A. Texas State will increase the recruitment and retention rates of African American and Hispanic/Latino students with a special emphasis on achieving HSI designation (At least 25 percent Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment; of which 50 percent are low-income—defined as 150 percent of the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.)

**Measure #1:** Annually Texas State will demonstrate an increase in the matriculation or yield rate of first-time freshmen to 48 percent and transfer applicants to 75 percent with an emphasis on enrolling African American and Hispanic/Latino students.

Data and Analysis:

Although the student enrollment in K-12 in Texas is rising, the demographic mix of students is changing. The number of white students graduating from public schools in Texas is projected to decline from 108,804 in 2008 to 96,568 in 2015. Since whites are often more affluent and have a greater likelihood of attending and graduating from college than other groups, this poses an enrollment challenge for colleges and universities. At the same time, it is projected that a total number of Hispanic high school graduates will increase from 93,407 in 2008 to 120,607 in 2015. As demonstrated in Table 1, modest increases will also occur among African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American students.

If Texas is to maintain a robust economy, it will need to increase the number of college graduates, especially among Hispanic students.

In terms of enrollment, Texas State has been successful in attracting more Hispanic students. As Table 2 indicates, the number of Hispanic students submitting applications for admission has increased 58 percent, from 2,472 in 2003 to 3,904 in 2007. Applications from white students during the same period rose only 3 percent. Applications from African American and Asian/Pacific Islander students increased 48 percent and 28 percent respectively. Clearly, the university’s market share of applications reflects the changing demographics.

Generating applications, however, is only a part of the enrollment management picture. In the end, it is the matriculation rate that determines the size and composition of the entering class. As the demography has changed, competition for high ability students has intensified. In addition, changing enrollment goals of the larger public universities in Texas continues to impact recruitment efforts and enrollment patterns. As Table 3 indicates, matriculation rates for incoming freshmen had been declining, but now have leveled out at 41 percent. This is due in part to the addition of several new merit scholarships.

Our transfer matriculation rates have remained stable at 70 percent, but increased competition from two of the state’s largest universities (Texas A&M and Texas Tech) is expected in the coming years. Consequently, we will need to continue to improve our recruitment activities, including adding additional regional staff.
**Measure #2:** Annually Texas State will demonstrate an increase in the retention rate for new African American and Hispanic/Latino freshmen to 78 percent and new African American and Hispanic/Latino transfer students to 80 percent.

Data and Analysis:

As Table 4 shows, the first year retention rate for students at Texas State has remained stable, averaging between 76-78 percent for freshmen and 81-83 percent for transfers over the past four years. The retention rate for Hispanic freshmen is presently at 75 percent and it is 82 percent and 84 percent for African American and Asian/Pacific Islander students respectively.

Reaching the overall freshman retention target of 78 percent will require additional institutional efforts to address the transition to college life. New retention efforts being led by the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs are already taking shape—focusing on reducing the number of students going on academic probation. Strategies being used include a summer bridge program (Emerging STARS), Supplemental Instruction, Residential College, Early Alert and PAWS Preview. New merit scholarships also were introduced for 2007-2008 which attracted additional high ability students who should have positive impact on future retention and graduation rates.

First-year retention rates for transfer students are excellent, averaging well over 80 percent, but even here, efforts are underway to improve these outcomes.

As we succeed in improving our retention efforts, we will impact our graduation rates. The six-year graduation rate is, in many respects, the defining measure of institutional effectiveness for the *Closing the Gaps* initiative in Texas. As Table 5 demonstrates, Texas State’s six-year graduation rate of 55 percent is one of the highest in the state, but by strengthening our retention efforts, further improvement is possible.

**Measure #3:** Annually, Texas State will make substantial progress towards achieving HSI status.

Data and Analysis:

In recent years, we have succeeded in increasing the size of our Hispanic prospect and applicant pools. This has allowed us to increase the number of acceptances, which has resulted in a steady increase in the number of matriculants. As Table 6 illustrates, we continue to make progress toward achieving HSI status. Preliminary enrollment figures for 2007 show that students meeting the federal definition for HSI calculations represented 22.5 percent of the undergraduate student body—up from 21.7 percent in 2006. (HSI status is attained when 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate population is Hispanic, and of the Hispanic enrollment at least 50 percent are low income—150 percent of the poverty level as determined by the Bureau of the Census.)

**Challenges:**

1. Changing demographics in Texas will continue to challenge our efforts to increase enrollment by 2-3 percent per year. This is primarily a function of the difference between the high school graduation and college attendance rates for whites and Hispanic/Latino students.

2. Increased competition from in-state and out-of-state institutions is growing in our state’s major population centers. The state’s two largest institutions have deployed admissions and financial aid staff across the state in several regional centers. Texas A&M has 40 full-time regional staff spread across the state. Texas Tech is reported to be increasing their regional staffing to approximately 20. Out-of-state institutions such as Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Ohio State,
Arkansas, LSU, Auburn and Alabama also have regional staff and, in some cases, offices in Dallas and Houston.

3. While Hispanic enrollment in K-12 is growing, we are faced with several challenges. First, Hispanic students have a higher high school and college drop-out rate than other groups. Second, a large percentage of these students are first-generation to college and do not have a good understanding of the value of a four-year degree or seeking that degree in a residential setting. Third, many of the families in this group have limited incomes, which may make community colleges a more attractive choice. Finally, while we will undoubtedly see increasing numbers of students coming to us from the community colleges, the fact remains that the percentage of community college students who complete a four-year degree is relatively small.

4. Rising college costs impact college attendance and completion rates.

5. The availability of classes is critical to student retention and completion.

6. Adequate housing, parking, and other student services directly impact student outcomes. Providing these services for a growing student population presents staffing, programming, and facility challenges.

Suggestions:

1. Develop need-based scholarships for students.

2. Establish a regional office in Houston. If possible, find an alum that is willing to “gift” some office space in the NW Houston area.

3. Undergraduate Admissions should develop additional recruitment activities in key areas such as the Valley and Houston that involve Texas State faculty, alumni and members of the Texas State Parents Association.

4. Undergraduate Admissions should utilize Texas State students to help recruit students from their high school, especially in target areas such as the Valley, Houston and San Antonio.

5. Undergraduate Admissions should collaborate with college faculty who are planning recruitment trips to community colleges.

6. Develop a plan to add at least two regional admissions staff per year for the next three years.

7. Increase out-of-state recruitment efforts focusing on students who qualify for merit scholarships and the nonresident tuition waiver.

8. Continue the Emerging STARS Program to help “at risk” freshmen make a successful transition to academic life here.

9. Continue to increase faculty and academic facilities for departments with growing enrollments.

10. Meet the housing, parking and other student services needs of a growing student body. Evaluate policies, procedures and facilities.

11. Through internal marketing, build institutional pride among students, faculty and staff.