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**College of the Desert Named Finalist for
National *Excelencia* in Education Award
EDGE/pLEDGE Recognized for Latino Student Success Efforts**

The only community college in California to be recognized, College of the Desert has been named a national finalist in the [2021 Examples of *Excelencia*](#). Presented by *Excelencia* in Education, the award acknowledges programs dedicated to accelerating Latino student success in higher education.



“It is an honor to be recognized for College of the Desert’s efforts to close equity gaps and provide support to Latino students,” said Superintendent/President Martha Garcia, Ed.D. “The success of our Latino students brings benefits to the entire Coachella Valley and the workforce as a whole.”

This is not the first time the program has been recognized at the state and national level as a model program. The College’s EDGE/pLEDGE program provides tuition assistance and wrap-around student support services to local high school graduates, helping them achieve their educational and career goals.

“We are very proud of this recognition and of the efforts of everyone at College of the Desert. Programs such as this allow us to fulfill our mission, boost college-going rates in our community, and help change the lives of our students and their families.”

Examples of *Excelencia*, through a year-long process, identifies, reviews, and promotes programs at colleges and universities as well as community-based organizations. It is the only national program that recognizes evidence-based programs that accelerate Latino student success in higher education.

Annually, *Excelencia* recognizes four Examples of *Excelencia*, one in each of the following categories: associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and community-based organizations. This year, *Excelencia* received more than 145 program nominations from 23 states and Puerto Rico. As a finalist, College of the Desert’s EDGE/pLEDGE program stands out nationally as an example of what works for Latino student success in higher education.

Winners of each of the four categories will be announced at [Celebración de *Excelencia*](#), being held virtually on October 28.

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