

*Handout @ 11/9/95 Board Meeting*

**THE NORTH TEXAS INITIATIVE**

A "Preliminary" Prospectus for Recommendations  
on  
Mexican Americans & Higher Education  
in the North Texas Region

by

*The Honorable Roberto R. Alonzo  
Texas House of Representatives  
District 104 - Dallas*

(Revised November 8, 1995)

## *A Quick Review of the Status Quo*

The number of Hispanics in higher education in Texas is still appalling today, even after decades of reports, volumes of research studies, census statistics, and the gathering of data by numerous groups and organizations. In short, and simply put, the data is replete supporting this fact: the accessibility and availability of higher educational opportunities for Hispanics in Texas is still a problem today - in the 90's. This is especially true for the North Texas Region. Reports from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), statistics from various higher education organizations, data from the Texas Legislature, and information from the news media all point in the same dismal direction: the number of Hispanics in higher education in Texas has not really improved as it should. We are not doing enough. And what we are doing is obviously not working effectively because the status quo is still dismal. And let's face it whether we want to or not - the Hispanic population is very close to becoming the majority population in this state.

If are to be well-prepared and effectively-equipped to better address the higher educational needs of this "new" majority population, the trends of the past will definitely have to shift. Curricular programs of the past will have to change. Admissions and testing standards will have to be more closely examined. Institutions of higher education in North Texas will have to beef up efforts for the recruitment and retention of Hispanics, students and faculty alike. More adequate sources and alternative types of financial aid resources will have to be made available and accessible to Hispanic students. Equally important, because of our quickly shifting population, the demographics in the North Texas region will have to be more closely reexamined and tied in with the higher educational goals of our colleges and universities in the area. Finally, if we are to adequately address the higher educational needs of the shifting Hispanic population in the North Texas region, it is imperative that we reexamine the institutional development and funding formulas for colleges and universities in this part of our state. In short, we must develop a *comprehensive and viable PLAN* that will effectively address the higher educational needs of all Hispanics in the North Texas region.

## *The North Texas Initiative*

That plan is the North Texas Initiative. Plans are currently underway to organize and coordinate a North Texas Higher Education Initiative comparable to the South Texas Border Initiative that was formed over three years ago and which made some excellent legislative recommendations to the Texas Legislature this past spring; thus, making a difference in the higher educational needs of that region of the state. In an effort to pull together the resources, talents, and expertise of key groups, civic leaders, and private individuals dedicated to the goal of improving educational opportunities for Hispanics in North Texas, the North Texas Initiative will be organized to serve as a clearinghouse of research, information, and data gathering. The

dissemination of this information will be made public through hearings, community meetings and open forums throughout the North Texas region. The North Texas Initiative will be charged with the major responsibility of undertaking a major comprehensive study of the North Texas Region's system of public higher education. Most importantly, the North Texas Initiative will make recommendations to the 75th Texas Legislature on higher education policy when it convenes in January 1997.

### ***Justifications for "Change"***

It is obvious that change in our current system of higher education in Texas is necessary if we are make a college education easily accessible and affordable to the growing population in North Texas of Mexican ancestry.

An article appeared recently in the latest issue of *Hispanic Magazine* (July 1995) telling us why change is necessary. In his article, "*Hispanics in Higher Education*," Dr. Manuel J. Justiz says "*With Hispanics fast becoming the nation's largest "minority" group' - one that will compromise an estimated 20 percent of the U.S. population by the year 2030 - the persistence of low college participation rates among Hispanics is a serious concern. Our colleges and universities are failing to keep pace with demographic change, resulting in tragic waste of human potential and a dwindling pool of skill, talent, and leadership that could threaten the nation's future security and prosperity.*" (p. 96). This statement alludes to Hispanic higher education in general. However, if we examine the statistics in Texas and North Texas specifically, the same could be said of this region. Moreover, the problems facing our Hispanic population is mirrored in the African American community as well.

Justiz goes on to say that "*Despite three decades of affirmative action, Hispanics are still drastically underrepresented on the nation's campuses. Hispanics account for only 4.9 percent of all college enrollments. Only 2.9 percent of bachelor's degrees and 1.8 percent of doctoral degrees go to Hispanics.*" "*Hispanics are also underrepresented among college faculty and administrators. Only 2.2 percent of full-time faculty members are Hispanic. Likewise, among college and university presidents, only about two percent are Hispanic.*" In assessing the whole issue of availability and accessibility of higher education, Dr. Justiz "hit the nail right on the head", so to speak, when he says, "*The key to improving Hispanic participation in higher education is a blueprint of policies and programs that will effectively address the problems that Hispanics typically encounter on campus: financial aid, assessment, articulation, and campus climate.*"

This blueprint that Justiz talks about in his article is what the North Texas Initiative proposes to do for Hispanic higher education in North Texas. Let's face it: the traditional system of Texas higher education needs fixing if it is to meet the needs of our changing demographics and globally competitive, technological society.

## *Makeup of The North Texas Initiative*

In an effort to pull together the resources, talents, and expertise of key groups, civic leaders, and private individuals dedicated to the goal of improving educational opportunities for Hispanics in North Texas, the North Texas Initiative shall be made up of civic leaders, local groups and organizations, elected public officials, parents, and both student and faculty representatives from our various local institutions of higher education as well as public high schools. A series of public hearings, community meetings and public forums throughout the North Texas region will be held during the next year or so.

### *"Proposed" Issues to Examine*

It is apparent from the statistics - wherever they are derived from - that the issue of accessibility and availability of higher education for Hispanics in North Texas remains a problem for students and faculty alike. While the entire system of higher education may need revamping, it is impossible to do the job overnight. It will take time. Time is not on our side. With that in mind, we must examine the system by prioritizing those areas and concerns that are of utmost importance at this time.

It is obvious we have not done enough to address our dismal state of affairs. It is further obvious that unless we shift gears and change the present trend we will continue to fail in meeting the higher educational needs of the future majority of our population in Texas, North Texas included. We must move forward at full speed, and seek out more effective ways to address this vital issue for us all, particularly Mexican Americans.

By working together, and in cooperation with each other - whether you're Mexican American, African American, or Anglo American - we can make a difference. The responsibility for improving accessibility and availability of higher education for ALL students should be a SHARED one, requiring a coordinated, sustained effort not only by policymakers, Boards of Regents, educators and college educators, but by everyone in the community at large.

Once again, most will agree that the entire system of higher education for ethnic minorities in North Texas needs revamping. Most will also agree that is impossible to revamp the system overnight. We cannot bite the entire pie all at once and expect immediate results. We must prioritize our issues. While not totally inclusive, the following are just some of the proposed issues that will be researched and examined by the North Texas Initiative. Plans will be made to break down the North Texas Initiative into more specialized subcommittees that will later report to the full committee before finalizing the recommendations. Among the subcommittees to be considered will be the following:

1. Recruitment, Retention & Campus Climate Subcommittee;
  - (A) Faculty & Staff
  - (B) Undergraduate & Graduate Students
2. Curricular/Extracurricular Program Offerings Subcommittee;
3. Admissions and Testing Subcommittee;
4. Financial Aid Subcommittee;
5. Demographics Subcommittee;
6. Institutional Development & Funding Subcommittee; and
7. Business, Industry & Labor Subcommittee.

The North Texas Initiative proposes to meet at least quarterly throughout the next year seeking ways to improve the recruitment, retention and academic success of Hispanic students in our colleges and universities in this region of the state. Throughout the year, members of the committee will research, analyze and discuss information relating to key issues affecting Hispanics in higher education, particularly those outlined above. If we are to seek viable solutions that aim to improve the higher educational needs of our quickly growing Hispanic population, it is imperative that the North Texas Initiative take seriously all the input that it obtains through its public hearings, public forums, written correspondence, and other related information. Generally and proportionally speaking, Mexican Americans and other minorities in North Texas have not penetrated our higher educational system in any significant numbers. The cause of this underrepresentation can be attributed, in large part, to the institutions' failure to provide the necessary input and representation by ethnic minorities in the final decision-making process and in the designing of programs for our colleges and universities in the North Texas region when addressing the issues of recruitment, retention and graduation.

It is hoped that the North Texas Initiative will take the necessary steps and make the long overdue recommendations that will make a college education more easily accessible and adequately affordable to ethnic minorities in this region of the state. This is the only logical choice we have if we are to prepare our state's new MAJORITY of people to meet the changing demographics and be better equipped to survive in our globally competitive, technological society that is already upon us.

### ***"Proposed" Timeline***

July-August, 1995

Rep. Alonzo staff meetings/communications with key groups: staff of Mexican American Legislative Caucus (MALC) - Texas House of Representatives; House Higher Education Committee; Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF); Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); the Center for Mexican American Students (CMAS), and others as identified.

August 1-11, 1995	Work on "Preliminary" Prospectus/Plan for Organizing the North Texas Initiative; Draft letter to send out to key contacts; Send out Letters of Solicitation to seek possible members to serve on the Initiative; Recommend others.
August 14-25, 1995	Organize/Coordinate first informal meeting to OFFICIALLY organize the North Texas Initiative; decide on the size of the Initiative; Select Chairman; Outline plans for the Initiative; Discuss fundraising options, meeting times, places, and so forth.
September, 1995	Hold first FORMAL meeting of the North Texas Initiative; invite members of the South Texas Border Initiative to address the group; also invite representatives from MALDEF, CMAS, the MALC Caucus Chairman (State Rep. Berlanga), the Chair of the House Higher Education Committee (State Rep. Irma Rangel); Speaker of the House (Hon. Pete Laney's office); area chambers; and other interested parties as necessary. Finalize meeting dates/calendar for the following year.
October, 1995	Identify Key Issues/Concerns that the Initiative will be addressing, examining, and researching throughout the year. Identify potential speakers for the various issues. Breakdown the Initiative into Subcommittees, naming chairmen for each.
November, 1995	Official meeting of the North Texas Initiative sometime this month in the Dallas area (Place, time and exact date to be announced later).
December 1-3, 1995	The Mexican American Legislative Caucus (MALC) meets for a formal official meeting in Dallas this weekend (as per Chairman Berlanga's request); preliminary plans call to have the North Texas Initiative placed on the MALC's meeting agenda to give a "Preliminary" status report on its work thus far; the MALC will possibly host the Initiative during a reception this weekend in Dallas.
December 10-20, 1995	During this time, a possible FUNDRAISER for the North Texas Initiative should be planned.
December (mid-month)	Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (before the Christmas Holidays).
January, 1996	Staff meetings, organization of information collected thus far will be analyzed and reviewed; there will probably be no meeting this

month.

February, 1996                    Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

March, 1996                        Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

April, 1996                         Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

May, 1996                          Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

June, 1996                         Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

July, 1996                         Another formal meeting of the North Texas Initiative will possibly be held this month (Exact date, time, place & agenda TBA).

August, 1996                       PRELIMINARY "DRAFT" REPORT of Recommendations prepared for this month's meeting. Members review & offer input.

September, 1996                    Staff reviews/examines "CHANGES" made by members.

October-November, 1996           "FINALIZED" Report in preparation.

November, 1996 (late)            FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NORTH TEXAS INITIATIVE released/made public to the public/news media. Press Conference will be held.

December, 1996                    FINAL REPORT is released to the 75th Texas Legislature.

## Forum

# Hispanics in Higher Education

BY MANUEL J. JUSTIZ

With Hispanics fast becoming the nation's largest "minority" group—one that will comprise an estimated 20 percent of the U.S. population by the year 2030—the persistence of low college participation rates among Hispanics is a serious concern. Our colleges and universities are failing to keep pace with demographic change, resulting in a tragic waste of human potential and a dwindling pool of skill, talent, and leadership that could threaten the nation's future security and prosperity.

Despite three decades of affirmative action, Hispanics are still drastically underrepresented on the nation's campuses. Hispanics account for only 4.9 percent of all college enrollments. Only 2.9 percent of bachelor's degrees and 1.8 percent of doctoral degrees go to Hispanics. What's more, these degrees are concentrated in education; Hispanics are virtually absent in math, science, engineering, and other career fields that are vital in a globally competitive, technological society.

Hispanics are also underrepresented among college faculty and administrators. Only 2.2 percent of full-time faculty members are Hispanic. Likewise, among college and university presidents, only about two percent are Hispanic. The key to improving Hispanic participation in higher education is a blueprint of policies and programs that will effectively address the problems that Hispanics typically encounter on campus: financial aid, assessment, articulation, and campus climate.

Spiraling college costs, along with reductions in financial aid programs, have hit Hispanic students especially hard because they tend to come from low-income families. Colleges and uni-



versities must work to channel aid to students who need it most and must demystify the financial aid application process.

While assessment is important, it too

**"The key to improving Hispanic participation in higher education is a blueprint of policies and programs that will effectively address . . . financial aid, assessment, articulation, and campus climate."**

often functions as a gatekeeping device. Assessment methods must be broadened so that standardized (norm-based) testing becomes only one of multiple measures of a student's potential.

Articulation is the concept of spelling out college requirements to students of all ages, emphasizing the rewards of a college education, and cultivating an awareness that college is an option for everyone. Articulation is vital for Hispanic

students, who are often tracked into vocational programs because of stereotyping and whose parents tend to have little or no college experience.

Hispanic students often face an inhospitable, isolating campus environment that interferes with academic achievement and personal development. Creating a genuinely supportive climate requires the institution's commitment to academic support services that fill in gaps in skills, mentoring programs that provide positive role models, a curriculum that reflects the contributions of Hispanic culture to American life, and policies that foster a critical mass of Hispanic students—an essential ingredient for sustaining progress in improving educational opportunities for Hispanics. Another necessary ingredient is a faculty recruitment and hiring policy that will increase the numbers of Hispanic teachers and administrators on campus, providing positive role models, mentors, and advocates for Hispanic students.

The responsibility for improving access to higher education for Hispanic students is a shared one, requiring a coordinated, sustained effort not only by policymakers and educators but by the Hispanic community as well. Dedicating ourselves to achieving proportional representation and comparable achievement levels for

Hispanics in higher education is not simply an affirmation of the American Dream but the mark of common sense and good judgment. We must invest in the human resources that will help guarantee a secure future for many generations to come. ■

*Manuel J. Justiz is Dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin, where he holds the A.M. Aikin Regents Chair in Education Leadership.*



**KUVN 23**  
DALLAS/FT.WORTH

## *Dallas/Fort Worth Ranks as a Top Ten Hispanic DMA*

<u>Market</u>	<u>Population</u> (millions)
Los Angeles	5.56
New York City	3.18
Miami	1.26
Chicago	1.06
San Francisco	1.04
Houston	1.06
San Antonio	0.93
<b>Dallas/Fort Worth</b>	<b>0.73</b>
McAllen/Brownsville	0.70
San Diego	0.62

Source: DRI/McGraw-Hill, *Hispanic Consumer Market Growth to 2010*, February 1995

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*Hispanics Comprise Almost  
15 Percent of the  
Dallas/Fort Worth DMA*

$$\frac{725,000}{4,907,000} = 14.8\%$$

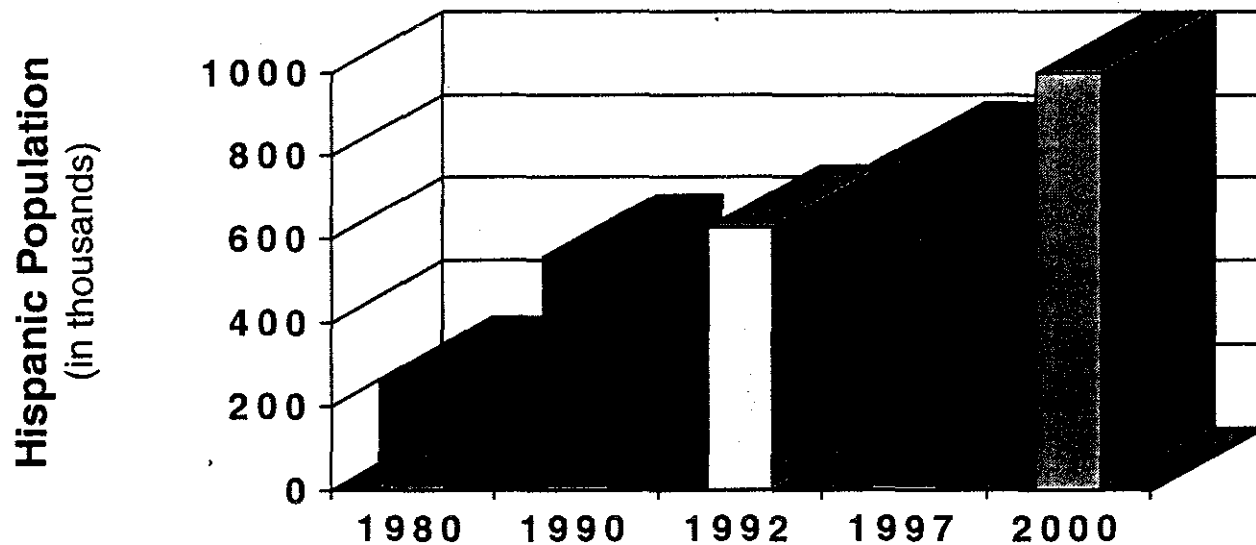
Source: DRI/McGraw-Hill, *Hispanic Consumer Market Growth to 2010*, February 1995

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*The Dallas/Fort Worth Hispanic Population  
is Growing Three Times Faster than the  
Non-Hispanic. . . and Will Reach ONE  
MILLION by the Year 2000*



Source: 1980, 1990 U.S. Census, 1992 U.S. Census Estimates, 1997 U.S. Census Projections



## *Estimated Education Levels Dallas/Fort Worth Hispanics*

<b>Some College/College Graduate:</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>High School Graduate:</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Some High School:</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Grade School or Less:</b>	<b><u>35%</u></b>
	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Rincon & Associates, 1995; U.S. Census 1990*

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