

# COM Research Brief

Institutional Research

July 2007

## 2006 Hispanic Leadership Summit

In 2006, COM hosted the first annual Hispanic Leadership Summit with leaders from the local community. Participants included representatives from educational institutions, health care organizations, faith-based organizations, small businesses, parents and students. Concerns and suggestions generated by the summit participants are summarized here.<sup>1</sup>

The goals for the summit included:

1. to strengthen and maintain a collaborative relationship between the Hispanic community and COM;
2. to identify new ways to attract Hispanic students;
3. to create strategies for maximizing their success; and
4. to inform the community regarding COM's goal of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Participants identified six topics for discussion. Using an adaptation of the Brainstorming Technique, breakout groups arrived at the following possible approaches or solutions.

### Financial Aid

- A common concern voiced by a majority of the community members was the lack of communication between COM's Financial Aid Department and the community.
- An important and shared suggestion was the need for additional workshops in the community to make the financial aid application process more understanding and hence easier to complete.
- Community leaders also brought up the college's deficiency in providing

information pertaining to Hispanic students such as financial aid benefits for those students who qualify under HB 1403, bilingual financial aid presentations, documentation in Spanish, etc.

### Mentoring Programs

- It was suggested that COM's mentoring programs start in the lower grades.
- Mentoring programs should extend beyond just college involvement. These programs should expand to churches and other public agencies.
- Mentoring programs need to be careful to ensure confidentiality of students who participate and keep in mind that "Hispanic" means diversity as much as unity. There is no approach in which one size fits all.
- In addition to working with the students, programs should also work with parents in providing them with vital information necessary for their student's success.

### College Preparation

- The community seems to have the impression that students graduating from area high schools are not being properly prepared to succeed in post-secondary education.
- It was suggested that COM develop or secure pre-college programs at area high schools to introduce students to college earlier in their schooling.
- Also suggested was to increase visibility and promotion of collegiate programs such as dual credit in all area high schools to motivate students to participate in these programs.

### High School Counseling

- Participants expressed the need for school counselors to keep parents and students up to date regarding all college information. Students and parents should be provided information regarding college financial aid, other financial resources, and information on degree and certificate plans.
  - Participants suggested that COM be included in parent workshops in the high schools so that relevant information can be given out to parents and students.
  - Presentations and workshops conducted by COM's financial aid representatives can facilitate completion of the financial aid application for both parents and students.
  - The need to include more Spanish speaking people in parent meetings to discuss their child's educational plans was also mentioned.
- Conduct workshops in Spanish so that parents will understand what is transpiring and feel included.
  - Provide outreach services to both students and parents to educate them on opportunities available for college students.
  - It was also suggested that currently enrolled Hispanic students and alumni assist COM in outreach efforts.

### Marketing to Hispanic Students

- COM should have more events and invite the community.
- Inform community regarding services for Hispanic and Latino students here at COM.
- The college needs to provide more advertisement targeting Hispanic students. Advertisement in Spanish will appeal to Hispanic parents.

### Parental Involvement

- It was suggested that COM provide college information to Spanish speaking students such as those in ESL classes.

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<sup>1</sup>Material for this brief was taken directly from the report: 2006 Hispanic Leadership Summit, "Cultivating Success Today: ¡CON EDUCACIÓN!", College of the Mainland, Texas City, TX, September, 2006