple data systems to visualize teacher preparation data to facilitate data use for continuous improvement. The TPDM dashboards visualize data in the following areas of the teacher preparation program – enrollment, candidate performance, program information, post completion, and university school partnerships.

### Evidence-Based Decision-Making Performance Metrics

Performance Measures	AY2018-19	AY2019-20
Established data institute	Data Summit	Data Summit
Dashboards created for all faculty access	PBi Dashboard	PBiDashboard
Evaluate the use of data in programmatic decision making	DFI CIS	DFI CIS

### Future Initiatives and Plans

- Identify specific target metrics for evidence-based decision making
- Provide professional development on rubrics and creating strong student learning outcomes and assessment activities
- Provide *Transforming Teacher Preparation: Teacher Educator Professional Development*. The purpose is to enhance and expand teacher educators' knowledge and skills to effectively mentor teacher candidates in the field. Specifically, the modules will address co-teaching approach, cognitive coaching, culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, and hybrid mentoring models. This PD will include asynchronous content in Blackboard Learning Management System and a synchronous meeting in Zoom. This hybrid online professional development includes four micro modules. Upon completing all requirements, participants will receive 5 CPE hours through Continuing Education. The following topics will be included: Transforming Teacher Preparation through a Co-Teaching Model: The Power of Collaboration for Student Success; Mentoring in Hybrid Environments: Community Building through Digital Communication Tools; Mentoring Through Culturally and Linguistic Sustaining Practices; and Transforming Teaching Practice with Cognitive Coaching: An Introduction. This PD is under development and will be implemented in Spring 2021. Drs. Sandra Musanti, Zulmaris Diaz, Veronica Estrada, and Leticia De Leon will be involved in the project

### PRIORITY 6: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Priority 6 involves the contribution to community wealth and asset building by integrating, coordinating, and leveraging programs and resources to support activities that enhance educational opportunities and wellbeing, including especially underserved and bilingual communities through partnerships with educational partners, families, policymakers, and local, regional, national, and global agencies, institutions, and organizations. Community Engagement means extending past efforts and creating vital "... partnerships that foster authentic social and community engagement" (CEP Mission, 2018) for the benefits of strengthening our diverse and vigorous programs. In concert with the University community engagement efforts, CEP launched multiple initiatives to engage our education community. Our students and faculty initiated and continued these initiatives below.

## On-Going Efforts and Record of Success

### CEP Open House:

CEP Open House Committee, represented and sponsored by different CEP Departments, provided RGV communities with an introduction of CEP degree programs and innovations on Edinburg and Brownsville campuses, 2016-2019. Led by one of the CEP departments annually, this engagement event showcased innovations, such as Mixed Reality Simulation, and provided our RGV communities with opportunities to understand the various educational programs available. This engagement event was cancelled in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 due to COVID-19.

### Mobile Literacy Unit (Drs. Irasema Gonzalez and Janine Schall):

Through grant funding, CEP acquired a mobile literacy lab from the Raul Tijerina Foundation to mobilize story time and curbside literacy fairs across the RGV community using the Mobile Literacy Unit (MLU). The MLU is a community outreach vehicle designed to travel across the Rio Grande Valley. The overarching purpose of the Mobile Literacy Unit is to promote literacy and reading achievement by taking university resources into the local community, particularly targeting areas that have been historically underserved. This award provides funding for books, student storytellers, technology, and other literacy supplies, with the goal of at least two community events per month. The MLU will spearhead "La Hora del Cuento" via the MLU YouTube Channel and "Curbside Book Fairs" that will provide access to safe supportive literacy experiences for low-income children in the RGV. The initiative is to make books available to communities that lack access to books.

### Harlingen Early College High School Aspiring Teacher Academy:

The CEP is partnering with the Harlingen CISD in the design of an aspiring teacher academy as a pathway in the district's early college high school. The UTRGV Early College High School will create a symbiotic relationship between UTRGV and HCISD through the development of an innovative and collaborative pipeline of students who will acquire skills leading to academic and professional success as they transition from high school to the university and beyond, thus enriching local and global communities.

### Parent 4 C Parent-directed treatment program:

The program is an Autism parent engagement program to provide Autism communities in the Brownsville area with evidence-based strategies to address the behavioral needs of children with Autism. The purpose of the program is to promote parent-directed treatment for improving the learning and behavior of children and adolescents with Autism.

### Advisory Committees:

Education programs ensure the quality and currency of their programs



through community members' participation in Advisory Committees. Each Advisory Committee, from grant funded programs to traditional degree programs, is composed of community members, school partners, and CEP faculty and administrators. Current advisory committees include the EPP advisory committee as well as advisory committees for Organization School Leadership and School Psychology. Each advisory committee reviews program progress and offers recommendations for continuous program improvement.

### **Fit-in Hang-Out Move-Forward Parent-directed treatment program:**

The program, funded by the State of Texas through Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, is an Autism parent engagement program. The purpose of the program is to promote parent-directed treatment in the social and communication development of children and adolescents with Autism. This program is a two-year program ending May 31, 2022.

### **Mentor teacher partnerships:**

To ensure school districts' support to our student success, we engage districts' experienced teachers and administrators as mentors to our students so that our students acquire authentic practice-based experiences.

### **Summer Camps:**

CEP has offered multiple summer camps for children in our communities to enjoy learning experiences from our college students' service projects.

### **Tutoring Program:**

UTeach, Early Childhood, and the Learning Center partnered to create a tutoring program for faculty members' children in the Colleges of Sciences and Education and P-16 Integration. Although CEP does not directly sponsor this Tutoring Program, this program provides academic assistance to ensure student success.

## **Community Engagement Performance Measures**

<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>AY2018-19</b>	<b>AY2019-20</b>	<b>%change</b>
Number of undergraduate partnerships in catalog	6	6	0%
Number of graduate partnerships	11	14	+21%
CEP Courses with Service Learning	24	17	-29.17%
Community Partners in Service Learning Courses	53	65	+22.64%



## Target Community Engagement Metrics/Outcomes

- By AY24-25, maintain strong relationships with current partners.
- By AY24-25, increase number of district partnerships by 10%.
- By AY24-25, increase the number of CEP service learning courses by 10%.

## Future Initiatives and Plans

- Identify specific target metrics such as number of community partners or number of CEP service-learning courses
- Create *The Learning Channel*. Dr. Irasema Gonzalez, Dr. Hilda Medrano, and Dr. John Lowdermilk are planning to create a culturally and socially responsive TV Channel. This project will ensure that young children enrolled in Head Start and Preschool programs in the Rio Grande Valley have access to age-appropriate interactive and high-quality learning opportunities from their homes that support children's cognitive and emotional well-being. The program will offer weekly interactive lessons (reading, singing, dancing, and movement) using resources that are commonly found in most homes by graduate students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program under the direction of the ECED faculty. Families participating in The Learning Channel lessons will receive monthly learning backpacks with resources (e.g., paints, books, manipulatives) and educational materials so their children are equipped to follow along in the learning from home. Children participating in the Learning Channel will receive an I-Pad/Tablet to view the Learning Channel and participate in lessons from home.
- Create additional research opportunities with school and community partners
- Expand service-learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students
- Provide professional development on service learning and community engagement as well as undergraduate research.
- Enhance curriculum and research by building upon and creating new partnerships



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