



## Temple-Telegram.com

### Gonzalez tours TC facilities

- Simulation Center receives praise -

by Kevin Chandler

Published March 11, 2006

From the vegetable fields of California to one of the highest offices in the land, Acting Assistant Secretary of Education Beto Gonzalez spent Friday morning encouraging local students to work hard to reach their dreams.

He also visited some Temple College facilities.

He stopped by the Health Sciences Center to look through the school's state-of-the-art Clinical Simulation Center and was visibly surprised at some of the abilities of the simulators.

Neil Coker, director of the TC Clinical Simulation Center, took the secretary into the surgical technology lab to meet "Stan," a simulation dummy. Gonzalez marveled at how its eyes react realistically to light and even blink. In the next room, Coker showed the different points that students can check the dummy's pulse, insert an IV, or even administer electric shocks to restart its virtual heart.

In the maternity simulator, Coker shared how one student in her first simulator session practiced saving a baby that was trapped by shoulder dystocia, or stuck shoulder, and found herself in the same situation in a real hospital just days later. While the upper level doctors were busy in another room working on another emergency, the student remembered what she had practiced in the simulation and performed the procedure without any trouble.

Gonzalez said that he was impressed by the center and the ability of the community to come together and meet community needs with these kinds of partnerships.

"I have seen a few programs like this," Gonzalez said. "They are scarce across the country and while community colleges always have a mission to meet the needs of the community, it doesn't always come together like it does here. I think that not only the Department of Education but we as public citizens have a duty to not only identify models like this and do everything we can to fund them and propagate them across the country."

In his talks with Temple and Belton middle school and high school students, Gonzalez stressed the importance of hard work and that in America, anything and everything is possible.

He was born in California to a family of migrant farm workers. As his parents followed the

nation's crop seasons, he never finished a school year at the same school and lived in poverty much of his young life.

After earning several college degrees he became a teacher, then a principal, and then a dean of students. Gonzalez pursued a career in public service and is now the assistant secretary for the office of vocational and adult education at the U.S. Department of Education.

Gonzalez challenged the students to live up to the expectations that their school system and their government asks them to meet and to dream big and work hard for those dreams, because with a fluctuating job market, their future success is in danger.

"You need to be able to read and write at grade level in middle school and high school if you want to be anything in life in the future," Gonzalez said.

"Ninety percent of all the meaningful jobs in the future will require you to have at least an associate's degree. India and Russia and China are producing more scientists and engineers than we are, and where engineering goes so does the economy. At one time, 90 percent of all patents being registered were from the U.S. Now, foreigners are registering 70 to 80 percent of all patents.

"You all don't have any excuses because you have a great school district, you have a vibrant community college, you have private sector business owners taking out their wallets to make sure that your facilities here are giving you a state-of-the-art education. All you need to do is to do your part. Ask yourselves 'Who am I on the way to becoming.' We all have dreams and want to be somebody."

The students had the opportunity to ask the secretary questions about what the government is doing to help them reach their dreams. A student from Belton asked if standardized testing like the TAKS test in the, "No Child Left Behind" policy is really the most effective way to prove that they are learning.

"As an educator, no I don't think it's the best way, but right now it's the only way," Gonzalez said. "If we don't have something that is testing where we are at, then we can't set benchmarks. If we don't have assessments, we grow complacent."

"In the 1960s we had the No.1 education system in the world. California was No.1, and right now it is 43<sup>rd</sup> because they didn't have an assessment system in place. I am almost philosophically against teaching to the test. It takes the innovation and the creativity from the curriculum. It's not perfect, but it is working."