



Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas, Inc.
Stretching Minds. Stretching Money.



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For Immediate Release

TG hosts colloquium for ICUT **Texas independent colleges explore retention issues**

Round Rock, Texas — Faculty, staff, and administrators from the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas (ICUT) met at TG's offices this week to focus on student retention, an issue that has profound impact on the state's ability to achieve the goals outlined in the "Closing the Gaps" plan for higher education.

The plan calls for an increase of 630,000 students to earn a postsecondary education by the year 2015. If the goal is not met, the economic projections for the state are dim.

And simply enrolling additional students isn't enough. Students must stay in school and complete their programs of study in order to gain the most benefit from their education. ICUT institutions have long realized the importance of retention. Information on student retention at ICUT institutions is being collected by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Their data show that in the fall of 2003 and 2004, over 85% of first-time undergraduates had returned to college for a second year at either a public or independent institution in Texas.

"While ICUT institutions have been fairly effective in retaining students, we realize that the growing need and demand for college graduates will require us to reevaluate our strategies," said Carol McDonald, president of ICUT. "This colloquium has given us the opportunity to refine and develop new strategies that can help us address the needs of a changing college population."

During the colloquium, attendees heard presentations from Dr. Scott Swail, president of the Educational Policy Institute and co-author of *Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education*; from Matt Short, director, institutional enrollment services for TG; and from

Dr. Bob Wilkinson, director of analysis, assessment, and planning for Pittsburg State University.

"TG is pleased to support ICUT's efforts in student retention by hosting this conference," said Sue McMillin, TG president and CEO. "Student retention has a high correlation to the student's success in managing repayment of student loans following graduation. We want to see all students succeed, whether they attend independent institutions or public colleges and universities – while they're on campus and after they achieve their educational goals."

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About TG

TG is a public, nonprofit corporation that helps to create access to higher education for millions of families and students through its role as an administrator of the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). Its vision is to be the premier source of information, financing, and assistance to help all families and students realize their educational and career dreams. Additional information about TG can be found online at <http://www.tgslc.org>.

About ICUT

Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas, Inc. (ICUT), is a nonprofit association and a member of the Texas Higher Education Coalition (THEC). The group's goal is to raise awareness around the important issues of accessibility, affordability, and retention in the Texas colleges and universities, and is the voice for Texas' fully accredited private colleges and universities. For more than 30 years, it has fulfilled its mission of helping policymakers recognize the importance and value of the independent sector of higher education. Additional information about ICUT can be found online at <http://www.icut.org>.