

Mail 12/8/08



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN

1201 West University Drive • Edinburg, Texas 78541-2999 • (956) 381-2100 Office • FAX (956) 381-2150
(07-08: 136)

February 8, 2008

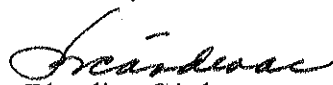
Dr. Gerald D. Lord
Associate Executive Director
Commissioner of Schools
Southern Association of
Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033

Dear Dr. Lord,

In accordance with the January 9, 2008 letter reaffirming accreditation for The University of Texas-Pan American, I am attaching a copy of the Executive Summary for our Quality Enhancement Plan which includes our name, address, and the contact information for our plan.

Should you have any questions or if we need to provide additional information, please let us know.

Sincerely,


Blandina Cárdenas
President

c: Paul Sale
William Turk
Olga Ramirez
Ana Maria Rodriguez

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN ~ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enhancing Learning for Mexican American Students in Gatekeeper Mathematics Courses The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, TX 78539 Olga M. Ramirez, Ph.D., QEP Interim Project Administrator, oram@utpa.edu

The University of Texas Pan American's (UTPA) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) addresses the major problem of student underachievement in "gatekeeper" mathematics courses. After reviewing the list of courses with the highest failure rates across the University, and discovering that MATH 1300 - Elementary Algebra, MATH 1334 - Intermediate Algebra, and MATH 1340 - College Algebra were at the top of the list, the Quality Enhancement Plan committee chose to focus on improving student achievement and student learning outcomes in these courses. The desired results are increased student success in mathematics, ultimately leading to increased graduation and retention rates.

Research conducted over many years has yielded a multitude of factors associated with student failure in college math courses. This QEP seeks to determine the impact of certain interventions on student learning outcomes among Mexican American students, since Mexican Americans make up 88% of UTPA's undergraduate student body as a whole. Also, while failure rates for Mexican Americans and Whites are similar in the identified gatekeeper mathematics courses, most of the students enrolled in the courses (91%) are Mexican Americans. The relationship of the interventions to learning outcomes will be tested using research design methods stated later in this proposal.

To determine the possible causes of high failure rates in mathematics, as well as to apply interventions to address those causes, a call for proposals went out to the UTPA faculty in early spring 2006. This call from the Office of the Provost resulted in 13 submitted proposals from four academic colleges that addressed the lack of academic success for Mexican-American students, many of whom are first-generation college-goers, in gatekeeper mathematics classes. The ultimate purpose of the call for proposals was to provide the QEP committee with ideas about how to address the high failure rate problem.

After an ad hoc committee reviewed the 13 proposals, it was decided that the intervention plan for the QEP Project would be designed to answer one question: *Is there an intervention or a series of interventions that can significantly improve the success of UTPA students in "gatekeeper" mathematics courses?* The ad hoc committee recommended three proposals that would cover three main areas: enhancing curriculum, enhancing student support, and enhancing professional development. Enhancements to the curriculum include a modular course structure, a fourth hour for discussion and tutoring, and uniform standards. Student support enhancements include an early warning mechanism, trained teaching assistants, trained tutors, and mandated tutoring. Enhancing professional development includes training instructors in relational, cooperative, and collaborative learning. Student assistants and tutors will also be trained in collaborative tutoring methods. After months of campus-wide faculty meetings, discussions, and writing of the QEP document, the QEP committee developed a plan that will be piloted in 2007-2008 and expanded in subsequent years. An annual review of the QEP will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness and to allow for modifications based on results.

\$ 465,828.00 [1st Year Budget]	\$ 3,322,218.00 [5-Year Budget]
For more information on UTPA's QEP	For more information on modularization
http://sacs.utpa.edu/QEP/	www.math.utpa.edu/modEA