

Texas State President Denise Trauth honored with Ohtli award

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By [James Barragan](#) - American-Statesman Staff

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Highlights

- *Denise Trauth led Texas State's push to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution.*
- *The Ohtli, which means "road," is given to those who open paths for people of Mexican heritage in the U.S.*
- *Mexican consul: "She has opened the doors for thousands of students of Mexican and Latino origins."*

Denise Trauth, president of Texas State University, received the Ohtli award from the Mexican government during a ceremony in downtown Austin on Tuesday night.

The Ohtli award, which means "road" in the Nahuatl language the Aztecs spoke, is given by individual Mexican consulates to people in their service areas who open doors for people of Mexican heritage and help bridge gaps between communities. The award was first handed out in 1996 and past Austin winners include former Mayor Gus Garcia, former state Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos and philanthropists Joe Long and his wife Teresa Lozano Long.

Under Trauth's leadership, Texas State earned a federal designation as a [Hispanic Serving Institution in 2011](#). The designation means more than 25 percent of its undergraduate population is Hispanic and opened up millions of dollars in federal funding to the institution.

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Trauth has served as president of Texas State since 2002 and began a strategic plan to turn the university into a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2004. At the time, the school's undergraduate population was between 18 percent and 19 percent Hispanic.

Trauth set a goal of reaching the 25 percent Latino threshold by 2012 and devoted resources and staff toward pursuing that outcome. Admissions counselors were sent into areas with high concentrations of Hispanic students, such as the Rio Grande Valley, Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth.

The university reached its goal in 2010 and received the federal designation a year later. The next year, [the university was also designated an "Emerging Research Institute."](#)

Trauth said the award was an unexpected honor that was gratifying and humbling.

"But it's not about Denise Trauth, it's about Texas State University and a large number of staff who worked hard not just to bring Latinos to Texas State but also to graduate these students," she said, pointing out that the school is the 14th-largest granter of bachelor degrees to Hispanic students in the country.

Trauth said she recognized early in her tenure that there was an opportunity for Texas State to increase how it served the large Hispanic population in the state and that the school continues to work on that goal despite having reached the Hispanic Serving Institution designation.

Tuesday night, González Gutiérrez said it was Trauth's clearly articulated vision that pushed forward those initiatives that have benefited Latino students.

"President Trauth deserves a lot of credit for what Texas State University is today, a place where students of all origins can graduate on time after four years of intense, high-quality and affordable education," he said.