

# **“ENHANCING QUALITY INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES” PROJECT**

*The University of Texas Pan American*



## **INTRODUCTION**

The “Enhancing Quality Instruction for Students with Disabilities” Project is a special demonstration project funded by the Office of Post Secondary Education of the US Department of Education. The primary purpose is to ensure students with disabilities receive a quality higher education.

## **GOAL**

Provide Institutions of Higher Education technical assistance and professional development activities for faculty, staff and administrators to offer them the skills and support that they need to effectively teach and serve students with disabilities.

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

UTPA Pilot Project - To provide professional development activities and training in disability awareness, legislation, innovative inclusive teaching and service provision to faculty, administrators, and first-point-of-contact staff.

Replication of Services - Based on UTPA pilot project and a case management model, provide customized professional development and on-site training to 36 institutions of higher education, with an emphasis on Minority-Serving Institutions.

## **KEY POINTS OF TRAINING**

### **LEGISLATION, AMENDMENTS, TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES**

Lack of knowledge and understanding of the current laws and regulations has been reported by Project customers as a major concern. In an effort to promote awareness and easy understanding of the laws and regulations concerning students with disabilities in higher education, Project Enhance has created a comprehensive training that covers all areas, from “What is a disability?” to the students rights and institutions responsibilities. Training includes current situations and settlements from the Office of Civil Rights. Participants are also provided with real life situations and how other institutions have successfully dealt with it, including best practices.

### **INCLUSIVENESS AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

Universal Design has passed from the field of architecture to the higher education environment, as its principles can be applied to services and teaching to make them inclusive. OPTIONS has become a key word in Universal Design for Learning and FLEXIBILITY a key in Universally Designed Services. Participants are exposed to these concepts as well as simple and no-cost techniques and ideas to make their services inclusive.

### **CUSTOMIZED SERVICES**

Project Enhance services are customized to the needs of the faculty, administrators and staff at a particular institution. Campus culture and environment is assessed to determine level of knowledge and perception. Based on a case management model, pre and post interventions survey are administered to adjust the training design. If your campus is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution of Higher Education, Project Enhance can also provide its professional development activities in Spanish.



## **BECOME A PROJECT CUSTOMER**

Institutions of higher education are eligible to participate as a customer. Project services, professional development activities and consulting services are provided to institutions of higher education at no cost. In exchange Project Enhance will request from your institution three things: (1) a Letter of Commitment from President/Chancellor stating their interest to participate in project activities, (2) Collaboration from the campus regarding the logistics of professional development activities, and (3) Report that measures the impact/results of project activities on campus.

## **SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES**

Project Enhance current customers have reported:

Increased knowledge of the faculty, administrators and staff; being the administrators and staff groups with biggest knowledge gain.

At least 80% of trainees have incorporated elements of the training into their teaching, administration, or service areas.

The gap in completion rates of students with documented disabilities vs. students without disabilities has been reduced to 5% or less.