



**Elizabeth Akushia Antie**

**Title of the project: Resource Allocation and its Impact on the Academic Success of International Students at UTEP**

**Abstract**

Studying abroad is an exciting opportunity that allows students to experience new cultures, broaden their perspectives, and grow both personally and academically. However, it also comes with challenges that can make the journey difficult. International students, who bring unique viewpoints and enrich university campuses with their diversity, often face obstacles that can affect their academic success. These challenges frequently relate to finding financial aid, accessing academic support, and adjusting to a new culture.

At The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), international students make up a significant part of the campus community. They contribute greatly to the university's diversity, but their ability to succeed depends heavily on the resources available to them. Support such as financial aid, academic help, and cultural integration programs are essential for their success.

This study employs quantitative methods to analyze surveys and institutional data to explore the financial, academic and cultural resources available to international students at UTEP, and how accessible these resources are to students. It also seeks to highlight key gaps and offer suggestions for improvement. While many students benefit from assistantships and scholarships, a large number are dissatisfied with the financial support they receive. Academic resources, though appreciated, are often underutilized because students may not know about them or face difficulty accessing them. Similarly, cultural integration programs, though available, sometimes fail to create a strong sense of community, with many students reporting limited involvement in campus social and cultural events.



**Diego R. Carlos**

**Title of the project: Examining the Impact of I-10 Expansion on El Paso's Communities: A Public Health and Traffic Analysis**

**Abstract**

This paper investigates the ongoing debate surrounding the widening of Interstate-10 in El Paso, Texas, focusing on the conflicting claims of stakeholders. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has planned to expand I-10 in various segments of the city, while local groups, including property owners and the Paso Del Norte Foundation, advocate for a Deck Park over the highway to modernize El Paso, reconnect marginalized communities, and increase green space. However, critics argue that the expansion project exacerbates community division, displaces residents through eminent domain, and increases pollution via induced traffic demand. This study examines these competing perspectives, considering the roles of TxDOT, the El Paso County Commissioners Court, and local neighborhood associations. Drawing on seven months of firsthand experience as an intern with the El Paso County Commissioners Court, this paper explores the potential public health and administrative implications of the project. Specifically, it seeks to answer two questions: Where in El Paso is I-10 most congested? And does highway expansion negatively impact nearby residents? The research aims to contribute to the broader conversation on urban development, public goods, and transportation policies, with relevance to cities nationwide.



**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Congratulations to  
Dr. Andonoska and all  
PAD 5367 students on a  
job well done!**



**Department of Political Science and  
Public Administration  
University of Texas at El Paso  
mpa@utep.edu  
(915) 747-5879**



**Capstone Showcase  
Fall 2024**

**December 5, 2024**

**Interdisciplinary Research  
Building (IDRB) Rm. 2.204**

**6:00- 8:00pm**

**Angelite Aleman****Title of the project: The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Employee Performance: The Case of El Paso Electric Company****Abstract**

This work provides an overview of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and how it has increased workplace success. This study provides a brief overview of EI and employee performance. Since there is limited research in El Paso Electric Company, this study will help show EI impact in this company. To research this, the study will use Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) to survey EP Electric Company employees. WLEIS research proposes that employees with a higher EI, can perform higher than their peers. It proposes that employees can handle stress, communicate effectively, and find solutions when conflict arises. By focusing on the importance of EI in the workplace, this study supports integration for making better employees where leadership, teamwork, and overall department success at El Paso Electric Company. In this study it is expected to find that emotional intelligence does help employees at El Paso Electric Company. This study will also focus on other studies to support WLEIS research.

**Graciela Alvarez****Title of the project: The Cultural Variance of Veterans Disability Compensation (VDC)****Abstract**

This study explores disparities in veteran compensation across service eras, with a focus on the evaluation differences between pre- and post-9/11 veterans. Using secondary data from Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports, the research analyzes demographic trends, compensation rates, and diagnoses, while peer-reviewed studies provide context for variations in reporting practices based on service periods and disabilities. Primary data will be collected through surveys targeting Vietnam/Desert Shield and post-9/11 veterans, conducted at the El Paso VA Hospital and among those who have sought third-party assistance.

The study also investigates the role of cultural and societal factors in shaping veterans' experiences. For example, the stigma surrounding the Vietnam War and the heightened patriotism following 9/11 may have influenced how veterans from these eras are perceived and treated. Particular attention is given to mental health as a contributing factor in compensation disparities, as evolving societal acceptance of mental health conditions may have impacted claims outcomes for different generations of veterans.

By integrating quantitative data, survey insights, and a review of cultural trends, this research evaluates whether the VA's evaluation process disproportionately disadvantages veterans based on their ability to communicate their conditions, particularly mental health issues. The study aims to highlight inequities in compensation practices and advocate for fair treatment of veterans across all service periods, emphasizing the need for a system that accounts for both physical and mental health conditions resulting from military service.

**Celeste E. Munoz****Title: Building Resilient Tribal Economies: A Strategic Framework****Abstract**

This project seeks to develop a culturally responsive logic model for the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo's Department of Economic Development (DED), drawing on best practices from both Native and non-Native economic programs. The model serves as a practical guide, ensuring the department operates efficiently, achieves critical performance metrics, and fulfills its mission to empower the tribal community. The model aims to create a vibrant and resilient economic future for the Pueblo community by integrating best practices and respecting cultural values. This initiative reflects a commitment to promoting an environment where economic development and cultural heritage coexist harmoniously, ensuring that all community members can thrive and benefit from these efforts. Addressing the skills gap and promoting workforce development are essential steps in creating a more inclusive and robust economy. By focusing on training, education, and upskilling, DED can effectively prepare the workforce and tribal businesses for the demands of emerging industries. This approach not only reduces unemployment but also creates valuable opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly within underserved communities like Native tribes.

The commitment of the Department of Economic Development to support these initiatives in Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Texas is vital for fostering social and economic inclusion. By prioritizing equity and accessibility in economic development efforts, we can enhance the overall competitiveness and resilience of the economy, ensuring that all tribal members have the opportunity to thrive in the evolving job market.

**Daniela Ochoa****Title of the project: The effectiveness of school-based mental health programs in El Paso, Texas****Abstract**

Mental health challenges are some of the most common issues seen in today's youth and have only increased in severity since the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the rise in these issues, accessibility to mental health care resources remains scarce for youth, especially those living in low-income areas. School-based mental health programs address the issue of accessibility by providing no cost mental health resources to students who are unable to receive mental health services elsewhere due to factors such as high costs and lack of transportation. This paper includes the analysis of certain documents such as annual health reports, school district mental health policies and community health assessments that recognize mental health as one of the key concerns regarding the wellbeing of youth in El Paso. Additionally, school-based therapy is considered insufficient in El Paso and other Texas cities due to a shortage in mental health professionals and a lack of funding sources. Due to these factors, it is crucial for the El Paso community to prioritize youth mental health by addressing the barriers that affect the effectiveness of school-based mental health programs and working to increase these resources to ensure adequate care.

**Victor Sanchez****Title of the project: Exploring the COVID-19 Pandemic Effects on Parks & Recreation Funding in Two Texas Cities****Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on local government budgets worldwide. Cities across the United States experienced massive budget cuts that resulted in the closing of many services. Given the pandemic's impact on the economy, this paper explores the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on the parks and recreation department in the cities of El Paso, Texas, and Fort Worth, Texas, through a fiscal analysis of the cities' adopted annual budgets and the city of El Paso's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Proposed Budget Book over a 6-year period covering FYs 2018-2023. The main findings presented in this paper are that the city of El Paso suffered the effects of the pandemic severely leading to a massive budget decrease for the parks and recreation department of -27.54% in 2021. Meanwhile, the city of Fort Worth had a relatively easier time with a reported continuous increase in budget for the parks and recreation department throughout the analyzed period. While this paper does not intend to claim that most parks and recreation departments in cities within the United States shared similar experiences, it does try to put into perspective the issues the department might have experienced and its resilience to continue serving the community during difficult times.

**Andrea G. Seanez****Title of the project: Understanding the Gap: Financial Aid Distribution Among Nontraditional Students****Abstract**

Nontraditional students are an increasingly significant demographic in postsecondary education but remain underserved and under-researched. Returning adult learners face greater risks of degree non-completion compared to their younger, traditional counterparts. In Fall 2022, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported persistence and retention rates of 80.9% and 71.9%, respectively, for students aged 20 and younger. By contrast, these rates were below 50% for students aged 25 and older. Among the many challenges nontraditional students face, insufficient financial support stands out as a critical barrier. Research indicates that financial aid can significantly improve educational persistence for nontraditional students, yet these students tend to receive smaller grant awards and are less likely to benefit from state aid. Given the limited data on this population, this study seeks to investigate disparities in federal and state financial aid allocation between traditional and nontraditional students. Furthermore, it offers recommendations for reforming financial aid policies to better address the needs of this growing student population.