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OVER 1,300 HISD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL GET A GLIMPSE OF COLLEGE THIS SUMMER

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On Campus Experiences Offer a Glimpse of College Life, Career Planning, as well as Academic Preparation

HOUSTON -- Over 1,300 Houston Independent School District (HISD) high school students have big options this summer by participating in one of 13 Project GRAD College Institutes that provide a closer look at college life. The goals of these Institutes are to familiarize students with a collegiate environment, explore potential career options, strengthen their academic and leadership skills, and help them earn the Project GRAD \$4,000 college scholarship.

Students can choose to spend part of their summer attending an Institute at: Rice University, the University of Houston – Main Campus, the University of Houston – Downtown, the University of Texas Health Science Center, the University of St. Thomas, or Houston Community College. Each Institute has a different academic and career focus. Students can write a business plan and “play” the stock market, design robots, prepare for next year’s advanced mathematics course, observe a surgery, work in a forensic lab, explore nano-chemistry, create a web site, or extract DNA. “Through these university partnerships and with funding from the business and philanthropic communities, students from HISD’s most economically challenged communities are able to see themselves not just college-bound, but also career-bound. They get to see what achievement in mathematics and science can lead to. They get to talk with professors and professionals in high demand fields of study. They learn that these colleges and these careers are viable options for themselves,” says GRAD Executive Director Ann Stiles.

Input from past program participants reinforces the value of the College Institute experience to our students. “It’s been a great experience. I have learned a lot. It was fun meeting kids from other schools and getting to talk about our experiences,” says a participant who attended a Rice University College Institute. A student from the University of St. Thomas College Institute shared: “It’s helped me out to get a look at how college will be and the way I should be prepared. It helps us see college life for three weeks and helps us to be more focused so we can go to college.”

College Institutes are made possible through the generous sponsorship of: Bank of America, Capital One, Chevron U.S.A., Inc., JPMorgan Chase, The Favrot Fund, Schlumberger, Shell, the Vivian L. Smith Foundation, and others. Funding is also provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Texas Education Agency, and HISD.

The HISD high schools that partner with Project GRAD are Davis, Reagan, Wheatley, Yates, and the Sam Houston Math, Science and Technology Center. Through this partnership, students who meet program requirements are eligible to receive Project GRAD’s \$4,000 college scholarship.

Project GRAD and HISD have spearheaded a college-bound collaboration which has grown to impact the lives of over 120,000 students from low-income communities across the country. Project GRAD Houston works in collaboration with HISD, serving 67 HISD schools with approximately 45,000 participating students. Since its inception in 1994, Project GRAD Houston has awarded over \$18 million in college scholarships to more than 4,500 HISD students.