

## UA Early Outreach Program for Parents Wins Top State Award

By University Communications  
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A University of Arizona program designed to teach parents of elementary school students how best to prepare their children for college has won the state's top higher education program award.

**The College Academy for Parents (CAP)** won the Pathways to Higher Education award from the Arizona Commission for Post-Secondary Education. CAP is a partnership between the UA Office of Early Academic Outreach (EAO) and seven elementary schools in Tucson's Sunnyside Unified School District.

Parents attend 12 two-hour long weekly workshops that cover topics including:

- educational planning and goal setting
- college admissions and financial aid
- academic expectations and preparation strategies
- the connections between academic subject areas and future careers
- transitions in the academic pipeline from elementary school to university

In its first three years, CAP has reached 233 parents from 178 families. More than 90 percent are Hispanic, according to CAP Program Coordinator Abra McAndrew. She said the program reflects the three years of nourishing the "seed" planted by CAP creator Arlene Benavidez.

### NOTE

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#### Related Web site(s)

[College Academy](#)



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Every session for parents includes a “College Camp” of fun and educational hands-on activities for children, providing a solution to a problem facing many parents who would want to attend CAP but have children in kindergarten through sixth grade for whom they have no babysitter. Current UA students conduct the “College Camp” activities.

Lori Tochiara, director of UA Minority Student Recruitment and Early Academic Outreach, said knowing the role parents play in the college planning process, her team has “worked hard to create programs the impact parents at key transition points during the educational pipeline.”

Workshops are presented in both English and Spanish by UA faculty members, many of whom come from backgrounds similar to the parents. “These faculty explain to the parents why the individual subjects they teach are areas that will be important in their children’s college education and in real life,” said Tochiara.

Patti Ota, UA’s Vice President for Enrollment Management, whose office directs the university’s early academic outreach, student recruitment and retention activities, believes it is this connection with UA faculty that makes the program so strong, stating, “The faculty who participate in the College Academy for parents have always embraced their role in communities beyond UA’s Tucson campus.

The partnership with Sunnyside School District has been very successful, according to Tochiara. Partner schools are: Billy Lane Lauffer, Craycroft, Elvira, Los Niños, Los Ranchitos, Santa Clara and Summit View.

The mission of the Office of Early Academic Outreach is to increase the number of ethnic minority, low-income and first-generation college-bound students who are eligible to enter a degree program at a university. This mission is accomplished by providing services to students in elementary, middle and high schools throughout southern Arizona. Other programs and services offered by Early Academic Outreach include: Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and Building the Future.

access and increase success in postsecondary education for Arizona citizens. The Pathways to Higher Education awards program showcases and recognizes outstanding outreach and transition programs.

The College Academy award will be the third state award for the Office of Early Academic Outreach programs. The MESA (Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement) Day program won first place in the 2003 Public Postsecondary Division and the College Knowledge for Parents program took second place in that year's Public Postsecondary Division.

For additional information, please contact Abra McAndrew at (520) 626-2300.

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