

A HYBRID DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN SOUTH TEXAS



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Presented by:

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Introduction

- **The University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) is located in Edinburg, Texas approximately 20 miles from the United States/Mexico border.**
- **Since August 2009, UTPA has relied on a hybrid distance education to effectively deliver a Bachelor's and a Master's in Social Work in the two remote locations of Laredo and Brownsville.**
- **UTPA is the only university south of San Antonio and south of Houston offering accredited graduate and undergraduate social work programs.**

Challenges Faced by Social Work Educators in South Texas

- Insufficient accredited social work programs
- High poverty rates
- Large Hispanic population
- Lower educational levels
- Anti-Immigrant and anti-Mexican political climate

Challenges - Insufficient Accessible Programs

CSWE accredited programs in the southern part of the state:

Universities	Degrees	Distance
The University of Texas at San Antonio	MSW	157 miles from Laredo 290 miles from Brownsville
Texas A&M Kingsville	BSW	125 miles from Laredo 122 miles from Brownsville
The University of Texas at Austin	BSW, MSW, PhD	240 miles from Laredo 345 miles from Brownsville
University of Houston	MSW, PhD	335 miles from Laredo 375 miles from Brownsville
Texas State University in San Marcos	BSW, MSW	206 miles from Laredo 310 miles from Brownsville

The University of Texas – Pan American delivers the BSW and MSSW programs to students in Laredo and Brownsville in their respective cities without students needing to travel anywhere.

Challenges – Insufficient Accessible Programs



South Texas Challenges - Poverty and Low Educational Levels

County	Major Corresponding Cities	Percentage of Hispanic population	Percentage living in poverty	Percentage of high school graduates
Cameron	Brownsville	88.1	34.0	62.4
Hidalgo	McAllen/Edinburg	90.6	35.2	59.5
Starr	Rio Grande	95.7	38.5	46.5
Zapata	Zapata	93.3	29.3	55.4
Webb	Laredo	95.7	30.9	61.7

Anti-immigrant Movement

Multiple anti-immigrant bills such as:

- **HB 12, HB 18, HB 875, and HB 623**
 - Require local police to act as immigration agents
 - Attempt to establish English as official language
 - Ask to raise tuition costs to undocumented state residents

- **Efforts by the Texas Department of Education to rewrite Texas history textbooks to exclude Mexicans and Mexican contributions**

(McKinley, 2010)

Need for the UTPA Social Work Distance Education Program

- Texas A&M International University closed its BSW program in May 2010.

- Requests from members of Congress, president of the Laredo Community College, and social workers in the cities of Laredo and Brownsville.

- Shortage of bachelor's and master's level social workers in South Texas.

- State budget cuts – UT System Board of Regents calls for an increase in cost-efficient educational programs

Nature of Graduate Distance Education Program

- Part time, evening program
- Offered through a combination of face to face, Blackboard and teleconference courses.
- 27 out of 63 credits or **43%** of the master's program is delivered through distance education methods.

MSSW Course Delivery Options	Credits	%
Internships in local human service organizations	12	19
UTPA faculty members or adjuncts teaching in Laredo and Brownsville	24	38
Blackboard or teleconference	27	43
TOTALS	63	100

Nature of Undergraduate Distance Education Program

- Part-time, evening, total of **120** credits
- Students complete the first two years of the bachelor's degree (**66** credits) at UT-Brownsville or Laredo Community College.
- We provide them with the last two years (**54** credits)

Bachelor of Social Work - Course Delivery Options	Credits	%
Internships in local human service organizations	6	5
UTPA faculty members or adjuncts teaching in Laredo and Brownsville	12	10
Blackboard or teleconference	36	30
TOTALS	54	45

Use of Technology

Courses are offered via:

- Blackboard
- Teleconference
- Skype
- Cellular phones
- Reduced seating/web enhanced

Inter-institutional Collaboration Agreements

**The University of Texas - Pan American
Laredo Community College and
The University of Texas – Brownsville**

Formalized in September 2009. These give us free access to their facilities and infrastructure.

Signing Ceremony with Laredo Community College
Presidents Sorber and Maldonado



Signing Ceremony with UT Brownsville
Presidents Sorber and García



Access, Retention and Graduation

Since the program's inception in August 2009

- Applied 73
 - Admitted 57
 - Registered 47
 - Graduated 5
 - Active 38
 - Left the program 2 (one due to problems with academic performance and one moved to New York)
 - Temporarily out of program due to illness - 2
 - **Retention rate - 95% or 45 out of 47.**
- Why? Accessibility and importance of this opportunity for them

Distance Education Program Finances

Financial report for the program's first three semesters of operation:

Total Revenues	\$182,189.80
Tuition and Fees	\$103,467.80
Formula Funding	\$ 78,721.56
Total Expenses	\$ 36,800.00
Net Income	\$145,389.80

First Group of MSSW Graduates from Laredo



References

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