

PRESS RELEASE  
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## **State's Top Higher Education Board hosts FACE Leadership Team**

Two dads and a mom from the FACE GEAR UP STAR Father/Student Leadership Team addressed a statewide audience of 170 public and higher education leaders who gathered in Austin on October 6.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board invited the three parents, José L. and Alicia Rodríguez and Arnold Carrillo Jr., to provide the luncheon presentation during the agency's P-16 Councils Institute. The three parents made up a 5-member team which also included Alphonso Rincón, FACE President/Founder, and Amy B. Koenning, GEAR UP STAR Implementation Director from the Pre-College Outreach Office of Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi.

The audience represented 31 universities and organizations from 10 regions of the state.

In 2006, the 79th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1 whose vision made Texas the nation's leader in promoting college and career readiness. The vision calls for one comprehensive system for students to progress from prekindergarten through college (P-16). The P-16 Councils are the local collaborative bodies made up of school districts, higher education institutions, agencies, and organizations dedicated to college and career readiness.

The five-member FACE/GEAR UP STAR Team's presentation, "The Prospect of a P-16 Father/Student Model" consisted of videos, slide shows, and narratives featuring the FACE model in action at the elementary, middle school, high school, and university levels.

Video clips and photos of FACE activities at Alice ISD's Salazar, Noonan, Dubose, and Saenz Elementary Schools, Adams Middle School, and Alice High School gave the audience a clear vision of the districtwide father/student model that FACE/Alice ISD have developed utilizing GEAR UP and Title I funding.

Video clips of professors and instructors from Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi collaborating with FACE, whether at the campus level or by hosting college tours, illustrated the development of the model in higher education environments. And finally, the video of an annual FACE / GEAR UP STAR event at the Borchard Regional Fairgrounds showcased the Leadership Team's service at the interdistrict level (6 school districts).

The FACE Team parents took turns addressing the audience about the FACE's most recent component: the FACE GEAR UP STAR Father Student Leadership Team. Rincón initiated the first Father Student Leadership Team in March 2009. Since its inception, the FACE Team has organized interdistrict events serving dads and students from 6 school districts, presented in the Texas State GEAR UP Conference in Houston, and rose to the national limelight by presenting two sessions at the National GEAR UP Conference, Washington DC in July.

“I have been in the FACE program 4-5 years,” said Jose Rodriguez from the podium. “One of the most memorable experiences I’ve had is when we asked kids to draw their fathers. One little girl drew two hearts, side by side, one was her’s and the other one was her father’s.”

“It is with great pride that I was able to present with the Jose, Arnold and Alicia,” said Amy Koenning. “Each of them spoke from their heart about what a difference the FACE program has made in their families’ lives and communities.”

“It is so important that the state initiatives make a concerted effort to include Dads in their programming,” added Koenning. “Schools need to emphasize that both parents have a valuable contribution to make to their child’s life. When Dads are invited, they will come.”

The FACE Team met officials from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, including Dr. Judy Loredó, Assistant Commissioner of P-16 Initiatives, Chris Alvarado, Director of Outreach Special Projects, and Priscilla Martínez, Program Director - P16 Initiatives.

“You are the important ones,” emphasized Dr. Loredó both when she welcomed the Councils in the morning and when she shook hands with each of the FACE Team members. “You are the ones out there who can get the job done. We can’t do it without your help.”

“Imagine a rose that takes ten years to blossom,” Rincon said before the FACE Team parents took the podium. “Imagine all the summers, winters, the mother plant had to endure to finally blossom. Our Leadership Team is that rose and it’s petals opened because of the consistent commitment and leadership of the Alice ISD community. Without all those campus programs, year after year, we would not have the Leadership Team today.”

The evening before the P16 Councils Institute, the FACE Team, Koenning and Rincón had a dinner meeting with Mona González, Executive Director of River City Youth Foundation of Austin. González’s organization, area organizations, and FACE have hosted a Father’s Day Parade in Southeast Austin in June for the last 10 years.

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