



# news RELEASE

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(For immediate release)

## **Odessa College finalist for Texas Higher Education Star Award**

ODESSA (Sept. 10, 2014) – Odessa College employees filled the Joe Zant, Jr. Community Room this week after receiving an invitation to join President Gregory D. Williams and the Administrative team for “an important announcement.”

Dr. Williams and Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Don Wood delivered the good news that OC was one of eight finalists for the 2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award – the premier award given in higher education by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Raymund A. Paredes, in a letter to Dr. Wood, stated, “... the Drop Rate Improvement Program has been submitted for consideration for a 2014 Texas Higher Education Star Award and is one of the finalists that have been referred by our initial review panel to a nine member selection committee. Your program and the students, faculty, administrators, and other staff who have created, developed, and carried it out are providing valuable services to Texas and its people by helping us close the gaps in education.”

Williams commended all of the staff of Odessa College and said, “This is a great accomplishment for the Odessa College family ... a lot of work has gone into this ... from each and every one of you.”

“The Drop Rate Improvement Program is about student retention and persistence. I think it is historic because ... keeping students in class even when they are struggling hasn’t always been the philosophy of higher education,” Williams added. “The Drop Rate Improvement Program is getting recognition for its effectiveness in successfully improving student success in every class we teach.”

The Star Award winners will be announced on November 21 at the State of Higher Education Luncheon. Other finalists for the 2014 Star Awards are:

- Lee College and Goose Creek CISD (partnership) – Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Student Success
- San Antonio College and San Antonio ISD (partnership) – San Antonio College GED to College Transition
- Texas A&M University and Blinn College (partnership) – Texas A&M – Blinn TEAM program

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- Texas A&M University – Commerce – Office of Hispanic Outreach and Student Programs
  - Texas A&M International University – First Year Experience Program
  - The University of Texas at El Paso – Developmental Math Program
- The Star Award, established by THECB in 2001, recognizes exceptional contributions toward meeting one or more of the goals of *Closing the Gaps* in student participation, student success, academic excellence, and research by 2015.