Who is Excelencia in Education?
Excelencia in Education, founded in 2004, accelerates Latino student success in higher education to address the U.S. economy’s need for a highly educated workforce and civic leadership by:

• Providing data-driven analysis on issues in higher education with a Latino lens;
• Promoting education policies and institutional practices that support Latinos’ academic achievement and that of other post-traditional students; and,
• Organizing a network of institutions and professionals with the common cause of Latino student success.

Policy must keep up with our country’s changing demographics to serve students. At Excelencia, our current policy priorities are the following: affordability, institutional capacity, retention and transfer, and workforce preparation. The current state of Latinos’ educational attainment and their success are predicated on these issues.

Following is a profile of Latino students today, our guiding principles for policymaking, and recommendations to meet Latino student needs, increase degree attainment, and close equity gaps.

What is the current profile of Latino students?
Excelencia’s analysis of federal data shows that Latinos are more likely to

• enroll at public institutions (69%),
• attend at mixed enrollment intensity—switching between part- and full-time (24%),
• begin their bachelor’s degree at a two-year institution (51%),
• be first-generation students (44%),
• come from low-income families (71% have an income less than $63,000),
• receive federal aid (56%) compared to state (29%) and institutional (19%) aid,
• work (62%) and work 30 or more hours while pursuing their studies (51%),
• receive larger Federal Work-Study grants ($2,444 compared to $2,340 students overall),
• take remedial courses (47% compared to 40% students overall),
• attend a Hispanic-Serving Institution (65% of all Latino students), and
• be overrepresented in the workforce (66% of Latinos participate in the labor force) but in lower skilled jobs (22% of Latinos are in the highest paying occupations).

Guiding Principles
The following guiding principles frame an approach to reassess current federal policies using a Latino lens.

• Efficiency in serving traditional students today can limit effectiveness in serving a majority of students tomorrow.
• Increase educational and economic opportunity for all students, prioritizing access and success for low-income and underrepresented students.
• Transparency of information requires strategic outreach and engagement for maximum effectiveness.
• Institutions that have a concentration of Latinos can transform to better serve the needs of the students they enroll.
• However a student starts, they need support along their pathway to and through college completion.
Recommendations

Affordability
- Simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Simplify student loan repayment.
- Increase and protect the Pell Grant.
- Revisit the campus-based aid allocation formula to reflect the demographic distribution of needy students across the country.
- Increase Federal Work-Study funding to allow for greater student participation.
- Ensure financial aid programs allow part-time student participation.
- Distribute financial aid based on need, not merit.

Retention and transfer
- Update federal data policy to better reflect Latino students' pathways.
- Simplify the transfer process by requiring institutions to accept credits and implement common course numbering across institutions.
- Incentivize effective data sharing to identify potential Latino transfer students, track their persistence across institutions, and document the impact of initiatives on students' transfer to completion.
- Encourage and promote reverse transfer policies.
- Provide alternative models of remediation.

Institutional capacity
- Consolidate the number of allowable activities in Title V grants to strengthen services.
- Focus on the post-traditional student profile.
- Link financial support to degree attainment.
- Support and expand funding for Title III and Title V programs.

Workforce preparation
- Use federal policy to promote participation in experiential learning opportunities including internship.
- Capitalize on Latinos’ already high workforce participation to help them find paying jobs that provide an applied experience.
- Recognize the institutions that are graduating Latino students.
- Encourage engagement between employers and institutions to provide opportunities while and after students are in school.

For more information, please contact Janette Martinez at jmartinez@edexcelencia.org.