

First Private College in the Nation Certified for Advancing Prospects of Latino Students



Photo by Excelencia in Education

Mercy College has planted and cultivated deep roots in the communities we serve in pursuit of our mission to ensure students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to earn a college degree. Today, Mercy enrolls a robust and growing Latino student population, many of whom are first-generation, and is pleased to be the largest private, non-profit Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in the region offering students an affordable, high-quality educational experience.

On September 30, 2022, Mercy was nationally recognized for its determination and progress in ensuring Hispanic students are provided the vital support to not only be able to access college but persist to graduation. The College earned the prestigious “Seal of *Excelencia*” from *Excelencia* in Education, a leading authority on efforts to accelerate Latino student success in higher education and has certified just 30 institutions across the country. **Mercy is the first private college in the country, as well as the first HSI in New York State, to receive this certification.** *Excelencia* in Education, the nation’s premier authority on efforts to accelerate Latino student success in higher education, has certified just 30 institutions across the country.

Excelencia in Education requires that a recipient of the Seal prove, through evidence and data, that its institutional practices serving Latino students are measurable, intentional and effective; that it has created an environment where Latino students thrive; and that its leadership is demonstrably committed to creating a culture of Latino student success.

The honor comes as Mercy prepares to celebrate 25 years as an HSI. Forty-four percent of the undergraduate student population is Hispanic, a number that has grown 10% in the

past seven years. Sixty percent of Mercy students are the first in their families to attend college. Mercy recently issued more than 500 bachelor’s degrees to graduating Hispanic students, the fourth most in the continental U.S. among private HSIs and more than several of Mercy’s neighboring institutions combined.

In accepting the honor, at the *Excelencia* in Education ceremony in Washington, D.C., in the company of fellow college presidents whose institutions also received the Seal, Mercy President Tim Hall said, “Mercy College is proud to be recognized as the first private institution of higher learning in the U.S. to receive the Seal of *Excelencia*. We are proud our students are helping to show what’s possible when we re-examine our mindsets and our pedagogies and our everyday ways of doing business. Nearly 175 institutions in the U.S. are private, four-year HSIs and together they serve nearly 135,000 Latino students. These students are an important part of our nation’s hope and future and deserve that we ready ourselves

intentionally to support them.”

Mercy Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Eva Fernández acknowledges the Seal as a significant milestone and commits Mercy to continuing its diligence in serving the needs of the growing Hispanic student population. “This is a validation of the hard work Mercy College has been engaged in for years to ensure equitable opportunities for success for all our students. The future of higher education in New York increasingly requires us to serve, and serve well, the many Hispanic students seeking a degree to advance their way in the region and the world.”

Highlights of the ceremony, including remarks from Mercy President Tim Hall’s speech can be viewed at: mercy.edu/excelenciahighlights.

