

BUA leads in undergrad Hispanic ministerial students

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SAN ANTONIO— *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* recognized [Baptist University of the Americas](#) as a national leader in preparing Hispanic students for vocational ministry.

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The publication reported in its July issue that BUA, despite an enrollment of just 261, ranked second nationally among all accredited universities for Hispanic ministry graduates at the bachelor's level for the 2010-2011 academic year. But combining the two previous years shows BUA the leader by a significant margin.

"This is a very much a good news/troubling news situation," BUA President René Maciel said. "Obviously, we celebrate the hard data that shows we are being faithful to the specific call God has given BUA.

"But compare the numbers to the need. In two years, we graduated almost 10 percent of all Hispanics (bachelor of arts) students to be ministers. The top 100 schools combined in two years graduated only 429—and that includes Protestant, Catholic and Jewish universities—in a country with

more than 50 million Hispanics. I am haunted by the words in Hebrews warning us not to ‘ignore so great a salvation.’”

The magazine has ranked the top 100 for minority students in other academic disciplines for years, but debuted the “religious and ministerial studies and theology” category this year. The report is based on research of Victor Borden at Indiana University Bloomington, using U.S. Department of Education data.

Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie topped the 2010-11 rankings granting 22 theology degrees while BUA had 18.

On its website, the magazine included 2009-10 figures that showed BUA ranked first for Hispanic theology graduates with 21. Combining the past two years, BUA placed first with 40, and Southwestern Assemblies of God placed second with 29.

Other Texas Baptist universities in the list were Dallas Baptist University, tied for 11th (18) and Howard Payne University in Brownwood, tied for 20th (4).

Gus Reyes, who heads up the Baptist General Convention of Texas Hispanic Education Initiative, affirmed BUA’s focus on developing leaders who will shape growing Hispanic congregations in Texas and beyond.

“The metrics reported point to the opportunity to increase the number of trained Hispanic leaders,” he said. “Recent demographics of the Hispanic population point to the need for a tsunami of theological and religious bachelor degrees. Praise God for BUA, the Hispanic Baptist Convention, and Texas Baptists as they work together to call out the ‘called’ and provide adequate education for spiritual transformation.”