



**TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
President's Briefing  
for the Board of Regents  
August 12-13, 2021**

## **PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, AND ACCREDITATION**

### SACSCOC Reaffirmation

Texas State University successfully completed the requirements for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The final On-Site Reaffirmation Committee Report and corresponding transmittal letter were received. The findings indicated that Texas State fulfilled all obligations and was not asked to submit any follow up reports. The SACSCOC Committee on Compliance and Reports will review the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee Report prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees' review and decision. The final decision will be announced during the meeting of the SACSCOC College Delegate Assembly at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2021.

The administration of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which focuses on undergraduate student research, has been assigned to Texas State's University College. A search committee for the director of the QEP's Innovation, Discovery, Exploration, and Analysis (IDEA) Center has been appointed, and the search process has commenced. Once the director is hired, other positions reporting to the director will be filled.

The Texas State SACSCOC Technical Support Team, responsible for the successful preparation and oversight of the platform for the virtual On-Site Reaffirmation Review, was recognized for their outstanding work by receiving the Texas State Quarterly Team Award on June 17, 2021.

### 2017-2023 University Plan

The 2019-20 strategic plan progress reports for divisions, colleges, and the university were finalized and posted on the Texas State University Plan website. The website was revised to provide easier access to plans, progress reports, and information regarding the planning process. The revised website is now live and can be accessed at:  
<https://www.avpie.txstate.edu/planning.html>.

Preliminary steps are being taken to guide the development of the 2023-2029 University Plan. Key phases, responsibilities, and a timeline are being considered.

## **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

### Signs of Post COVID-19 Recovery

Nationwide, the COVID-19 pandemic nearly decimated the traditional college experience and hit college-going students and their families hard financially. The sudden pivot to online learning and services, coupled with COVID-19 job/income losses and health concerns, caused an unprecedented drop in undergraduate enrollment.

The pandemic eroded some of the most influential and pivotal moments of high school students' senior year. Prom, graduation, and college visits, to name a few, were adapted to less meaningful online experiences. Suddenly the idea of starting a new chapter in an educational journey became even more daunting. College-going students had to weigh the costs versus benefits of paying for virtual classes at a time when finding jobs and generating income was increasingly challenging.

First-time college students were isolated from systems of secondary support that typically assist with transitioning to and persisting through postsecondary education. Shifting family priorities, mounting health concerns, and increase need for access to technology made postsecondary success this past year more challenging than ever. Furthermore, new students who enrolled in fall 2021 are the first group of Texas State students recruited completely online.

Texas State has ramped up its efforts to address these challenges, and positive signs are already beginning to emerge:

- *Health concerns are beginning to attenuate.* The vaccine rollout is instilling more consumer confidence for a safe return to an in-person college experience for fall 2021. At Texas State, no-cost vaccinations are available at the Student Health Center by appointment Monday through Friday and mass vaccination events are held periodically.
- *Recruitment and retention efforts are beginning to pay off.* Preliminary numbers (as cited in the next section) indicate that enrollment may return to prepandemic levels. Examples of these efforts include:
  - Expanded the scholarship program for incoming freshmen by \$10.5 million, from \$5.4 million to \$15.9 million. To date for the assured scholarship program, 7,549 awards have been extended to freshmen, and 2,483 (33 percent) have accepted.
  - Raised the annual gross income cap for the tuition-free Bobcat Promise Program from \$35,000 to \$50,000 in spring 2020 to be effective fall 2020. The number of students who benefitted from this program increased from 1,642 to 1,889.
  - Launched the Bring Bobcats Back program to reengage stop-outs, former Texas State students who have earned a significant number of college credits, to return to complete their bachelor's degree. To date, 175 students have enrolled, and four students have graduated. By fall 2021, the goal is to enroll 350 students.
  - Procured a \$1.5 million reskilling grant to help up to 1,000 stop-outs or displaced workers, who have some college credit, return to school and complete their degrees.

- Awarded \$33.4 million in Bobcat Cares COVID-19 Relief Funding to currently enrolled students:
  - \$15.9 million via the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) I authorized by the federal CARES Act awarded to 17,672 students in May 2020,
  - \$2.9 million via the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund as authorized by the federal CARES Act awarded to 3,000 students in October 2020,
  - \$9.4 million via HEERF II awarded to 15,284 students in March 2021,
  - \$5.2 million via HEERF II awarded to 5,540 students during summer 2021.
- Plan to award \$46 million of CARES Act funding in fall 2021 and spring 2022.
- A test-optional approach for freshman admissions requirements was implemented.

At the graduate level, enrollment is robust. Growth has been similar to what is typically seen during an economic recession when individuals who experience a reduction in employment tend to seek out graduate programs to gain extra qualifications, shift careers, or become more marketable. In addition, most classes pivoted to hybrid or fully online delivery formats. Contrary to undergraduates, graduate students (in particular, working adults) find these instructional modes more accessible and appealing. However, now that the economy is slowly recovering and some of the delivery format is returning to in-person instruction, Texas State is starting to see a slow decline in new graduate enrollment as individuals are weighing their options. The Graduate College and academic departments are engaged in heavy outreach to admitted, but not yet registered, students to encourage them to register. The university is hopeful that this outreach, in combination with available Bobcat Cares funding and efforts to retain or increase online offerings, will persuade admitted students to register.

Despite the current economic challenges resulting from the pandemic, Texas State students have remained resilient. The number of degrees awarded at Texas State in May 2021 were 4,170 degrees, a 1.6 percent increase (67 degrees) compared to May 2020.

### Undergraduate Recruitment Fall 2021

As of June 25, 2021, Texas universities are experiencing much greater competition as statewide undergraduate applications are down eight percent for domestic first-year students and five percent for new transfers. Community colleges continue to experience the greatest drop in new applications, with a nine percent decrease across all two-year institutions. Texas State application trends have fared better than most Texas universities. Texas State remains in the third position for the highest number of submitted fall 2021 undergraduate applications behind University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University.

*Undergraduate.* As of June 28, 2021, and compared to the same time in 2020:

- freshman applications received were 30,700, a five percent decrease (-1,671 applications);
- freshman acceptances were 21,257, a one percent increase (227 acceptances);
- freshmen registered for new student orientation were 7,193, a 5.9 percent increase (402 registrants);

- transfer applications were 5,626, a 1 percent decrease (-59 applications);
- transfer acceptances were 3,874, a 7 percent increase (+229 acceptances); and
- transfers registered for new student orientation were 2,249, a five percent increase (+105 transfers).

The new expansion in freshman merit scholarships has boosted acceptances by seven percent (+488 acceptances). New merit scholarship recipients registered for new student orientation has increased by twenty-three percent (+384 registrants).

### Graduate Recruitment and Retention for Fall 2021

As of June 28, 2021, and compared to the same time in 2020:

- doctoral applications received was 305, the same as last year;
- doctoral acceptances were 157, a 13.8 percent increase (19 acceptances);
- new doctoral registrations were 84, a 37.7 percent increase (23 registrations);
- master's applications received was 3,830, a 0.3 percent decrease (-10 applications);
- master's acceptances were 1,961, a 1.2 percent increase (24 acceptances); and
- new master's registrations were 881, a 6.5 percent decrease (-61 registrations).

As of June 28, 2021, the enrollment of continuing master's students is up 16.9 percent (327 students) and of continuing Ph.D. and Ed.D. students is up 2.4 percent (5 students), while the enrollment of continuing Doctor of Physical Therapy students is down 1.7 percent (-2 students).

Overall enrollment of new and continuing graduate students is up 8.7 percent (294 students).

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

### Status of Construction and Renovation Projects

This status report is organized by the phase in which each project falls in the development cycle. The phases include:

- Planning and Programming – The process of identifying space needs and general magnitude of project cost.
- Design – The process of developing detailed blueprints and cost estimates.
- Construction – The entire process of building the project.
- Project Completion – The construction is complete, the bills are all paid, the building has been turned over for use, and The Texas State University System (TSUS) has officially approved project close-out.

*Note.* When multiple projects are underway in one building, all projects are presented together for ease of understanding regardless of their phase in the development cycle.

### Projects in the Planning and Programming Phase

The feasibility study for **Bobcat Stadium South End Zone Addition** has been completed. The project size is 34,458 Gross Square Feet (GSF), and the Total Project Cost (TPC) is \$16.5 million. This project will remodel a large portion of the existing South End Zone Complex adding new locker rooms and meetings areas, and create an addition for a weight room and athletic training/rehabilitation area. This project is on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and will be initiated pending successful fundraising.

The **Music Building** will be located on the San Marcos Campus near the Performing Arts Center and the Theatre Center to address the pressing needs of the School of Music. The new building will include classrooms, offices, and rehearsal spaces. A draft program of design was prepared in 2010 and updated in June 2019 with a project size of 110,128 GSF and an estimated inflation-adjusted TPC of \$90 million. This project is on the CIP and will be initiated pending successful fundraising.

The **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Building** will be located on the San Marcos Campus and include classrooms, labs, and offices to support the Department of Mathematics, Department of Computer Science, and the School of Criminal Justice and Criminology. The building will also provide teaching space for several other academic disciplines. The draft program of design has been completed with a projected size of 200,000 GSF and an estimated TPC of \$157 million. The program document was used in preparing a Tuition Revenue Bond (TRB) funding request for the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. This project is on the CIP and will be initiated pending TRB funding.

**Esperanza Hall** will be the fourth academic building on the Round Rock Campus and include classrooms, labs, and offices to support four departments in the College of Health Professions, the College's Advising Center, and the Dean's Office. The draft program of design has been completed with a project size of 107,665 GSF and an estimated TPC of \$88 million. The program document was used in preparing a TRB funding request for the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. This project is on the CIP and will be initiated pending TRB funding.

### Projects in the Design Phase

The TPC for the planned **Hilltop Housing Complex** on the San Marcos Campus is \$96.7 million based on 1,006 beds. Barnes Gromatzky Kosarek Architects is the architect, and Vaughn Construction is the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR). Demolition of Hornsby and Burleson Halls and utility upgrades have been completed. Design development was approved during the May 2019 Board of Regents meeting. The architect has completed 100 percent construction documents. The construction phase is being delayed until student enrollment rebounds after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Projects in the Construction Phase

The construction of the **Infrastructure Research Laboratory** began in July 2021. Located at the Science, Technology, and Advanced Research (STAR) Park, this laboratory will provide the College of Science and Engineering with state-of-the-art capabilities and innovative technology for advanced testing of beams, girders, and other concrete components under high stress and

tension as well as provide research space for the civil engineering degree program. The TPC is \$14.1 million. Alamo Architects has been selected to provide design services for the project.

The construction of the **Film and Television Studios Project (Live Oak Studios)** began in May 2021. This is a one-story, 10,291 square foot structure that will provide much needed space for film, journalism, and mass communication majors. Teaching spaces include a sound stage, video editing lab, sound recording/mix classroom, and a state-of-the-art television studio. The TPC is \$10 million. The Lawrence Group Architects is the architect, and Vaughn Construction is the CMR.

The construction of the **University Police Department (UPD) Building** (Pecan Building) began in October 2020. This project will include approximately 14,000 GSF and will relocate UPD from its current home in the Nueces building to make room for academic programs. The TPC is \$9 million and will reach substantial completion in November 2021. Atkins is the architect, and Vaughn Construction is the CMR.

### Projects Completed

The following completed projects took place on the San Marcos Campus:

The **LBJ Student Center (LBJSC) Expansion Project**, with a TPC of \$31.2 million and a total size of 36,866 GSF, is now complete. The project also included 38,643 GSF of renovation in the “old” part of the LBJSC. The final report is being prepared pending art installation.

The **Round Rock Campus Services Building**, with a TPC of \$6.2 million, reached substantial completion in May 2021. The final report is being prepared.

The **Roy F. Mitte Space Reconfiguration Project**, with a TPC of \$6.5 million, is now complete. The final report is being prepared pending delivery of furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

The **University Events Center Expansion Project**, with a TPC of \$62.5 million, is now complete. The final report is pending the completion of a construction audit.

## **INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The university has raised approximately \$13.5 million in the first nine months of fiscal year 2021, of which, \$8.3 million were from 20 gifts of \$100,000 or more. These include approximately \$625,000 from three foundations for research in education, psychology, and long-term health care; a planned gift of \$335,000 designated to the Friends of Fine Arts and Communications Excellence Fund; a planned gift for \$300,000 to establish graduate fellowships; a gift-in-kind valued at \$110,000 for The Wittliff Collections; and a gift of \$100,000 for the Bobcat Stadium South End Zone Addition project. A portion of these gifts are eligible for a match through the Texas Research Incentive Program.

The university has selected October 8, 2021, for a gala event to launch the public phase of the fundraising campaign, having raised over \$166 million for university priorities. University Advancement and the Office of University Marketing have contracted with firms to produce a video and other marketing materials for the campaign.

University Advancement has also begun planning for a return to in-person events in the fall 2021, including hosting donors and alumni for a reception and tailgate in Miami for the football game against Florida International University and campaign-related fundraising events.

## **SPONSORED PROGRAM AWARDS - RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTIONAL**

New sponsored program awards obtained during the third quarter of fiscal year 2021 include both the Instructional Awards and the Research Awards categories. The Instructional Awards category consists of awards that cannot be classified as research according to definitions provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The Research Awards category impacts both restricted research and total research and development expenditures for the university. Both research-related metrics contribute to determining National Research University Fund eligibility and the Core Research Support Funding allocated by the Texas Legislature to Emerging Research Universities.

Below are the Research and Instructional Awards over \$100,000 received during the third quarter of fiscal year 2021.

<b>Recipient/Unit</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Project Title and Purpose</b>
<b>Dr. Todd Sherron</b> Department of Organization, Workforce, and Leadership Studies	<b>\$1,500,000</b> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	<b>COVID: Texas Reskilling Support Fund Program</b> will address the urgency for helping students across Texas complete their degree and navigate an increasingly uncertain labor market by engaging stop-out students to provide the support and resources to help them not just enroll, but successfully graduate.
<b>Dr. John P. Blair</b> ALERT Center	<b>\$762,670 Supplement, Total Award \$1,782,670</b> Federal Bureau of Investigation	<b>ALERT Active Shooter Training</b> will support Active Shooter training for state, local, tribal, and campus law enforcement and federal agencies.
<b>Mr. John Robert Curnutt</b> ALERT Center	<b>\$472,909 Supplement, Total Award \$1,661,468</b> Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service	<b>Active Shooter Incident Management</b> will provide 12 deliveries for Active Shooter Incident Management Courses.

<b>Dr. Farhad Ameri</b> Department of Engineering Technology	<b>\$392,737</b> National Science Foundation	<b>REU Site: Multidisciplinary Research Experience in Advance Manufacturing for Undergraduates</b> will expose students to transformative interdisciplinary research to advanced manufacturing systems, materials, and processes.
<b>Dr. Maria del Mar Huertas Pau</b> Department of Biology	<b>\$298,560</b> United States Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food & Agriculture	<b>Development of Nasal and Gut Probiotics To Protect Intensive Catfish Culture Against <i>Edwardsiella Ictaluri</i> Infections</b> will characterize the response of the catfish nasal microbiome and physiology to different sub-acute concentrations of nitrite.
<b>Dr. Nikoleta Theodoropoulou</b> Department of Physics	<b>\$278,778</b> United States Department of Defense	<b>Enhanced Optical, Electrical, and Magnetic Measurement Capabilities for Materials and Device Studies in Research and Education</b> will acquire state-of-the-art instrumentation that will support an array of advanced materials research projects involving measurements for photovoltaic solar cells, quantum dots, semiconductors, carbon nanotubes, and other high performance materials.
<b>Dr. Keisuke Ikehata</b> Ingram School of Engineering	<b>\$250,000</b> United States Department of Interior	<b>Enhanced Water Recovery by a Combination of Photobiological Process and Secondary Reverse Osmosis-Lifecycle Cost Analysis and Mini-Pilot Study</b> will demonstrate the continuous, long-term operation of diatom-based photobiological treatment for a full-scale advanced water purification treatment for a brackish groundwater desalination facility.

<b>Dr. Todd Michael Ahlman</b> Center for Archaeological Studies	<b>\$249,982</b> Texas Parks and Wildlife	<b>Archaeological Survey of Bastrop State Park FY21</b> will conduct an intensive archaeological survey that will include extensive background study and archival research and develop a work plan that includes a predictive model where areas of high, medium, and low potential for cultural resources are identified.
<b>Dr. Merritt L. Drewery</b> Department of Agricultural Sciences	<b>\$200,000</b> United States Department of Agriculture	<b>Black Soldier Fly Larvae as a protein source for cattle consuming forage</b> will address approaches to develop feed formulation or use of novel alternative feedstuffs and nutrient utilization and efficiency using a whole-animal approach.
<b>Dr. Lesli M. Biediger-Friedman</b> School of Family and Consumer Sciences	<b>\$198,930 Supplement, Total Award \$300,626</b> Texas Department of Health and Human Services	<b>Chat with WIC: Innovating WIC Services with a Chatbot</b> will be used to evaluate the Texas Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Chatbot project.
<b>Mr. David N. Dornak</b> The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment	<b>\$160,000 Supplement, Total Award \$247,477</b> Texas General Land Office	<b>Texas General Land Office Work Order B153</b> will complete requirements for EPA and NOAA approval of the Texas Coastal Nonpoint Source Program administered by the Texas General Land Office with specific focus on refining management measures to be implemented in the Texas Coastal Zone.
<b>Dr. Ryan Gerald Anderson</b> Department of Agricultural Sciences	<b>\$149,998</b> United States Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture	<b>Enhancing STEM skills through Metal Fabrication as a regular submission</b> will improve the welding equipment used in instructional courses through the purchase of eight Lincoln Electric C300 multi-process welders. The C300 allows students to learn welding techniques useful for agricultural applications.

<b>Dr. Anthony S. Torres</b> Department of Engineering Technology	<b>\$100,000</b> Minnesota Department of Transportation	<b>Enhanced Entrained Air Void System Characterization for Durable Highway Concrete</b> will research an alternative characterization technique for concrete.
<b>Dr. Nikoleta Theodoropoulou</b> Department of Physics	<b>\$100,000 Supplement, Total Award \$300,074</b> First Solar, Inc.	<b>CdTe Back Contact Using Molecular Beam Epitaxy</b> will deliver an improved alloy comprised of cadmium, zinc and tellurium or alternative material that demonstrates required performance specifications.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Information Security

The university's security posture remains a prominent piece of division activities. In early June 2021, 100 percent multi-factor authentication saturation was achieved, further strengthening the security of electronic information resources for the university. Reaching saturation provides faculty, staff, and students with an increased level of security and helps further protect the university from malicious threat actors. OneDrive Sync was also introduced to faculty and staff as another backup option for documents, giving them an option to use OneDrive Sync or Code42. These automatic backups provide an added layer of protection and mitigation from ransomware attacks.

### External Email Notification Live

Email remains a constant entry point for malicious actors to enter Texas State's electronic systems. The security of email has been increased by indicating the email's sender is outside of the university community. The notification reminds recipients to exercise caution when opening the email and any attachments associated with it. This method is considered a best practice and will be used for all non-txstate.edu email addresses.

### Migration of Student Information System (Banner) to Ellucian Cloud Services

The migration of the student information system (Banner) from on-premises hosting to Ellucian's hosted environment, postponed from mid-February 2021 to mid-April 2021 due to the winter storm, has been successfully completed. As is expected with large-scale migrations of this sort, non-critical migration issues have been identified and remedied as they have been reported. The university and Ellucian continue to partner in quickly resolving issues. This migration is key for the university as it prepares the institution for the future computing architectures being implemented by major solutions providers.

## Microsoft 365 Seamless Single Sign On

Using the multitude of products brought to the university by Microsoft 365 is now easier with the addition of seamless single sign on. When faculty, staff, and students log into a domain-connected computer on either campus, they will automatically be logged into Microsoft 365. This saves time and provides a quality-of-life enhancement.

## TXST Mobile Campus Contacts Update

The most recent update to the TXST mobile app included upgrades to the Campus Contacts section of the app. The app, geared toward student use, now has easy to use filtering, search, and sorting functions to better serve students' needs. Additionally, a contact card for Student Government was added to the mobile app.

## Spring 2021 Tech Talk

Communication with Technical Support Personnel (TSPs) from across the university is vital to the continued success of Information Technology initiatives and services. Annually, the spring Tech Talk brings TSPs together to gain insight on tech services and projects, ask questions, and network with fellow staff. This information and resource sharing event geared specifically for staff in technical support roles always reaps wonderful benefits. The Spring 2021 Tech Talk was attended by 140 participants and covered nine different topics.

## **UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC ITEMS**

### University & Department

Texas State was ranked in the top 6.3 percent out of 19,788 universities worldwide in the 2021-22 edition of the “Global 2000 List by the Center for World University Rankings” published by the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR). CWUR publishes the largest academic rankings of global universities. Objective indicators are used for all four key pillars underlying the methodology of the ranking, which include quality of education, alumni employment, quality of faculty and research performance, with no reliance on surveys and university data submissions. Equal emphasis is placed on the learning environment and research.

For the third consecutive year, the university was named among the top institutions for social impact on the *Times Higher Education* University Impact Rankings. The university was ranked No. 87 worldwide, the first time it has reached the top 100. The university also ranked ninth among universities from the United States and first in Texas. Among the individual categories, it scored seven top 100 worldwide rankings, including three top 20 placements.

The university partnered with the Hays County Local Health Department for a mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic in April 2021. County and university officials vaccinated more than 2,000 people during the event, which took place at the University Events Center.

The university and Lone Star College signed an agreement in April 2021 establishing a program-to-program partnership for elementary teacher education. The initiative streamlines the process for future elementary teachers who begin their education at Lone Star College to complete their degrees at Texas State. Lone Star College, serving the Houston area, is the first to join the partnership with Texas State, but more community colleges across the state are anticipated to participate in the future.

Eleven programs were named among the Best Graduate School Rankings for 2022 by *U. S. News and World Report*. National top graduate program placements came in the categories:

- Criminology (tied for No. 26),
- Health Care Management (tied for No. 55),
- Physical Therapy (tied for No. 71),
- Business (tied for No. 101),
- Part-time MBA (No. 127),
- Social Work (tied for No. 137),
- Speech-Language Pathology (tied for No. 146),
- Education Schools (tied for No. 148),
- Public Affairs Programs (tied for No. 164),
- Biological Sciences (tied for No. 190), and
- Nursing Schools: Master's (No. 168-220).

The Common Experience, along with the Communication Design Program and in partnership with IBM, hosted the State of Black Design Conference April 9-10, 2021. The two-day virtual conference provided networking, development, and career opportunities for young designers, with a focus on student designers of color.

The Department of Political Science Model United Nations program swept the virtual awards stage in the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) March 25-28, 2021. Students debated a host of global issues, ranging from the challenges of combating the proliferation of chemically enhanced illicit drugs to expanding food security for vulnerable and marginalized groups. The SRMUN competition consisted of 250 competitors, representing 35 institutions, including Auburn University, the University of Georgia, Mississippi State University, and Tennessee State University.

The university and Ascension Seton Williamson announced a collaboration to offer comprehensive sleep diagnostics and therapeutics to patients 12 years and older in the Williamson County area. The new Ascension Seton Williamson Sleep Center at the Round Rock Campus features state-of-the-art equipment and furnishings in Willow Hall. The Sleep Center provides a multidisciplinary approach to the diagnosis and treatment of problems with sleeping, staying awake, or troublesome behavior during sleep.

Legendary Texas author and screenwriter Mr. Larry McMurtry died on March 25, 2021, at the age of 84. Over the years, Mr. McMurtry donated many treasures to The Wittliff Collections. Among these are his original 1972 film scenario, "Streets of Laredo," which he later rewrote and expanded into his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "Lonesome Dove." In 2020, sculptor Mr. Clete Shields created a bronze bust of Mr. McMurtry that overlooks the entrance to The Wittliff's new Lonesome Dove exhibition gallery.

The books *The Spirit of Chicano Park*, written by Ms. Beatrice Zamora and illustrated by Ms. Maira Maez, *Feathered Serpent and the Five Suns: A Mesoamerican Creation Myth*, written and illustrated by Mr. Duncan Tonatiuh, and *Dreaming with Mariposas*, written by Ms. Sonia Gutiérrez, were named the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award recipients for works published in 2019-20. The awards will be presented at the university on October 28, 2021, with additional events scheduled in cooperation with the Texas Book Festival on October 30, 2021.

#### Faculty and Staff

Dr. Araceli Martinez Ortiz, a research associate professor of engineering education in the College of Education, was named a Minority Serving Institution Fellow by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Office of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Engagement. Dr. Ortiz will serve a two-year term in the fellowship, which will focus on helping NASA create unique opportunities for students and the public to contribute to NASA's work in exploration and discovery; build a diverse future STEM workforce by engaging students in authentic learning experiences with NASA scientists, content, and facilities; and strengthen public understanding by enabling powerful connections to NASA's mission and work.

Dr. Carlton Fong, an assistant professor in the College of Education, was honored as a Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science (APS). In recognizing Dr. Fong, APS acknowledged that his "innovative work has already advanced the field, signaling great potential for continued contributions to psychological science."

Dr. Gregg Marshall, a professor, respiratory therapist, and chair of the Department of Respiratory Care, was reappointed to the Texas Board of Respiratory Care by Governor Greg Abbott. The board advises the Texas Medical Board, adopts rules to establish the certification and permitting program for respiratory therapists and sets minimum qualifications for respiratory care practitioners, standards of conduct, and grounds for disciplinary actions.

Dr. Carolyn Boyd, Shumla Endowed Research Professor in the Department of Anthropology, was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for archaeology and ethnographic field research. The project, *Origins and Tenacity of Myth, Ritual, and Cosmology in Archaic Period Rock Art of Southwest Texas and Northern Mexico*, is tied to the documentation and interpretation of 4,000-year-old Pecos River style rock art in Southwest Texas and Coahuila, Mexico.

Dr. Arzu Ari, associate dean for research in the College of Health Professions and a professor in the Department of Respiratory Care, was named chair of the International Education Recognition System (IERS). The IERS was developed by the American Association for Respiratory Care and the International Council for Respiratory Care (ICRC). Currently, there are 28 country representatives at the ICRC.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences elected Ms. Naomi Shihab Nye, professor of creative writing, as one of its newest members. She is among 250 people chosen by the American Academy this year, and the first ever elected from the university. As a poet, novelist and songwriter, Ms. Nye has authored or edited more than 30 books, including three novels and

12 collections of poetry. In 2020, she was honored with a lifetime achievement award from the National Book Critics Circle. She has won four Pushcart Prizes, the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, the Paterson Poetry Prize, and many notable book and best book citations from the American Library Association. She received the Robert Creeley Award in 2013 and received the 2013 NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature.

Mr. Todd Hudnall, a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, was named a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). The RSC is the world's oldest professional society of chemists dating back more than 175 years. The RSC serves as the European counterpart to the American Chemical Society (ACS), and is based in London, U.K.

Dr. Yasmine Beale-Rivaya, a professor in the Department of World Languages and Literature, was named Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities for 2021-2024, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. During her three-year appointment, Dr. Beale-Rivaya will implement a project, "Minority Languages and Communities in Contact," which focuses on minority languages and communities that coexist with another language that is preferred by the majority.

Mr. Cyrus Cassells, a professor in the Department of English, and Ms. Jennifer Ling Datchuk, an assistant professor in the School of Art and Design, were named 2021 Texas Poet Laureate and Texas State Three-Dimensional Artist by the Texas State Legislature. The appointments, among eight created by Senate Bill 1043 of the 77th Legislature for 2021-22, are filled for one-year terms. The appointees for 2021 were selected by a legislative-appointed committee for the exceptional quality of their work and for their outstanding commitment to the arts in Texas.

Dr. Eric Sarmiento, an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, was named one of seven inaugural recipients of the 2021 Early-Career Research Fellowships by the Gulf Research Program (GRP) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The fellows were selected for the Human Health and Community Resilience track, which is one of three new fellowship tracks that GRP launched as part of a fellowship program redesign earlier this year. Human Health and Community Resilience fellows will spend the next two years pursuing research that contributes to advancing health equity and examines the social determinants of health in the Gulf states (Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas) and Alaska.

The Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA) accepted Dr. Kambra Bolch, associate dean for academic programs in University College; Dr. Joellen Coryell, assistant dean for educational partnerships for the College of Education and professor of adult, professional and community education in the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology; and Dr. Anna Turri, assistant chair and associate professor in the Department of Marketing in the McCoy College of Business Administration to the 2021-22 cohort. TALA is sponsored by the Texas Council of Chief Academic Officers, which aims to elevate professional development opportunities for faculty and aspiring leaders in academic affairs.

## Students

Two current graduate students received 2021 National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowships, which are awarded to graduate students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Ms. Fatimah Bouderdaben and Ms. Sara Moya were among 2,704 awarded, selected from among more than 12,000 applicants. The NSF fellowship provides three years of support, including a \$34,000 annual stipend and a cost-of-education allowance of \$12,000.

## Alumni

Alumna Judge Rose Vela (B.A. '85) was appointed director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, United States Office of Personnel Management in March 2021. The commission, which provides emerging leaders with first-hand experience in the process of governing the nation, was established by fellow alumnus President Lyndon B. Johnson in a 1964 Executive Order.

# Major Construction Fall 2021

1. Pecan Building
2. Live Oak Hall
3. Infrastructure Research Laboratory at STAR Park

