

March 7, 2017



Hispanic College Students to Benefit From 13-Year Partnership Between Southwest Airlines and The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Program Provides Opportunity for College Students to Travel Home to See Family

DALLAS, March 7, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) and The [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities \(HACU\)](#) today announced their partnership for the 13th annual "¡Lánzate! / Take Off!" Program, which will provide selected Latino college students with a designated number of trips on Southwest Airlines to travel home to see family. Applicants must show economic need and be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at least 200 miles from home. Students can submit applications through April 14, 2017, at www.hacu.net.

Education advocates and HACU leaders from across the country will form a diverse selection panel this summer to choose the 2017 program recipients. For more information about the program, please visit the [HACU website](#).

HACU President and CEO Antonio R. Flores praised the long-running partnership with Southwest Airlines as an important tool to keep high-achieving Latino students connected to their families while completing their collegiate or graduate-level studies.

"It is important for every student to be able to count on the emotional support of their family while away at college. This is especially true for Hispanic students, many of whom are the first in their family to attend an institution of higher education," Flores said. "The ¡Lánzate! Travel Award Program, a successful partnership between HACU and Southwest Airlines for over a decade, keeps students close to the people who are their biggest supporters in their journey to a degree."

Christine Ortega, Southwest Airlines Senior Advisor for Community Affairs & Grassroots, echoed that sentiment, highlighting the value a family visit can have on a student's decision to stay in school.

"We know that college can be an amazing experience, but it can also be very difficult," Ortega said. "Many of our participants have told us the travel award helped keep them in school as opposed to dropping out because they missed their home and family. At Southwest, we are passionate about connecting people to what's important in their lives and proud that we can play a small role in helping so many Latino students fulfill their dreams."

More than 1,900 roundtrips have been awarded to students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees since the program's inception in 2005.

ABOUT HACU

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents more than 470 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America and Spain. The association's headquarters are located in San Antonio, Texas, with offices in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, California. HACU is the only national association representing existing and emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Information is available at www.hacu.net.

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 46th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 53,000 Employees to more than 100 million Customers annually. Southwest proudly operates a network of 101 destinations in the United States and eight additional countries with more than 3,900 departures a day during peak travel season. Subject to requisite governmental approvals, service to Grand Cayman begins June 4, 2017, the same date service is scheduled to begin from Cincinnati.

Based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent data, Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded. The Company operates the largest fleet of Boeing aircraft in the world, the majority of which are equipped with satellite-based WiFi providing gate-to-gate connectivity. That connectivity enables Customers to use their personal devices to view video on-demand movies and television shows, as well as nearly 20 channels of free, live TV compliments of our valued Partners. Southwest created [Transfarency®](#), a philosophy which treats Customers honestly and fairly, and in which low fares actually stay low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free® to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some airlines may allow free checked bags on select routes or for qualified circumstances), and there are no change fees, though fare differences might apply. The airline proudly unveiled a bold new look: *Heart*. A new logo, aircraft livery, interior design featuring a new seat and Flight Attendant galley, Employee-designed uniforms, and an updated airport experience all showcase the dedication of Southwest Employees who connect Customers with what's important in their lives.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel described by the U.S. Department of Transportation as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares and increase in passenger traffic whenever the carrier enters new markets. With 44 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2015 Southwest Airlines One Report™ can be found at SouthwestOneReport.com.

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at Southwest.com or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/hispanic-college-students-to-benefit-from-13-year-partnership-between-southwest-airlines-and-the-hispanic-association-of-colleges-and-universities-300419579.html>

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