



# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND P16 INTEGRATION RECRUITMENT PLAN 2021-2022



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

# BACKGROUND

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With a rich and highly complex history, the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), a four-county Texas-Mexico border region is one of the fastest growing areas of the country. Of the total 1.3 million population in this area, 90% are Hispanic (Latino). A glimpse into the ascending numbers shows a projected increase of 1.9% per year from 2010 and likely until 2030 (Texas Department of Transportation, 2020). Other significant descriptors of the area include a per-capita income average of \$21,091 with higher than state and national unemployment rates (Texas Department of Transportation, 2020). Plagued by persistent poverty and low educational levels, the region has about 40% of the adult population, those over 25 years old, without a high school diploma in the Rio Grande Valley while the U.S. average is 14% (2020). Although this initial impression of the RGV profile may appear dismal, it fails to capture the cultural strength and resilience of the people. The unique characteristics of the people who call RGV their home deserve attention. The RGV community recognizes the impact of social and economic mobility therefore highly value education. In 2011, a study found that college enrollment rates in RGV for a three-year average, for 2009, 2010 and 2011, were higher at 60% than those for the state of Texas at 57%. Significantly, most college enrollees were identified as first-generation, low-income students who worked at full time jobs (RGV Lead, 2019).

In 2013, the Texas Legislature created the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley as the first major public university of the 21st century securing the Permanent University Fund (PUF)-a public endowment contributing support to the University of Texas (UT) System and other institutions for infrastructure enhancements. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is the largest Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in the State of Texas, and the second largest HSI in the continental United States (in terms of enrollment of Hispanic students). UTRGV was founded on strong principles and beliefs in the transformative power of education for the lives of the Rio Grande Valley community and beyond. From inception, UTRGV's overarching goal has been of becoming a 21st century bilingual, bicultural and biliterate university with core priorities on student success and expansion of educational opportunities.



# RECRUITMENT PLAN: OVERVIEW

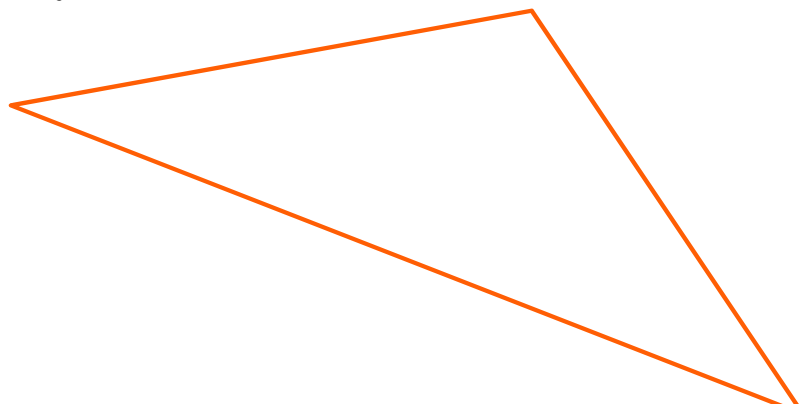
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The College of Education and P16 Integration's mission and vision clearly echoes the university mission. The college serves as a catalyst for educational success of our community embracing diversity as fundamental to excellence in education. Attracting, supporting and producing a strong pool of teachers for the region remains integral toward fulfilling the college's mission. In consideration of the regional sociocultural context of the community, the student demographics in local schools, and alignment of the university and college missions, the overall purpose of our recruitment and retention plan is to further develop and refine the production of Hispanic/Latino teachers in hard to staff schools and shortage fields in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and the region.

Two areas that will be highlighted and supported by the evidence are our program's high production of minority teachers, and our program's retention rates that are of great significance in comparison to state and national level numbers. For instance, while the national landscape has been persistently challenged with having a teacher workforce that reflects the demographics of the diverse student population in K-12 schools, our program represents an anomaly that stands as extraordinary in producing a candidate pool that reflects the diversity of our students. In our local school districts, most of the teachers are predominately Hispanic/Latino teaching Hispanic/Latino students. Another characteristic that makes our program exceptional are the high retention rates of our teachers after they enter the profession. While nationally, minority teachers leave the profession at higher rates than white teachers, our teachers in both elementary and secondary have an 89-90% retention after five years in the teaching profession (CREATE, 2020).

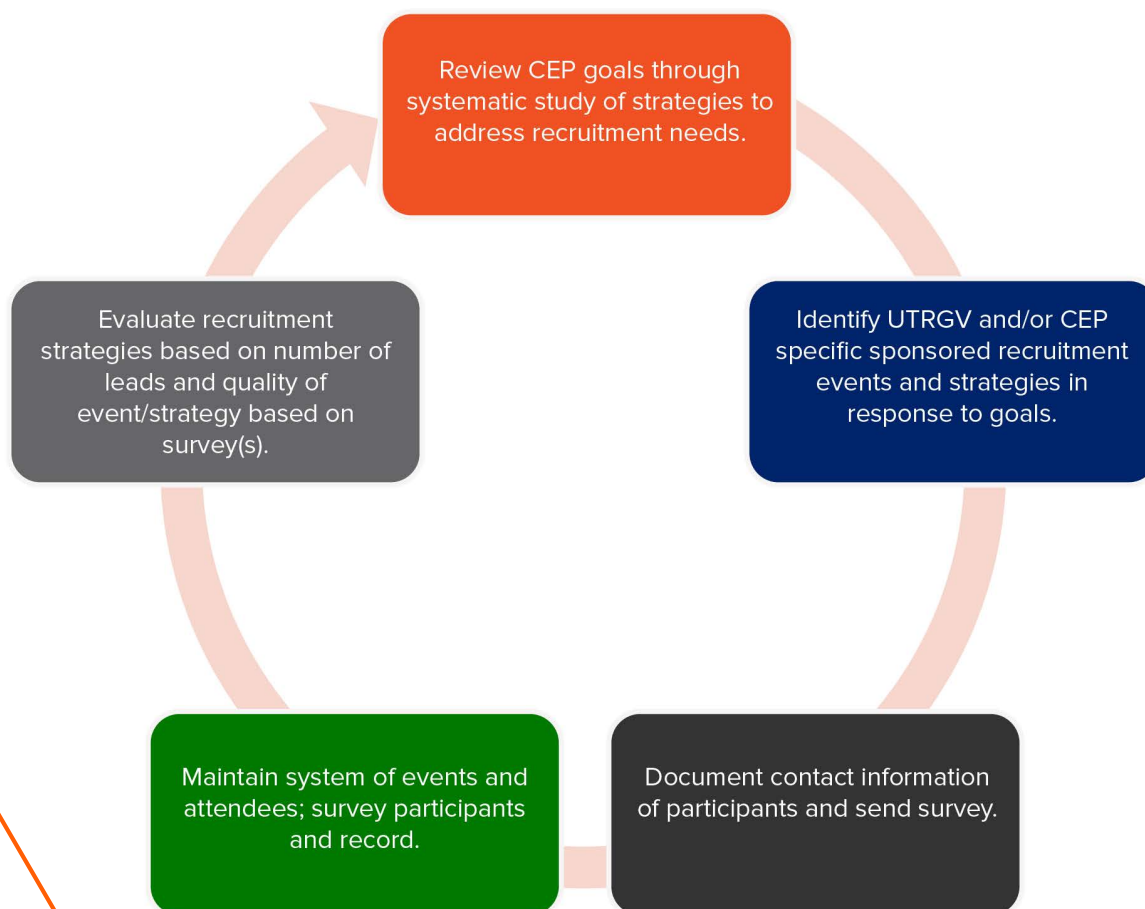
Our program's recruitment, outreach, and retention goals will be described along with brief overview of our evidence that support and inform our plan. Our program recruitment/outreach and retention goals aligned to our institution mission are as follows:

- 1.Continue to attract high quality teacher candidates while serving as a model to depict the process for producing and retaining predominately Hispanic/Latino teachers in the profession through high visibility and notable strategies and activities.
- 2.Create a new process for a systematic review and analysis of progress evidence in relation to the recruitment, outreach plans and monitoring system for prospective leads with use of multiple sources of internally and externally collected data.
- 3.Establish new pathways to teaching in regionally identified critical areas and hard-to-staff schools.



The College of Education and P-16 Integration is committed to providing the highest quality professional educator preparation with attention to supporting teacher candidates through completion for filling hard to staff critical areas in the Rio Grande Valley. By designing purposeful recruitment, attention to attracting high quality aspiring teachers for targeted areas have included planning to increase the number of teachers in hard-to-staff schools and shortage certification fields along with recruiting efforts to increase the caliber of teacher candidates that enter and complete our program. The college has committed to creating more structure and systemic review of the program's recruitment activity to probe further into evaluation of strategies and monitoring the trajectory of prospective leads.

Engaging in continuous improvement, CEP has launched two new goals to strengthen the program's recruitment. To address Goal 2, a plan for creating a standard system to review, analyze and monitor data and progress of goals will be established. The general model is depicted in the graphic below.



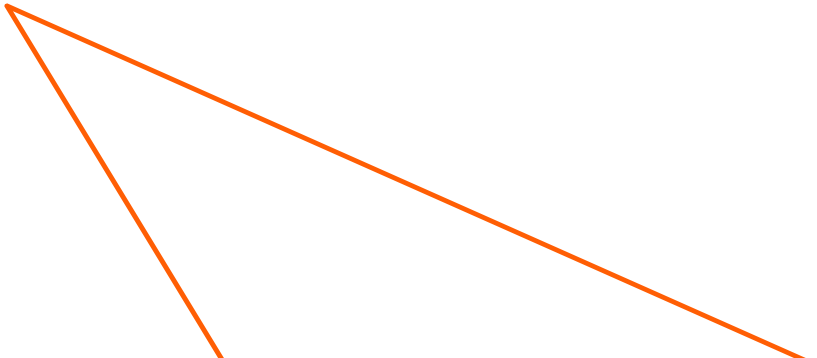
# RECRUITMENT PLAN: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

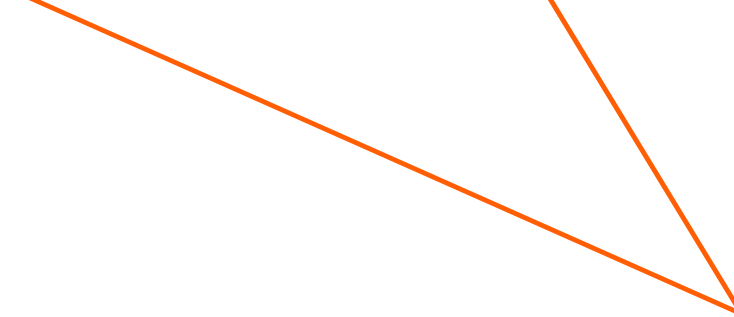
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The College of Education and P16 Integration (CEP) has developed a new pathway into teaching to be responsive to regional district needs and grow enrollment in the all-level/secondary teacher preparation program. The local district survey data and CREATE data illustrate 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 increase the enrollment in critical needs majors/shortage certification fields as demonstrated by admission rates per area of certification a new pathway will be closely monitored for fulfilling district needs. Below are some preliminary goals in successfully meeting Goal 3 for future evaluation.

Previously, the undergraduate programs that have led to all-level/secondary teacher certification have been limited for prospective students to consider the profession. In response to ongoing areas of need for secondary teachers, the EPP took curricular action. The 21-hour all level/secondary education minor was proposed and approved by the University to begin as offering in 2018-2019. As a recently new curricular option, this route addresses the issue of limited undergraduate pathways into teaching. To increase the number of teacher candidates admitted to the initial licensure educator preparation program in critical certification/shortage areas, the EPP has advertised the new minor in secondary education that can attach to eligible academic majors leading to initial teacher certification. With this option, academic majors have a pathway into the teaching profession at their junior and senior level unlike the traditional undergraduate degree pathway of declaring embedded teaching certification coursework at freshman-level.

The new flexible pathway allows upper-level classmen an option to enter the teaching profession. The advantage of offering this option is that these students will be able to complete a rigorous, clinically rich preparation route while receiving tuition and financial supports such as grants, financial aid, and scholarships. The only option before this new pathway was created was having students with academic majors graduate and pursue teaching through for-profit alternative certification programs that may cost an average of \$5,000. A benefit of the new pathway allows students to decide to enter the teaching profession later in their academic trajectory and in turn this will grow the number of middle, secondary and all-level teacher certification program students in our EPP especially in critical areas.





The program plans to continue to advertise and market the all-level/secondary education minor option for entering the teaching profession. The program has worked with the University Academic Advisement Center to provide prospective students the information. Additionally, a website has been developed to communicate the new option to prospective students and to share with other colleges.

Discussions and planning of communication campaigns in coordination with academic advisors have begun with plans to begin these sessions in the summer of 2021. Outreach efforts planned 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 five high needs subject areas as identified in the CREATE data along as district data: English, science, math, social studies, and special education.