



college forward

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Low-income parents gain college knowledge at unique workshop

AUSTIN, Texas — A year ago, Sierra Perez's father would never have considered sending his daughter to college in New Jersey. But this fall, Mr. Perez fully supports Sierra as she applies to Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, along with several other outstanding schools.

Mr. Perez, who did not attend college himself, gained comfort with the idea of an out-of-state university at College/*Universidad* 101, a day-long workshop hosted by Sierra's after-school program, College Forward, which serves eight high schools in the Austin area. At the workshop, he realized the importance of finding the college that best "fit" his passionate, involved daughter—and Rutgers might be that college.

On Saturday, October 20, 2007 College Forward will host its third College/*Universidad* 101 workshop to benefit parents like Mr. Perez. The workshop, held this fall at Southwestern University, is the only comprehensive program of its kind for educating the parents of Texas' college-bound youth.

Over 100 parents and guardians of students from College Forward's program are expected to attend the workshop, which is offered in both English and Spanish.

Students in the College Forward program attend two years of free after-school classes to help them achieve their college goals. Students are more likely to succeed if families are invested in the process, but the families College Forward serves often have limited awareness of the options available to their children. College/*Universidad* 101 helps close that knowledge gap.

"This workshop eased a lot of my fear and worry as to how to make college education accessible to my child," noted one parent.

College/*Universidad* 101 follows a parent-centric model that involves, rather than instructs, its participants. Instead of presenting parents with lectures about what they must do, facilitators lead them through a series of interactive discussions and reflections about their own lives, their dreams for their children and concrete steps for achieving those dreams.

Parents learn skills for identifying differences between colleges, communicating with university personnel, navigating financial aid, and dealing with the mental and emotional aspects of their child's transition.

◆ 100% of College Forward's students have been **accepted into colleges nationwide**

◆ College Forward students' **ACT scores increased** by an average of **22%**

◆ College Forward's high school graduates are awarded an average of over **\$16,000 each in scholarships and grants**

“We work to help parents be truly connected to the college-going experience and support their son or daughter as a family,” said College Forward executive director Lisa Fielder. “We establish personal relationships with parents and encourage them to be an integral part of ensuring their college-bound child’s success.”

The workshop will be led by prominent college admission and university officials from across Texas, including Josie Barrett, Special Assistant for Strategic Planning to the President of St. Edward’s; Rick Moreno, Director of Financial Aid at Laredo Community College; Raquel Garza, Senior Counselor at St. Augustine High School in Laredo; and Eva Garza, a Project ADVANCE counselor at Austin High School.

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