Meeting the Challenge and Affecting Change:
Revised Background Briefs to Assist with Mid-Cycle Planning Efforts

Compiled here is a series of 11 planning background briefs, with nine revisions to earlier submissions and three new reports(*). Material for each was contributed by key stakeholders at the university who are the most familiar with the individually-approved topics. The environment within which higher education, particularly Texas State University, operates is a challenging maze of constantly changing influences. The President's Cabinet has chosen select topics that are most likely to affect and inform the remaining three years of this strategic planning cycle.

These brief documents are designed to support you as you revisit your plans for mid-cycle adjustments by providing a general assessment of a specific environmental facet that should give some sense of the present "lay of the land" and the anticipated changes and other challenges. Though they are mostly separate topics, they should not be viewed or consumed as independent vertical "smokestacks." There are many overlaps and cross-influences apparent here and it is recommended that you consider all of the topics as potentially useful. For instance, the National Research University Fund (NRUF) Eligibility brief has as many implications for undergraduate admission, graduate program development, and faculty development as it does for direct research areas. The same is true for the other topics, as well.

Though the variations in topics mean variations in content, each brief starts with a concise overall concept of what is included, followed by an **Overview** summarizing the state of affairs in general. The **Status** section then specifically addresses where Texas State is in the context of the overall environment, and **Implications** cover what the expected ramifications are for the university over the remaining term of the strategic plan. Finally, the contributors include some additional resource material/websites, and contact information for the contributors.

The approved brief topics for the remainder of the 2017-2023 planning cycle include:

- **College Affordability & State Funding**
- **Student Life**
- **Student Success**
- **Engaging Alumni**
- **Competing for and Supporting Quality Faculty**
- **Hiring, Inspiring, and Retaining Outstanding Staff**
- **Charting a Path to NRUF Eligibility**
- **Emerging Technologies and Digital Learning Environments**
- **The Intentional Shift from Diversity to Inclusion***
- **Utility Infrastructure***
- **Fundraising***

Please view these briefs as a resource to be used by all involved in the planning process in your unit.

College Affordability & State Funding

Balancing Economic Means, Educational Costs, and Academic Excellence

Texas State University should continue to place college affordability among its highest priorities in order to make progress towards the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 60x30TX plan to have sixty percent of Texas' 25- to 34-year-old workforce holding postsecondary credentials by 2030. This will require achieving a delicate equilibrium among student finances, external funding, costs, and time to degree.

Overview

The economic resources of college-bound Texas students are forecast to decline over the coming decade. That prediction is compounded by the expectation that state funding of higher education will continue to shrink as a percentage of the revenue necessary to run the university, as it has for the past two decades.

This convergence of factors places the university in a challenging position. It needs to remain focused on providing a first-rate education and advancing its own strategic goals, but that cannot come at the expense of unsustainable increases in the cost of attendance.

While the goal of student affordability is sometimes portrayed as incompatible with the pursuit of excellence, these two goals can be aligned. Texas State's plans and processes can allow progress on both.

Status

The notion of providing an affordable college education is hardly new. Indeed, President Lyndon Johnson confronted it head on when he signed the Higher Education Act 51 years ago right here on the Texas State campus. In his remarks that day, President Johnson said that the Act, "means that a high school senior anywhere in this great land of ours can apply to any college or any university in any of the 50 States and not be turned away because his family is poor."

Despite the progress made since 1965, the financial challenges facing families and students seeking to complete a college degree remain daunting. In fact, the distance between affordability and financial ability has perhaps increased. Not only poverty, but even lower income status has become a barrier to higher educational opportunity. The largest federal aid program, Pell Grants, maximum award covers only approximately 28 percent of the cost of a four-year public college education in 2018 for the neediest students – the lowest proportion in history and less than half of what it covered in 1980.[1]

The effect of affordability on ability to access higher education is stark: while 54 percent of Americans from high-income families hold a bachelor's degree by age 25, just 39 percent from Pell-eligible families attain that level of education.[2]

The patterns at Texas State mirror national trends – student financial support has not increased as a percentage of costs of college attendance. In 2008, tuition, fees, room and board added up to $12,414 while student aid averaged roughly 60 percent of that ($7,456). By 2018, costs totaled $19,883 while student aid still only met 55 percent ($10,856). The fact that 62 percent of that student aid is in the form of loans that must be repaid can place an extra burden on the initial income years of Texas State grads. So not only support, but the form of support becomes a critical factor.

Data back the contention that a university degree is becoming not merely desirable, but a necessity for success. College graduates will earn, on average, more than a million dollars more in their lifetimes than non-graduates. Perhaps more importantly, nearly 60 percent or more of all new jobs in the State of Texas (and nationally) are projected to require some form of higher education by 2030. Unfortunately, 58 percent of prime working-age Texans lack an associate's degree or higher. That ranks Texas 43rd in the nation in educational attainment and 29th for high school degree holders which creates a significant impediment to the state's future prosperity.[3]

Implications

How can the university help?

~While affordability has often been tied to access in the past, it is also linked to degree completion. Students with some college education really do not do perceptibly better from a financial standpoint than those with no college at all. It is the completion of a degree program that brings meaningful rewards and job eligibility.

Therefore, programs and processes that help to retain students and move them toward completion can be productive targets for consideration. A student who manages to complete only two or three years of college with very little or even no debt is not better off financially than the student who borrows an average amount in order to complete a degree on time.

~Discussions about living-learning communities and initiatives tied to affinity groups can be useful because these are good examples of programs that enhance student engagement – an important factor in progress toward a degree.

~ Developing a scholarship optimization model that strategically expands the reach of aid in order to more efficiently utilize the limited financial resources available.

~Creating a recruiting plan specifically designed for stop-outs to return to the university and complete their degree programs.

~Academic support services that include academic advising and career counseling, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and peer-assisted learning enhance student success and may also be considered.

~Careful scheduling of classes, particularly required classes, can afford students optimal opportunities to complete required courses in sequence and on time. Creative packaging of degree offerings that shorten the time spent in earning a degree can reduce costs while increasing degree completion. These are but a few examples of programs and processes that improve student success and could be considered and discussed during the planning process.

In addition to making sure that students are getting both financial and academic support, the university can ensure that it is a responsible steward of costs.

~Not only is it important for deans, chairs, directors, supervisors, administrative assistants, and accounting clerks to carefully scrutinize every expense, it can be productive to consider cost reduction during the planning process and to suggest initiatives whose prime purpose is to either reduce costs or shift costs from needs of lesser priority to those more likely to affect the university's strategic needs.

~Finally, ensuring student success and being efficient in fiscal operations does not preclude excellence. While it may be true that Texas State has already raised *doing more with less* to an art form, there is also room to make what is better into best. Is there a better and more efficient way to deliver a service? Is there a more appropriate way to deliver or schedule a course? Is technology being used to lower the cost of services, course materials, products, and supplies? These are all questions that can be an important part of any planning process.

Affordability doesn't just mean becoming less expensive, for students or the rest of the university, it means becoming better and then best.

Further Reading

[1]*Trends in Student Aid 2018*
https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2018-trends-in-student-aid.pdf
[2]*New Insights into Attainment for Low-Income Students*
https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2019/02/21/466229/new-insights-attainment-low-income-students/
[3]*TheCase for a Postsecondary Credential*
http://60x30tx.com/why-60x30tx/
Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan 2015-2030
http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/6862.PDF
State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas
https://www.trelliscompany.org/state-of-student-aid-2019/
College Affordability and Completion: Ensuring a Pathway to Opportunity
http://www.ed.gov/college
How three higher education leaders think about Student Success
https://www.eab.com/daily-briefing/2015/08/25/how-three-higher-ed-leaders-think-about-student-success?
Keeping College Within Reach
http://forabettertexas.org/images/EO_2015_04_KeepingCollegeWithinReach.pdf

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Student Life

Understanding Students and Adapting to Changes in Attitudes, Behaviors, and Perspectives

Texas State University continues to move towards a more diverse composition of its freshman class, and across everything that is Texas State. Even the nature of that diversity will keep changing. College students are changing, not only in diversity and socioeconomic makeup, but also in the ways in which they interact with each other, the university, and eventually, the world. This is the largest and most diverse generation in U.S. history. Its members boast eclectic interests and complex characteristics, ranging from social identities and student activism to political ideas and workplace behaviors. They are attracted to the social sciences and applied fields, and are activists, socially conscious, self-promoting, and report more disabilities than previous generations. Since employers of recent college graduates lament that many new hires are not ready for the workforce, universities and employers are collaborating to determine and define career readiness. Much of this and other adaptations necessary to accommodate and serve this changing clientele fall in the realm of student life: a dynamic menu of activities and opportunities that supplements and informs the academic experience.

Overview

The changes in college freshmen begin with changes in the pipeline – national and state high school graduates. Three interrelated demographic themes will influence the composition of higher education over the next decade – growth in the number of public high school graduates, their increasing diversity, and their changing socioeconomic makeup.

According to a study by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), the annual number of high school graduates is expected to increase from 3.45 million in 2019 to 3.56 million by 2025. But those national figures mask the fact that graduation rates have declined in the Northeast and much of the Midwest, while growing in many southern and western states. Texas, in fact, is expected to have a significant increase in high school graduates, from 348,578 in 2019, to a projected 374,687 by 2025. That's 7.4 percent growth.

(Note: In the December 2016 edition of Knocking at the College Door, WICHE projected that the U.S. is headed into a period of stagnation in the overall number of high school graduates it produces and declining numbers of graduates from private religious and nonsectarian schools.)

Those graduates will be increasingly nonwhite nationally, a trend that is already well underway at Texas State. Statewide, the number of Hispanic graduates is expected to fuel most of the state's high school graduate growth and will represent 52 percent of all Texas high graduates by 2025. African American and Non-Hispanic White graduates will remain flat from 2019 to 2025, while Asian/Pacific Islander graduates are expected to increase by 18 percent during the same period.

An increasing number of college-bound students, and their families, will have insufficient financial resources to meet increasing educational costs. In 2017, Texas had the fourteenth highest poverty rate in the nation (13.6 percent) and a higher rate than the national average. Between 2005 and 2018, the percentage of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants, rose from 26.1 percent to 38.8 percent.

Students like to receive (and give) constant feedback and consider their education to be a cooperative venture between the institution and themselves. Colleges are expected to provide resources any time students wish to access them, 24/7, because they like to communicate frequently, needing either face-to-face or technological connection much of the time.

Student activism has been a part of higher education for some time, but in late 2015, the upsurge of student activism on campus surprised university leaders, and the current wave is expected to intensify due to changing demographics on campus and increasingly high expectations from students. Student activism may have an impact on those other than activists themselves, including the greater student body, university community, and alumni.

Students are also facing significant health challenges. Survey data indicate that they are less healthy and experiencing higher levels of distress than students in previous years. The percentage of students who are overweight or obese continues to increase. Almost half of students do not exercise and very few eat a healthy diet. They have inadequate coping skills and they do

not know how to manage their health. Their parents have been making those decisions for them. A significant number of students have already been diagnosed with a mental health disorder before coming to college. Many students will experience a mental health problem for the first time while in college.

Status

Given Texas State's cost of attendance, which is a relative bargain compared to other public institutions, current federal, state and institutional financial aid programs may be insufficient to meet the needs, particularly of low-income students. Students dependent on grants and loans will need to be more financially literate. Nor will the impact be entirely on students. Current rates of enrollment, retention, and graduation may be affected.

For the past six years, Texas State has experienced record freshman classes and graduates fueled by sustained increases in the size of the freshman class and stable retention.

• In fall 2018, the university enrolled 38,644 students. Of these, 37 percent were Hispanic, and 11 percent were African American.
• That figure included a record 6,084 freshmen of whom 41 percent were Hispanic and 13 percent African American.
• 46.7 percent of entering freshmen graduated in the top 25 percent of their class.
• The mean SAT was 1098, and the mean ACT was 22.9.

Students view higher education as an investment and a direct link to employment. While the current six million job vacancies, is a near historic high, and having many job openings is certainly better than no job openings, it is best to know what career competencies are sought. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found these included:

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
Oral/Written Communications
Teamwork/Collaboration
Digital Technology
Leadership
Professionalism/Work Ethic
Career Management

Note that many of these, particularly the first four, are among the outcomes incorporated in Texas State's general education core curriculum.

In addition, increasing awareness and articulation of career readiness competencies and marketable skills will not only address the job vacancy and talent gap that currently exists,

but also aid in marketing and recruiting. A dedicated focus on promoting experiential learning through co-operative education and internship opportunities will yield excellent avenues for students to become more marketable to employers. Recent college graduates with real-world work experience in their career of choice are candidates of choice to recruiters.

International students are also highly attuned to the need for return on their high education investment. They view employment opportunities – both during the program of academic study (Curricular Practical Training Program) and immediately after graduation under the Occupational Training Program – to be vital aspects of studying in the U.S. Increasingly, highly attentive student services are expected from an international community that shares and receives information through social media and readily connects with counterparts in the States all over the world. Support services such as "intrusive" or proactive advising are increasingly perceived as expectations by service-minded international students.

Increasing numbers of domestic students are adopting the view that global engagement through study abroad opportunities or interacting with international platforms, research projects, student groups or activities are also part of optimizing the education résumé. Experiential learning that includes international contexts are desirable to both domestic and international students.

The effects of advancing technology and computing innovation go beyond the potential impact on students' academic activities. Parents or other significant adults are a part of their lives in ways not seen for several generations, and this too is due at least in part to the pervasiveness of technology. Many report that their parents are their best friends – through technology, they readily access and enjoy staying in constant contact with them. Parents, like never before, are part of the college experience. They are likely to email the university president, board of regents, or state representative directly about a professor they don't like, a program they don't agree with, or to share some other idiosyncratic displeasure, idea, or opinion. However, parents are not the only influential force. Because of their technological bent and electronic savvy, students claim friendships and relationships with millions of acquaintances and communities they have contacted through social media.

Institutions are not prepared to manage today's student activism. There are some unique factors to activism that

make it very challenging to address, including a value conflict among the higher education community and the public, a broad set of activist issues, social media, and mismatched realities between students and administrators. Many student activists are also issuing demands to the institution, and they expect to see immediate and significant change.

When the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 made significant changes to the definition of the term *disability*, medical conditions not previously protected were now included – because of this, there will be a continuing increase of college students in need of academic and housing-related accommodations. Furthermore, because students have had very actively involved parents as their advocates, they have the expectation that institutions will readily accommodate them in a seamless and convenient manner, through the use of technology.

Students are dealing with a variety of health issues that have the potential to negatively impact their academic success, retention, and quality of life. The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) conducted in the spring of 2019 shows that only 45 percent of students endorse having "very good or excellent" health. Students are experiencing higher levels of distress. Seventy-four percent felt overwhelming anxiety during the past 12 months. Sixty percent felt things were hopeless. Forty-eight percent felt so depressed that it was difficult to function. Seventeen percent seriously considered suicide, and 1.6 percent attempted suicide. Obesity increases the risk for heart disease, hypertension, stoke, diabetes, lipid disorders, and cancer. Forty-three percent of students report they are overweight or obese. Only five percent of students eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Forty-seven percent of students report not exercising at all. Unvaccinated students pose a risk to the campus community. Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and mumps are being reported on college campuses across the country. Only 68 percent of students report being vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella, and 60 percent report being vaccinated against chickenpox.

Additionally, perhaps due to reliance on technology, students have a highly sedentary life style, which contributes to increases in obesity rates. This is considered to be a relatively unhealthy generation. While rates of drug use are lower than those of previous generations, technology addiction may replace substance addiction as a leading concern. They have been exposed vicariously via social media to numerous instances of violence, economic recession, and war, all of which have contributed to stress.

Where and how they live while on campus can contribute both cause and solution to many of these issues. Until recently, the most important thing college students wanted was privacy. But the emphasis on privacy carried with it the potential to foster isolation, particularly if the residence hall had limited common areas for socializing. Today, some colleges and universities are reverting to an older university housing model: double rooms with bathrooms and common areas shared by larger groups of students. Residence hall design is also being jolted by technology. Mobile computing, ubiquitous internet connectivity, and distance learning - including massive open online courses – are having a profound effect on how, when, and where students learn. Design features that reduce isolation and promote socialization are also helping resident assistants gain more opportunities to interact with their charges, particularly important for those responsible for freshmen. Additionally, holding down costs is the primary motivator for shared bath facilities.

Implications

Given their potential impact on student recruitment and student success and its trickle down effects on enrollment, retention, and graduation, the growth of increasingly diverse and increasingly financially stressed freshmen is a broad area that could yield productive consideration.

The vision of more incoming students who are more diverse, but have fewer financial resources suggests several related topics for discussion.

~The consideration of anticipated resources versus anticipated growth for the university and constituent academic programs, leading to potential growth targets.

~The not unrelated issues of freshman retention and graduation rates since the overall capacity of the university is partially determined not only by the number coming in, but also by the number staying and the number earning degrees. Methods could include changes in academic and other student support services to match the profile of entering freshmen.

~The larger proportion of lower socioeconomic status students (and their supporting families) may lead to consideration of economically-efficient changes in academic programs, more available financial or financial literacy support. These involve reacting to the incoming pool but there are also potentials to shape it, keeping in mind other aspects of the planning process.

~Making progress toward the NRUF freshman class metric of 50 percent in top 25 percent of their high school graduating class (or average SAT/ACT score at least 1210/26), suggests discussions about attracting higher-ability students. The success will depend on the refinement of scholarship optimization model and expansion of merit-based scholarship opportunities, availability of individual scholarly activities or a number of other actions.

~Texas ranked fifth in the nation for school graduation rate in 2017, but only 50 percent of graduates enroll in college immediately after high school. Creating a going-to-college culture will be critical for Texas to remain competitive in the global economy.

~Curricular and co-curricular efforts may be able to collaborate in identifying and articulating how students can acquire career readiness competencies and marketable skills. And considerations could be given to encouraging them to infuse their academic experience with co-curricular experiences that will enhance their competencies and skills. Documenting the results may be also considered. Not surprisingly, parents' expectations demand more evident results pertaining to graduates getting a satisfying job. Not only the university, but individual programs, may want to consider how to support documenting graduating students' success in this regard, and equally to support their family's sense of *Return on Investment*.

~Support services for international students that provide relational customer service features such as proactive advising may be augmented to events that honor and focus on cultural groups, international holidays and other activities tailored to specific populations.

~Increased development of service learning and experiential learning in international contexts may be developed in the area of study abroad.

~Students' desire for more entrepreneurial skills suggests consideration of additions to academic programs, including more experiential learning opportunities.

~Responding to student activism is an institution-wide priority. The university may face possible reputational consequences, declining donations and support from alumni and friends, and decreased interest from prospective students, and their families. There can also be increased pressure from outsiders and possible legal action. It will be important for university leaders to communicate information about long-term change and building mechanisms for long-term progress.

~While students and parents may not consider the importance of mental and physical health, it is important for institutions to acknowledge their importance in student academic success and retention. Data from the NCHA makes it clear that more students are coming to college with an established mental health diagnosis and increasing numbers of students are experiencing overwhelming distress. Mental health resources must be increased and new delivery models explored. Students value convenience and access. Medical and counseling services must work on making services available when students need them – same day, after hours and via telehealth.

~Dining services on campus must do a better job of educating students about healthy foods and promoting proper portion size and recommended servings of protein, grains, fruits and vegetables. With almost half of all students reporting no exercise at all, Campus Recreation and other campus partners must collaborate to promote exercise and develop new strategies for teaching students who have no experience with exercise to learn how to make it a part of a healthier lifestyle. Misinformation about the effectiveness and safety of vaccines has led to lower levels of immunization. New strategies must be developed to promote accurate information and encourage students to protect themselves and the campus community by complying with CDC-recommended vaccinations.

~The 24/7 expectations of all students may lead to discussions about similar expansion of other resources (e.g., academic advisors, financial aid counselors, etc.).

In summary, the increase in the number of high school graduates over the next decade, their increasing diversity, and the rising number from low income families present predictable challenges, which can and should be viewed as opportunities.

The growth in applicant pool will allow the achievement of enrollment growth goals, but the increasing size of freshman classes suggests that consideration could also be given to the potential impact on retention, and graduation benchmarks. As family means are increasingly stretched to meet college costs, this too can have an effect on recruitment, retention and graduation without proactive planning. NRUF goals related to freshman class quality may lead to more competition for high ability students, which may in turn suggest not only financial, but imaginative and innovative academic incentives.

The impact of the new generation of freshmen on strategic planning is clear, inescapable, and in many ways, can be a catalyst to desirable change.

The emerging and future generations of college students will change and provide a constant challenge for Texas State's academic and student services. But it is important to remember that these changes are mostly predicable, allowing for **pro**action, which is always more effective than **re**action.

Further Reading

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Center for Collegiate Mental Health, *2015 Annual Report*, STA 15-108 (January 2016).

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EAB, *Navigating the New Wave of Student Activism*, 2017.

Nathan D. Grawe, "Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education," John Hopkins University Press, 2018.

Peter Fabris, "Major Trends in University Residence Halls," *Building Design+Construction* (18 May 2011).

Steve Murdock, "Population Change in Texas: Implications for Education and the Socioeconomic Future of Texas," Hobby Center for the Study of Texas, Rice University, April 2014.

Vivek Pandit, *We are Generation Z: How Identity, Attitudes, and Perspectives are Shaping Our Future* (Dallas: Brown Books, 2015).

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* (Boulder, Colorado: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2016.

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Student Success

Encouraging Growth in Learning, Understanding, and Living

Student success is an integral part of the Texas State University culture. People and programs are focused on the needs of an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body. Academic programs are developed that respond to workforce needs. Simply stated, Texas State is committed to helping students succeed within and outside of the classroom, with the goal of educating students to be productive citizens with successful careers and fulfilling lives beyond the university.

Overview

Texas State is committed to student success and the development of learner-centered and student-focused academic programs and services that will lead to career and life success after graduation. Academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, and the development of skills leading to successful careers and fulfilling lives are foundational to the university's mission. These learning outcomes are especially important given the university's commitment to serving students traditionally under-served by higher education.

Given this focus, increasing student retention and graduation rates are outcomes valued by students, families, and a variety of audiences beyond the university. Achieving goals for student success in a timely and cost-effective manner, while avoiding unnecessary accumulation of student loan debt, are additional metrics that are used to measure Texas State's impact and overall effectiveness.

Student success is a focus of strategic importance to Texas. Development of the 2017-2023 Texas State strategic plan began as the State of Texas implemented its new strategic plan for higher education, 60X30TX. Goals and outcomes of Texas State's strategic plan support the university's achievement of 60X30TX goals, including:

- By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree;
- By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas;

- By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills; and
- By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Student success is a focus of strategic importance to Texas State. Texas State is also pursuing National Research University Fund (NRUF) eligibility, and student success plays a role in the achievement of that designation. Examples of student success-related outcomes of importance to Texas State's future status as a National Research University include:

- Number of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees awarded;
- Institutional commitment to improving the participation and success of underrepresented students; and
- Master's and doctoral graduation rates.

Student success is a focus of strategic importance during a time of growth and change. Woven throughout 60X30TX and NRUF goals is the understanding that Texas is experiencing a time of significant and dramatic change. Both plans include expectations for improving the achievement of, and subsequently socioeconomic status of, historically underserved populations. Texas State is a Hispanic serving institution and has observed substantial increases in Hispanic and African American student populations over the past decade. On the horizon lies the growth of America's fastest growing minority group, Asian Americans, which represent 4.42 percent of Texans according to the Pew Research Center. Demographic change has implications for student success over the timeframe for our strategic plan and it is essential that programs and services support the achievement of all Texas State students.

Founded as a normal school, Texas State is rapidly becoming more STEM-focused as an Emerging Research University. Success rates in the College of Science and Engineering (e.g., retention and graduation) typically trail those of the other colleges. As such, developing programs enhancing student

access and success in STEM disciplines will be vital to achieving institutional student success goals.

Status

There are several general trends in student success. In response to changing student demographics and increasing demand for services, the following general areas are often identified as valuable in increasing student success.

- Improving path and transition to college
  - Admissions processes
  - Freshman seminars
  - New student convocations
  - New student orientations
  - Welcome week activities
- Advisement
  - Academic advising
  - Academic coaching
  - Career and marketable skills counseling
  - Early alert systems
  - Mental health counseling
  - Mentoring (faculty and staff)
  - Peer mentoring
- Engaged learning
  - Common experience and reading programs
  - Content-specific discussion groups
  - Freshman interest groups (FIGs)
  - Learning communities (LLCs)
  - On-campus employment
  - Peer-led team learning
  - Study abroad
  - Study-in-America
  - Service learning
  - Supplemental instruction
  - Tutoring
  - Undergraduate research
- Instruction and pedagogy
  - Collaborative learning
  - Active learning
  - Developmental education
  - Early and regular feedback
  - Faculty training and development
  - Leadership development
  - Technology/online instruction
  - Open educational resources
- Campus climate
  - Assessment for continuous improvement
  - Diversity and inclusion initiatives
  - Residential experience
  - Student activities and engagement
  - Student perception of instruction

Important challenges must continue to be addressed in our 2017-2023 strategic plan if Texas State is to achieve goals of strategic importance to the university. This plan must address the academic and social needs of a variety of populations with the shared goal of improving academic achievement, persistence, retention, and graduation rates, including but not limited to:

- New freshmen and transfer undergraduate students;
- New graduate students;
- Continuing students at all educational levels;
- Students from underrepresented populations, in general, and male students of color, more specifically;
- Students at risk of attrition due to socioeconomic factors; and
- Increasing enrollment in STEM disciplines relative to other majors.

Implications

It is expected that Texas State will continue to improve in all student success outcomes, even given the challenges identified to continued improvement over time. Generally speaking, aspirational goals for undergraduate students include:

- Successful completion of 15 degree-applicable semester credit hours each long semester;
- Freshman retention rates increasing over time to 85 percent or greater;
- Four- and six-year graduation rates for native freshmen increasing by 1.5 percent annually;
- Three- and five-year graduation rates for transfer students increasing by 1.5 percent annually;
- Reduction and elimination of achievement gaps existing between major and minority students; and
- Improved student debt to income ratios upon graduation.

As our Texas State strategic plan is updated, there are several near-term priorities that may be worthy of consideration by departments, colleges, and divisions.

~In 2018, Texas State was selected by the Association of Public Land-grant Universities as a participant in a new initiative, Powered by Publics: Scaling Student Success. This collaborative effort of 130 institutions has been developed to increase college access, success, and postsecondary attainment. Texas State is a member of a "transformational cluster" of ten public universities focusing on strategies enhancing the success of under-

resourced learners on campuses with large numbers of Pell grant-eligible students. A primary goal of this group is to eliminate the achievement gap existing between the socioeconomically disadvantaged student and his or her non-disadvantaged peers. Further, as studies suggest, students could be more successful in courses that choose to use open educational resources and therefore provide sure access to learning materials while eliminating the costs of those materials for students.[1]

~Stop-out students may drop out of the university for a host of reasons. One of these includes a difficult work/life balance. For students faced with this issue, attendance at the university in traditional face-to-face classes during the typical 8-5 schedule may prove challenging. Online and hybrid course offerings could facilitate the success of stop-out students. In a 2018 study, *Making Digital Learning Work*, researchers found that students "who took at least a portion of their degree program online" earned their degrees faster at a lower cost, driving down the some factors that lead to student stop-out and drop-out.

~Today's first-generation college student arrives facing a number of different challenges. Research indicates that first-generation students arrive on campus less prepared for the college curriculum, facing financial challenges, working more hours than their peers, and experiencing a lack of self-esteem during the transition to college due to the lack of family support. According to the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California – Los Angeles, median family income for freshmen whose parents didn't attend college was $37,665 in 2014, compared to $99,635 for those who did. As a result, a recent report from the Institute of Education Sciences indicated that only 20 percent of first-generation students obtained a four-year college degree 10 years after the sophomore year in high school, while 42 percent of continuing generation students achieved this goal in the same timeframe. In fall 2018, 46 percent of new first-year students at Texas State were first-generation, and students from all backgrounds are represented within this population. Eliminating achievements gaps between first-generation students and their non-first-generation peers is key to achievement of overarching student success goals.

As one considers the economic landscape, it should be generally understood that improvements should be achieved in a fiscally responsible manner. The likelihood that substantial increases in funding and

space will be available in the near term is minimal. As such, strategies for improving outcomes should be targeted, specific, and scalable. Collaboration across divisions, colleges, departments, and programs will be key to achieving student success goals. Online and hybrid instruction and technology resources may be leveraged and be included as a part of the comprehensive solution to student success issues. Additionally, open educational resources may be explored as a method to increase student success, while helping students manage overall cost of attendance and debt.

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Engaging Alumni
Providing Opportunities to Become Part of the Strategic Future

Much of the focus of strategic planning for a university, and particularly Texas State University, is on predicting, anticipating, and adapting to change – change in students, change in career markets and demands, change in technology, change in physical facilities and needs, changes in ways the university serves its communities. That change can be both a challenge and an opportunity when making plans to engage alumni.

Retaining or re-establishing contact with graduates beyond their college years is a key to engagement. Though methods of engagement and communication, have changed, alumni engagement has traditionally focused on reminding them of the past – of their college days, lifelong friendships, following the fortunes of Bobcat athletic teams, and emphasizing the value of their degree. Inviting alumni to "come home again" was also fairly feasible given their limited career and/or address changes.

Today, alumni are much more mobile, seeking faster, more frequent, and real-time information. Returning to campus is only one way of keeping them engaged and, in fact, only a somewhat low percentage visit in any year. Since change is at the hub of the university environment, and strategic plans are all about change, it's time to expand opportunities for alumni to experience and participate in the changes taking place at their alma mater, as well as savor the familiarities and comfort of the past. Today, alumni are much more likely to contribute and be engaged, if they are encouraged to cherish the past, while also being given the opportunity to be involved with, and make a difference in, the strategic future.

Overview

As of 2019, there are nearly 200,000 Bobcat alumni, many of whom show an increased sense of pride and connection that can be measured by their growing culture of philanthropy regarding Texas State.

More than 46,000 alumni contributed to the eight-year *Pride in Action* fundraising campaign that ran between 2006 and 2014. Their gifts were critical to the transformational impact of this historic campaign, funding 19 new buildings and providing nearly $120 million for student scholarships, programs, and faculty research. This philanthropic support helped

the university to earn state designation as an Emerging Research University (ERU), a significant step on the path to eventual Carnegie R1 ranking.

In fiscal year 2015, Texas State began a new fundraising campaign to support the university on our path to National Research University Fund (NRUF) eligibility. In the first five years, over 35,000 alumni have given in support of the campaign. Strong alumni support will continue to play a central role in supporting the growth of Texas State.

The percent of alumni giving to their alma mater has been the standard metric for alumni engagement used for university rankings and benchmarking for decades. However, recently, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE is the primary Advancement professional association) has begun to align around new engagement metrics, detailed in a white paper from August 2018 (*CASE Alumni Engagement Metrics).* This shift reflects a national trend in which alumni associations transition from the traditional membership-based models to more inclusive approaches that seek to broaden engagement of alumni across four focus areas:

- *Communications* with alumni that are interactive, meaningful and informative, and that support the institution's mission, strategic goals and reputation.
- *Experiences* that inspire alumni, are valued by the institution, and support its mission and strategic goals.
- Diverse opportunities for alumni to make *philanthropic* investments that are meaningful to the donor and support the institution's mission and strategic goals.
- Rewarding *volunteer* roles that are endorsed and valued by the institution and support its mission and strategic goals.

In 2019, CASE will launch a new benchmarking survey for all higher education institutions to use to report on alumni engagement and benchmark against peer institutions. University Advancement has worked with the Texas State University Alumni Association to adjust programming around this framework for alumni engagement.

Status

In FY 2019, the Alumni Association worked with an external consultant to evaluate alumni relations programming. Based on the findings and recommendations of that assessment, the Association developed a new strategic direction to broaden alumni engagement across each of the four CASE categories. Key components of the new direction include:

- Discontinue the annual dues-paying membership program and reframe communications and programming to underscore that the Alumni Association promotes the engagement of all alumni, not just "members."
- Implement a targeted communications strategy to inform alumni about university news, including new follower acquisition campaigns, identification and engagement of social media influencers, and targeted messaging.
- Launch a new texting platform to facilitate broad outreach to alumni with interactive and personalized communication.
- Develop an annual calendar of events with consistent presence in specific geographic areas based on concentrations of alumni.
- Tailor events to engage new groups of alumni based on life stage, industry, college, or purpose.
- Partner with academic units and Athletics to promote alumni engagement events on campus.
- Identify and promote opportunities across campus to engage volunteers in support of the university.
- Continue to engage students through Alumni Association-sponsored programs to build pride in the university and encourage lifelong engagement with the university.

Implications

~ In FY 2018, University Advancement recorded approximately 48,000, or 1/4 of all alumni, as having engaged in at least one of the four CASE engagement areas, which presents opportunities for academic programs to become involved in engaging their own alumni.

~ Texas State will participate in the new CASE Alumni Engagement survey to track alumni engagement annually and use peer benchmarking to set goals and inform adjustments to programming.

~ University Advancement Communications has partnered with an external consulting firm on a national public relations campaign to promote media coverage of the research conducted at Texas State. The Communications department will partner with the Alumni Association to promote awareness of national news coverage among alumni and engage them as ambassadors for the institution.

As part of implementing the new strategic direction, University Advancement is reorganizing staffing across departments. This includes a reallocation of staff time previously assigned to support the membership-dues marketing and fulfillment to focus on other forms of engagement programming. Additionally, the utilization of clear alumni engagement metrics will inform strategic planning and collaboration across units around common objectives.

These efforts, to create a bond with current students, link with recent graduates, and attract alumni support for the university's increasing needs, recognize that Texas State's alumni are changing as Texas State changes. The challenge and opportunity is to bring them into the future together.

Further Reading

100 Years of Alumni Relations
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https://www.case.org/system/files/media/file/CASEWhitePaper_AlumniMetrics.pdf

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Competing for and Supporting Quality Faculty

Providing Resources and Support to Attract Talented and Diverse Faculty

A vital component of Texas State University's past and present has always been a student-centered, intellectually vigorous professoriate. An equally compelling need for the university's strategic future is the ability to expand the current capacity of its faculty by adding talented researchers and scholars who will help the university achieve National Research University Fund (NRUF) eligibility status and recognition as a Research University through the Carnegie R1 ranking.

Adding such faculty is not a simple task. Texas State, other universities, and the entire industry are competing for these diverse and talented researchers. Successful competition requires significant resources such as start-up packages, career development, and competitive salaries, as well as a supportive environment – one that includes a current faculty eager to collaborate and open to participating in the intellectual synergy that is Texas State. In turn, new researchers and scholars from diverse backgrounds stimulate creative approaches and provide different perspectives and critical inquiry, all of which are necessary to challenge and fulfill the needs of new generations of students.

This scan describes the challenges, efforts, and resources, both financial and environmental, needed to hire and retain a talented group of teachers, researchers, and scholars.

Overview

Texas State's steady increase in full-time and part-time faculty has accompanied its growth in student enrollment. In fall 2018, total faculty numbered 2,087, up by 15 percent since 2015. Of this number, 70 percent were full-time faculty. Tenure-line faculty (tenured and tenure-track) represented 57 percent of full-time faculty. When funding is available, a call is made for net new tenure-track positions. Since 2015, 44 new tenure-track positions have been funded to address enrollment increases and to support new academic programs.

Texas State has been successful in retaining a significant percentage of tenure-line hires. Retention rates for tenure-line faculty during the last three fiscal years averaged 95.3 percent. Excluding retirements, the average was 97.9 percent.

In fall 2018, 23 percent of full-time faculty were from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups. Among tenure-line faculty, the percentage was 27 percent. The percentage of underrepresented groups among all faculty was 31 percent. Although there have been increases in the number of underrepresented faculty, the concurrent increase in the overall faculty has kept the percentages relatively unchanged.

Status

Competitive market data for faculty salaries is derived from College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) surveys and is tied to discipline-specific medians from comparable institutions. Periodically, the comparison group used to benchmark faculty salary medians at Texas State is revised so that the university is being compared to institutions similar in enrollment and mission. CUPA provides a starting point for negotiations that may be affected by a discipline-specific labor market, size, and quality of the applicant pool, number of doctoral graduates, number of faculty job openings in the discipline, and the unique qualifications of applicants.

Senior leadership has sought to encourage a culture of shared governance and transparency. The president, as well as the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, speak frequently of their commitment to this important value. They meet once a month with the Faculty Senate to address faculty concerns and issues. The provost reiterates this message to new academic administrators, with academic departments during regular visits, and in workshops with new faculty.

Texas State encourages innovation and interdisciplinary approaches. Faculty have the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration through centers, degree programs, internal research initiatives, and other partnerships. Innovation and entrepreneurship are the focus of programs in a variety of colleges and at Texas State's STAR Park technology incubator.

Faculty at Texas State are offered multiple opportunities for enhancing both teaching and research proficiencies. These include the Scholarship and Teaching Excellence Program for new tenure-track faculty, and ongoing workshops sponsored by Faculty Development, Organizational Development and Communication, and other offices. University support of development leaves, fellowship leaves, and workload releases also plays a strong role in retaining faculty and enhancing their effectiveness and productivity.

Faculty are recognized and rewarded for their work. The administration is committed to providing regular merit salary increases in an effort to remain competitive. Faculty are eligible for an array of awards and honors, many of which are recognized at annual convocation each fall semester.

Recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups receives institutional engagement and support. The Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Council on Inclusive Excellence, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the special assistant to the provost for Inclusion and Diversity provide programs and resources to ensure the effective hiring and retention of diverse faculty. Academic administrators stay mindful of the national pipeline of candidates and the importance of encouraging diverse students to pursue graduate education.

Implications

In order to attract and retain high quality, diverse faculty, Texas State continues to employ a diversified strategy that includes adequate financial resources and a welcoming cultural and environmental context. The following general statements are intended to spark ideas and more specific approaches for implementation during the planning process.

~Competing in a national and international market often requires hiring at a senior level or offering incentives to keep current faculty. Excellence requires competitive salaries, as well as research support incentives. Pre-emptive and counter offers are designed to match or exceed those of others attempting to recruit an outstanding faculty member. Suggestions or consideration of specific incentive ideas could be a focus of departmental implementation.

~Hiring and retaining high quality faculty also includes fostering an environment of empowerment and engagement. This environment includes opportunities to grow and nurture new perspectives, pursue knowledge, and collaborate with others. It means that research and scholarship should not be viewed as restricted to designated individuals or groups or disciplines. Consideration of additional cross-disciplinary initiatives could foster increased productivity.

~Attracting top researchers in many disciplines requires comprehensive start-up packages that allow new hires to establish productive labs and purchase necessary equipment. Total university start-up funding has averaged $3,798,690 annually for the last three years. The increasing number of start-up packages supports scholarly work across the entire campus and is intended to bolster efforts to meet the metrics of NRUF status. Discussion of implementation strategies and specific programs should be ongoing.

Texas State's success and impact is directly tied to the dedication and accomplishments of faculty in their roles as teachers, scholars, and academicians. Successful strategies to recruit and retain faculty require the participation of the entire campus and the recognition that NRUF status and Carnegie R1 status will only happen through effective strategic planning and resource allocation.

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Hiring, Inspiring, and Retaining Outstanding Staff

The Challenge of Attracting and Keeping Exceptional Staff

Ensuring that Texas State University has a diverse, stable, motivated, and productive workforce requires a challenging balance of resource uses. Though a number of factors, both local and national, are straining resources and forcing hard decisions, the challenge remains the same for Texas State as for any university: attracting and retaining highly qualified and effective staff that are representative of our student body is necessary for the university to reach the potential envisioned in our strategic plan.

Overview

Even given the fact that many areas of the university have fewer positions than they would like, perhaps even fewer than they need, Texas State is still a very large employer with over 2,200 benefits-eligible, plus an additional 250 non-benefits eligible, staff positions spread across 735 job titles. Assuming normal turnover, simply maintaining current employee levels means filling hundreds of vacancies annually.

The difficulty in finding highly qualified staff that reflect the diversity of our student body to fill each of those vacancies continues to increase. Therefore, efforts to retain existing employees pay significant dividends as opposed to the challenges of hiring in a tight job market. Furthermore, retaining current personnel is often less resource-intensive than training and otherwise bringing a new hire up to speed.

It should be kept in mind that pay is not the only factor that motivates staff. Some incentives that can motivate staff to stay with the university may come in terms of promotion, training opportunities, increased responsibility, professional development, amenities, and other non-monetary rewards.

Status

A number of metrics show the depth of staffing challenges the university faces:
- The number of staff job postings is increasing each year, but applicant pools are shrinking.
- Fiscal year (FY) 2018 saw 17 percent of all postings closed as **no hire** due primarily to the unacceptable quality of the applicant pool.

- The 401 staff job postings in FY 2013 drew 17,890 applicants, or 44.6 applicants per posting. The 533 postings for FY 2018 drew only 13,373 applicants, or 25.1 applicants per posting. That is a decrease of over 4,500 total applicants, which represents a 45 percent decrease.

The impact of these challenges is not equally spread across all divisions or all types of employment. The division of Finance and Support Services (FSS), for example, has seen a 43 percent drop in nonexempt applicants, but only a two percent drop in applicants for exempt positions. FSS applicants to positions requiring a degree have dropped by 62 percent versus 37 percent for non-degree positions.

Compounding our hiring challenges is the fact that almost 25 percent of Texas State's current employees will be eligible to retire in the next five years. This figure is significantly greater in support positions where 36 percent will be eligible to retire. Once again, this is not equally distributed across the divisions. More than one-third of FSS employees will be eligible to retire over the next five years, with the number evenly distributed between exempt and nonexempt positions. Information Technology and Student Affairs potential retirements are closer to one-fourth of all employees. Academic Affairs is slightly over one-fifth of all employees.

Highlighting our retention challenge, for the five-year period ending in 2018, about 1,870 benefits-eligible staff employees were hired. Of those, 48 percent subsequently left the university with an average employment time of only 1.6 years. Though a significant minority of these departures were for poor performance, a point which underscores the difficulty of making qualified and capable hires from shrinking applicant pools, exit interviews suggest that over 33 percent left for a promotion or a higher paying position.

The university pay plan structure that we use as the

basis for benchmarking has not been adjusted based on market forces since May 2008. This fact has led to 82 percent of current pay plan minimums being below their market benchmarks in FY 2018.

Implications

The university's past approach to staff recruitment has been primarily passive and needs to change. Human Resources currently routinely places job vacancy notices on its website plus an additional 52 resource sites through outside contracts. Departments must tell Human Resources when they want notices placed outside of these sites. This approach is about to change with two additional positions, including our first full-time recruiting position, being assigned to the staff employment function. These positions will enable a more active and aggressive recruiting approach to be implemented that will target increasing both the total number within and the diversity of job applicants in applicant pools, as well as the identification and exploitation of more productive applicant sources locally, regionally, or nationally, as appropriate.

The university remains committed to making progress on the competitiveness of compensation, even though obtaining adequate funding to do so will remain a challenge. A project was launched at the beginning of 2019 that is designed to result in a restructure of the staff pay plan, permit a more accurate comparison to market rates, increase the flexibility and opportunity for pay movement within grades, and better align pay relationships among titles. Efforts such as this must continue.

Non-salary actions can also show employees that they are valued members of the university community and help to mitigate our employment, compensation, and retention challenges. Actions recently implemented or under development include increased emphasis on the benefits of working at Texas State, publishing these benefits in job vacancy notices and on the Human Resources website, revamping the new employee on-boarding process to emphasize the pride, history, traditions, and benefits of working at the university (including a formal follow-up program at regular intervals through the first year of employment), and an individualized annual total value compensation statement for each employee. Actions such as these should be integrated in an organized manner into division and department strategic plans.

A few examples of these types of actions might include:

~Creating and maintaining a positive workplace culture within individual offices and across the university;

~Ensuring that we have challenging, inclusive, and satisfying work environments;

~Taking a holistic approach to employee wellness;

~Providing a comprehensive professional development program that includes strong mentoring and coaching; and

~Equipping those who supervise with the knowledge, tools, and skills needed to do so effectively.

Further Reading

Texas State Compensation Philosophy
http://www.hr.txstate.edu/compensation/Philosophy.html
Addressing Compensation Rates Below Market Value
https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/business-affairs-forum/custom/2012/05/addressing-compensation-rates-below-market-value

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Charting a Path to NRUF Eligibility

The Metrics of National Research University Funding

One significant institutional goal as an Emerging Research University (ERU) under the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Accountability System is gaining access to National Research University Funding (NRUF). This scan provides information on where Texas State University is in regard to each of the NRUF eligibility metrics, where it needs to be to earn NRUF status, and what intermediate measures could indicate satisfactory progress toward the ultimate goal.

Overview

Since 2012, Texas State has been a THECB Emerging Research University under the THECB Accountability System. As an ERU, the university is responsible for developing a long-term strategic plan for research and updating it every five years. That plan recognizes that ERU status is not a static achievement, but the beginning of a journey leading to a Carnegie classification of R1: Doctoral University – Very high research activity and NRUF eligibility.

One of the major goals outlined in the research strategic plan is meeting the THECB metrics necessary to be eligible for National Research University Funding. NRUF is a pool of money designed to enable the eight ERUs to achieve national prominence in research.

There are two mandatory metrics. The first is **designation as an ERU**. The second is **minimum expenditure of $45 million in restricted research** for two consecutive years before NRUF eligibility is established.

In addition, there are six optional metrics of which the university must achieve four. One of these, **recognition of scholarly attainment and research capability,** measured by the presence of a Phi Kappa Phi academic honor society chapter on campus, has been met.

The other metric options (must achieve three) are:

•**A minimum endowment of $400 million for two consecutive years before NRUF eligibility is established.**

•**Awarding of at least 200 Ph.D. degrees in two consecutive years before NRUF eligibility is established.**
•**Entering freshman class demonstrates high academic achievement for two consecutive years before NRUF eligibility is established**. (*At least 50 percent are in top 25 percent of their high school class* **or** *average SAT score is equal to or greater than 1210/average ACT score is equal to or greater than 26)* **and** *composition of class shows progress toward reflecting the population of the state or region with respect to underrepresented students and shows a commitment to improving the academic performance of these students [i.e., TRIO programs, McNair Scholars]*).
•**Demonstrated faculty of high quality for two consecutive years before NRUF eligibility is established.** (*At least five annual recognitions as members of National Academies or Nobel Prize recipients;* **or** *seven annual awards of national/international distinction from 25 exemplary organizations, including Cottrell Scholars, National Science Foundation CAREER Awards, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellows, Woodrow Wilson Fellows, Guggenheim Fellows, etc.*).
•**Demonstrated high quality graduate education**. (*At least 50 graduate-level programs; master's graduation rate of at least 56 percent, and doctoral graduation rate of at least 58 percent; demonstrate that commitment to five doctoral programs [including financial support for doctoral students] is competitive with comparable Association of American Universities public institution programs*.)

Status

Texas State's Executive Research Planning Committee determined in 2018 that meeting certain individual NRUF eligibility criteria was possible by 2026, while others had a higher degree of uncertainty that prevented establishment of a realistic timeline. Summaries of the metrics remaining to be achieved include:

Minimum $45 million annual research expenditure. Restricted research expenditures in FY 2018 were $35.6 million, which represents a 7.6 percent increase over the previous year and a net increase of $2.5 million. In comparison with the other ERUs

during FY 2014-FY 2018, Texas State had the largest five-year percentage increases and third largest dollar increase.

Minimum endowment of $400 million. Texas State had an approximate $205 million in its endowment as of 2018. This represents an increase of $98 million since 2008. The university's 2018 endowment growth of $18.3 million in fundraising was the third highest of the five ERU's who have not yet achieved all NRUF metrics.

Awarding at least 200 Ph.D. degrees. As of 2018, the university has 13 Ph.D. programs that yielded 40 graduates in 2018. As part of its strategic plan, the university is planning to add Ph.D. programs in the coming years based on workforce needs analyses and feasibility studies. However, this metric is not likely to be met within the same time frame as some other optional criteria.

Entering freshman class demonstrates high academic achievement. Although the 2018 freshman class was comprised of 46.8 percent from the top 25 percent of their high school class, this figure does not meet the NRUF metric of 50 percent. The alternative metric of a 1210 average SAT score is above Texas State's 1098 (2018). The class is, however, representative of the state's ethic/racial composition, consisting of 45 percent first generation, and 60 percent minority. While the university has met this criteria in the recent past, it is subject to fluctuation.

Demonstrated faculty of high quality. In 2018, two Texas State faculty have been recognized by NSF CAREER awards.

Demonstrated high quality graduate education. Texas State houses 107 graduate programs, greatly exceeding the NRUF metric of 50. In addition, the master's graduation rate of 76 percent within five years percent average over the past six years (metric = 58 percent) and doctoral rate of 61 percent within 10 years (metric = 56 percent) exceeds the NRUF requirement.

Implications

Minimum $45 million annual research expenditure. Based on FY 2018 expenditures and a simple linear model, it is predicted that this metric could be met by 2024 assuming a seven percent rate of annual

increase or by 2026 with an annual rate of increase of 4.5 percent. However, there are several factors that affect the rate of sponsored programs expenditures in more complex ways than can be described by a simple linear model. For example, state funding historically received via a competitive grant is being restructured as a state appropriation, which are exempt from counting toward restricted research expenditures. Another critical factor is the high percentage of federal awards received by Texas State, which are influenced by priority decisions made by funding agencies or when there is interruption of funding resulting from government shutdowns. Finally, the research portfolio is very dynamic with initiation and termination of awards occurring throughout the fiscal year that also impact research expenditures. Therefore, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is developing a comprehensive analysis across the funded portfolio to better understand the performance. Opportunities that support growth include:

~The Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) Park research incubator offers expanded opportunities to accommodate a variety of start-up companies, particularly those that mesh with Texas State areas of growth, emphasis, or potential.

~University criteria allow for centers of excellence that can serve as innovation leaders, contribute to economic development, catalyze trans-disciplinary efforts, generate knowledge, and enhance student opportunities in many fields.

~In addition to enhancing current partnerships with industry and business, Texas State's areas of academic emphasis and expansion offer opportunities to develop new partnerships with industry.

~New research priorities like the Translational Health Research Initiative seek to transcend existing disciplines and boundaries to create and apply new knowledge that will improve health outcomes for our students, community, and the world.

Minimum endowment of $400 million. To achieve the target by the end of 2026, the endowment will need to grow at an annual rate of approximately nine percent including a combination of new money and market returns.

Potential endowment-increasing actions include:

~Academic Affairs partnering with the Division of University Advancement, which can yield opportunities for endowed chairs and endowed professorships associated with key research programs and programs with which donors have a special relationship. Endowed scholarships are also a potential expansion area. This effort is being supported by the Big Ideas Initiative launched in 2019.

~The Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) is restricted to ERUs. It matches gifts from foundations, corporations, and private donors intended for research support. Carefully tailoring gift solicitations to support the university's areas of expansion and concentration can potentially double the impact on endowment growth.

Awarding at least 200 Ph.D. degrees. Achieving this NRUF metric will require a significant increase in doctoral graduates per year. That growth is dependent on accompanying growth in programs, reduction in time to degree, and increased student financial support. At this time, there is no reliable method for estimating the date of when this metric might be achieved, however areas of planning include:

~Continuing efforts to include doctoral student support in grant applications. This not only increases the number and amount of fellowships available, but maximizes the university's funds.

~Donor solicitations should be mindful that doctoral student tuition fellowships are a useful and marketable investment incentive. (Note: These are also eligible for TRIP-matching funds.)

~Opportunities exist for doctoral programs that align with faculty strengths and market needs.

Entering freshman class demonstrates high academic achievement. Since one of the elements of this metric is improving the academic performance of underrepresented students, enrollment in TRIO programs and Student Support Services is significant, but other program ideas could also be valuable.

~Expanded merit-based scholarship funds could lead to increasing percentages of high ability students from upper high school ranks and with accompanying higher SAT/ACT scores.

~Increasing funding for the Undergraduate Research Fellowship program could serve as a targeted marketing strategy for high achieving students.

Demonstrated faculty of high quality. Since the NRUF metrics for this area involve the quantity of faculty who achieve national academic recognition (five per year) or are awarded by one or more of 25 organizations (seven per year), initiatives might focus on those providing grooming, opportunities for current faculty or recruitment resources, and techniques for promising new faculty.

~New staff and faculty position descriptions might be developed with a view toward complementing existing research expertise or building capacity in growth areas or adding unique new areas of potential and expertise.

~Organized and coordinated college-level programs could be implemented to encourage, highlight, and promote the research activities of promising faculty members and facilitate their nomination for appropriate recognition and awards. This might include publicizing the availability of these recognition programs and actively matching them with qualified faculty.

Demonstrated high quality graduate education. Since this includes financial support for doctoral students, there is overlap with the metric regarding number of Ph.D. degrees awarded. See also suggestions for student support under that section.

~Additionally, since complete evaluation/ assessments of five doctoral programs are part of the metric, initiatives that embody these comprehensive examinations could be useful within the 2014-2024 NRUF window.

Further Reading
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Texas State University's Strategic Plan for Research

Revised 2019

Emerging Technologies and
<u>Digital Learning Environments</u>

Meeting the Technological Challenge for More Effective Teaching/Learning and Better Prepared Graduates

Technological innovation is changing the career world Texas State University's graduates will enter, and it is also diversifying the ways in which they learn. Therefore, the integration of technology into the learning process should be a vital element of the university's planning; but only effective and widespread use of technology's teaching and learning potentials will make the most of this strategic investment. The ultimate goal is implementing technology as a campus-wide booster and multiplier of teaching effectiveness.

<u>Overview</u>

Annually, **EDUCAUSE** announces its Top 10 Information Technology (IT) issues for the year based on surveys from higher education IT leaders across the country. While the 2016 list contains information security and funding models, most of it focuses on student success technologies, business intelligence and analytics, optimizing educational technology, e-learning, and online education.

Additionally, **EDUCAUSE** publishes its *Horizon Report* for higher education and categorizes issues by *when* (time frames) or *how* (difficulty in solving). Important developments in educational technology in particular have the greatest potential to change how Texas State continues to implement its core mission. In the most recent Horizon Report, redesigning learning spaces, growing measurements of learning and analytics, blended learning designs (combining the best of face-to-face and online learning), collaborative learning, deeper learning approaches, evolution of online learning, the proliferation of Open Educational Resources (text, media, and other resources that are openly licensed and freely available), and advancing cultures of innovations are at the top of the list.

Coupled with the inevitable trend of nearly all key services moving to cloud-based services, the future of education delivery and student engagement looks very different from what exists today. The IT organization that supports these architectures will be equally transformed.

Additionally, consumers of higher education (especially incoming tech-savvy students) are not only more and more dependent on these services, but expect them to be more intelligent personal, and match what they are familiar with. For example, mobile devices are steadily becoming a smart endpoint where service providers can push information to consumers based on their geographic location and that location, on or off a college campus, is often beyond the traditional confines of the classroom or lab. While the higher education industry has not yet seen this become pervasive across campuses, it is expected to become a key strategy for making Texas State and other universities more efficient and effective. In addition, increasing competitive pressure for enrollment and demand from students for flexible, accessible, and affordable degree program options has created a strategic space for distance learning and open educational resources (OER) as planning tools. Much of this can be expected during the second half of the current strategic plan.

<u>Status</u>

The campus network, while in good condition, has just not kept pace with technology in some areas – affordable refresh cycles are quite lengthy compared to evolving industry standards. The standard today in wired network switching is **1 Gigabit** to the desktop, the university still has a many of switches at the **10/100 Mbps level** (orders of magnitude slower), and many are over 10 years old. The university wireless infrastructure is production-ready so that it can be used in classrooms or in applications where reliability and coverage are necessary.

This is not to say that Texas State hasn't made significant advances in the applications of technology over the past several years. It has, but the appetite for technology is high in academic, research, and administrative units; and the university is hitting a tipping point regarding resources (human and financial) available to both support existing technology and implement emerging and new technologies.

An area of concern is the feasibility of remaining on the existing Learning Management System (LMS), known better as TRACS. TRACS is an implementation of Sakai, an open source LMS that started in 2004. Over the past several years, the Sakai community has seen a decline in

membership, with members opting for commercial LMS's such as Blackboard or Canvas. To mitigate this risk, the university has chosen Canvas as the new learning management platform at Texas State. Canvas has proven to be more extendable and able to reach the learners at the university where they are. Canvas will be made available to the Texas State community in spring 2020.

While overall enrollment and headcount have been flat at Texas State, distance learning credit hour production has been rising among all student demographics by double digit percentages since 2014. Significant investments have been made in technology and course and program development for distance learning. Additionally, recent structural reorganizations have provided the potential for a more centralized, strategic approach to distance learning fully aligned with Academic Affairs goals. Despite the launch of several new graduate programs since 2017, Texas State has not performed comparably in key performance indicators to peers within the state and nation. Few Texas State programs are listed as fully online and marketing support for individual academic programs is typically restricted to program launch only. These challenges present growth opportunities in distance education which may be leveraged to meet student demand and facilitate student success.

Comparison with its peers in implementation of open educational resources (OER) reveals that Texas State has opportunities for growth in this area as well. A landscape survey on OER was initiated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in 2018 to explore how institutions are making use of OER in courses and academic programs. Our institutional response revealed almost no activity regarding OER among faculty, little professional development activity about it, and no institution-wide measurement of impact implemented or planned

Recently published results from a large-scale research project at the University of Georgia, demonstrate that use of OER can improve student achievement. The THECB has created a grant program and started a process for securing a state-wide OER repository to encourage adoption. Thus, opportunities abound for making headway regarding OER implementation.

Implications
Technology for instruction or general communication significantly changes every three to four years. Consequently, in the life of our current strategic plan

there will be major change. Compounding the challenge are other major variables: changes in students, somewhat slower adaptability of faculty, and the rate of content change specific to each academic discipline.

~Evaluating which educational technology trends the university chooses to align itself with, is a major commitment to a moving target. Discussions at all levels may be needed to contribute to thoughtful and deliberate evaluation of which technologies will provide the greatest return for varied purposes in different disciplines.

~Academic programs will also face consideration of the supporting technologies that facilitate learning interactions including flipped classrooms (where homework and lecture material is accessed by students outside of class, leaving class for discussion, activities, etc.), active learning environments, online education, and multi-way interactive video.

~The sophisticated capabilities of mobile computing have not become pervasive across campuses, but will become so and programs may want to set up mechanisms to address this.

~Creating an institutional-level strategic framework and direction that academic units may access when implementing distance learning programming will leverage our significant investments in technologies and new organizational structure, while enhancing Texas State's competitive position for new enrollments and ensuring student success, quality, and compliance with an increasingly complex set of federal, state, and accreditation standards.

~Developing additional awareness among faculty about OER and encouraging its use should be undertaken with strategic goals set to enhance student learning, make learning materials more accessible, and increase affordability in courses and programs for students.

In general, the use of technology outside the university will continue to have a significant influence on the technology landscape inside the university as expectations of students, faculty, and staff grow and Texas State seeks to fulfill this and future strategic plans.

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The Intentional Shift from Diversity to Inclusion

Valuing, Leveraging, and Welcoming Diversity among University Constituents

Diversity is defined as "the presence of difference within a given setting;" whereas, inclusion is defined as "the process of different identities feeling and/or being valued, leveraged, and welcomed within a given setting." (Bolder, n.d.) While Texas State University has experienced significant growth in diversity among its faculty, staff, and students, there is considerable work to be done in creating a university that embraces, values, and practices inclusive dialogue, interaction and support.

Overview

Over the past several years, many college and university campuses have faced turmoil around questions of fairness, inclusion, equity, and diversity. Texas State is among them.

Since the decision was made for Texas State to actively pursue Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status, the overall expansion of a diverse student body has been realized. Currently, Texas State not only maintains HSI status, but is also a majority/ minority university. In addition to race and ethnicity, Texas State continues to be a top, "veteran friendly" university according to the *Military Times*, a campus with an active and vibrant LGBTQIA student body, and a campus with a similar representation of between students from rural and urban locations. In addition, recent efforts have been made to increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and administration on campus. One result is that the university was recently named by Forbes magazine as one of the nation's "Best Employers for Diversity."

Conversely, while some efforts have been made to shift Texas State from a diverse campus to a campus that actively, thoughtfully, and critically pursues inclusion, ample opportunities remain for faculty, staff, and students to pursue reasons to:

- consistently acknowledge the diversity of the university as a viable and realistic preparation for students to real-world diversity;
- hire faculty that can provide diverse and inclusive curriculum, programming, and mentoring;
- actively encourage students to participate in university- and community-related activities that expand their knowledge and practice of inclusivity; and
- brand the university as "one Texas State," where students challenge the privilege of "choosing not to enter into other's forms of oppression."

Status

Over the past couple of years, Texas State has sought to reinforce its message and unwavering commitment to listening, improving, and acting as a truly inclusive university. Members of the Bobcat community have already begun to forge pathways through crucial conversations, new staff positions, artistic displays, dialogue sessions, demonstrations, process improvements, poetry, music, and other forms of expression.

The current status of student diversity at Texas State, as well as the efforts to increase diverse faculty and staff is "high;" whereas, ample opportunity exists to establish a level of **inclusiveness** that is congruent with our diversity efforts.

Centered upon the basic goals of effectiveness, coupled with some of the issues raised by students, faculty, and staff, there are two broad concepts that Texas State is currently focused on in order to become a more inclusive campus.

- Increasing the participation of faculty, staff, students, and administration in programs, events, presentations, and dialogues, where

they do not belong to the groups or ideologies being presented.

- Creating a campus where, despite differences in background, ideology, nationality, etc., *all* students feel safe, valued, and included.

Implications

Texas State is guided by a commitment to shared values, including a spirit of inclusiveness, the free exchange of ideas, and a sense of community. To achieve these ideals, it is imperative that all members of the university are made to feel welcome, embrace a diversity of people and ideas, and ensure that all voices are heard.

The path to inclusive excellence will be as varied as the faculty, staff, and students who make up our vibrant institution. While there is no limit to the efforts and opportunities to increase inclusivity at Texas State, there are several specific opportunities to intentionally demonstrate impactful inclusion. Some of these include:

~ Establish a "One Bobcat" campaign that is designed to specifically reinforce the importance of inclusion at Texas State. This effort would include marketing both on campus and for the overall present and future Bobcat community, creating paraphernalia (e.g., t-shirts, posters, giveaways) to promote the campaign, and university programming.

~ Ensure that the annual *Common Experience* programming includes specific presentations and events that directly support diversity and inclusion – particularly praxis-driven inclusion.

~ Through the leadership of the college deans, department chairs, and school directors, encourage departments and schools to actively offer programs, events, dialogues, and speakers that promote diverse people, diverse issues, and inclusive participation.

These first steps towards intentionally shifting from a merely **diverse** institution to an **inclusive** one recognizes and acknowledges that Texas State's faculty, staff, and students are changing, and the university environment needs to strategically meet the changing needs of its constituents.

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Utility Infrastructure

Replacing, Upgrading, and Advancing for a Growing University

A reliable and resilient campus infrastructure provides the groundwork for Texas State University to achieve is mission and goals. The utility infrastructure, which includes the core networking and data center infrastructure, plays an important role in campus operations, as outages of any of these services cause disruption to the university's ability to effectively deliver its overall mission.

Overview

The *University Master Plan,* updated in 2017, identifies the need to improve infrastructure to support the university's goal of becoming a National Research University. That plan recognizes the need for the campus to have reliable and resilient utility infrastructure in place.

The City of San Marcos is responsible for delivery of electrical power to the San Marcos campus and for receipt and treatment of the campus sanitary sewer effluent. Centerpoint Energy is responsible for delivery of natural gas. For the Round Rock campus, Oncor and the City of Round Rock are responsible for delivery of electrical power potable water, and for receipt of the campus sanitary sewer effluent. Atmos is responsible for delivery of natural gas.

The utility infrastructure owned and operated by Texas State, found on the San Marcos campus consists of: medium voltage (MV) electrical distribution system, medium pressure steam (MPS) generation and distribution system, chilled water (CW) generation and distribution system, potable well-water production and distribution system, sanitary and storm sewer systems, a reclaimed water system, and building automation systems located inside campus buildings. The Outside Plant (OSP) consists of the pathways, spaces, and media that provide telecommunications external to buildings. OSP is used to support voice, data, video, electronic security, building automation, fire, life, safety, and other low voltage systems as they evolve.

Status

The 2017 master plan identified several utility infrastructure items that should be addressed soon to ensure resiliency and reliability of the university's utility systems.

On the San Marcos campus:

- Portions of the electrical distribution system are approaching the end of their useful life. Further, the campus' underground (UG) parallel radial systems are becoming increasingly prohibitive to maintain because the parallel circuits are run through shared manholes with other utilities. The existing UG electrical distribution system is being re-configured to segregate the two parallel feeders into separate manholes, thus promoting more resilient and reliable system configuration. Much work is still required to completely replace all aging electrical infrastructure on campus and finish segregating the parallel radial feed system. The university is also working with San Marcos Electric Utilities to bring reliable and redundant electrical capacity commensurate with our research needs to the San Marcos campus.
- The steam generation system has exceeded its firm capacity. There is uncertainty in the steam flow meter data used to analyze actual campus loads, and a new project is underway to replace sensors with more reliable units that will provide credible and repeatable data that can then be used to guide decisions regarding future assets.
- The chilled water generation system consists of five separate plants throughout campus, each operating in 'island mode;' however, loads can be shifted across plants to accommodate plant operational changes. Recent upgrades to the campus distribution system have furthered the ability of the system to move building loads from plant to plant. Continual review of campus load versus available assets will guide when and where the next chilled water asset is implemented.
- The water production and distribution systems have multiple single points of failure. The grid configured campus water distribution system is aging but has built-in redundancies to minimize outages due to line breaks. There is a need to evaluate and design a new cross-connection with the City of San Marcos to allow for water towers to be taken offline for maintenance.
- The sanitary and storm water systems throughout campus are designed to convey effluent to associated outfalls. There are known concerns regarding the size and, in some areas, location of these systems that need to be addressed.

- The reclaimed water system on campus will be used for irrigation purposes to help reduce the quantity of water withdrawn from the aquifer.
- Portions of the telecommunications network use outdated fiber for connections between buildings which does not support high-speed connections. Additionally, many buildings on campus only have one fiber connection to the network, with no backup in the event of a fiber cut.
- The network switches and routers that comprise the campus data network do not have reliable power. Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) units are commonly installed with new network switches during upgrades, but these units can occasionally fail and cause unscheduled outages.
- Most of the wireless access points (WAPs) that comprise the outdoor Wi-Fi network are mounted to building exteriors, causing interference with WAPs inside the buildings and does not provide optimal placement for many outdoor areas that need Wi-Fi service.
- Some buildings on campus utilize fiber optic cable provided by a local cable TV company. When this contract expires, these fiber connections may become expensive or unavailable.
- All three data centers and many buildings on the San Marcos campus utilize diesel generators for emergency power, which must be manually re-filled during operation. Availability of diesel fuel in a major disaster scenario places our data centers at risk in the case of an extended disaster scenario.

On the Round Rock campus:
- All the existing utility infrastructure on the Round Rock campus is relatively new and can be expanded to meet the needs of campus as it continues to grow. The existing Central Utility Building (CUB) on campus has space to support future buildout of both hot and chilled water generation assets to support up to a total of five academic buildings of similar size as the existing structures.
- The underground cable pathways on the Round Rock campus comprise single points of failure, including a single pathway for access to the campus from the right-of-way.
- The network switches and routers that comprise the campus data network do not have reliable power.
- The network on the Round Rock campus is not designed to run the campus independently in the case of a network failure between San Marcos and Round Rock, as it depends on numerous services provided at the San Marcos campus for normal operation.
- The Round Rock campus does not a have proper data center.

Implications

Given these challenges, how can a manageable and appropriate growth rate be sustained from a utilities infrastructure standpoint?

On the San Marcos campus:

~The electrical infrastructure will need major replacements of underground cables within the next 10-20 years. While replacing cables, attention should be paid to segregating the parallel radial feeds to allow for maintenance to occur on one set of cables, while keeping the parallel feed energized.

~The steam infrastructure will also require further analysis to determine when additional heating assets need to be installed. There are known deficiencies at the Central Plant.

~The chilled water infrastructure will require further analysis as the East Plant approaches the end of its useful life (circa 2025). New production assets should be added to ensure firm capacity is available.

~The analysis and design of the cross-connection of the water system should be implemented.

~The sanitary system should be inspected and modeled to verify age and capacity. The storm systems should be maintained and upgraded in accordance with the campus MS4 program.

~The use of reclaimed water on campus may cost the university more money in operating costs, but will help the university become more sustainable by reducing withdrawal rates from the Edwards Aquifer.

~A new campus utility masterplan is needed.

~All remaining outside plant multimode fiber on campus should be replaced with single-mode fiber in the next three years. Multiple strands of single-mode fiber should be run to all buildings that currently have only a single pair to provide redundancy.

~Old and failing copper telephone cabling between buildings should be removed and replaced with fiber-optic cables.

~Reliable power should be provided to data closets in all buildings, including emergency power generation and UPS.

~Power and data cabling should be provided on light poles and other outdoor structures in future construction.

~Dark fiber provided by the local cable TV company should be replaced with university-owned fiber.

~Diesel emergency power generators should be replaced with natural gas units.

On the Round Rock Campus:
~As the campus grows, the infrastructure should be expanded within the footprint of the existing CUB, as needed. Once it is no longer feasible to continue to add or upsize assets within the existing CUB, the campus should add a separate CUB facility to support the additional growth on campus. The new and existing CUB should be hydraulically connected and operate in unison.

~Redundant campus entry pathways for data providers should be installed in order to eliminate single points of failure.

~Future buildings should include redundant outside plant pathways to interconnect with existing facilities.

~As the campus is expanded, data center space (including power distribution, cooling, rack space, and emergency power) should be included in one or more buildings in order to host any on-premises computing hardware that may be required.

Implemented carefully, none of these measures should come at the expense of the traditional academic experience or quality that has long been a deserved part of the university's reputation.

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Fundraising

Supporting the University's Strategic Priorities

Texas State University has set a goal of becoming a National Research University in order to help meet educational workforce demands and contribute to innovation in the economy through research. In support of this goal, the university has added students and degree programs, built state-of-the-art facilities, and raised its research profile. Our athletic programs continue to reach new heights, as well. The university has launched a fundraising campaign to support investments in each of these areas and to drive the continued growth of Texas State.

Overview

In the eight-year period during the Pride in Action campaign, the university averaged $19 million annually in philanthropic gifts. The campaign ended in 2014 with $152 million raised in support of the university, exceeding the original goal of $110 million. Following the close of the campaign, University Advancement began preparing for the next comprehensive campaign to support the university in achieving eligibility for the National Research University Fund (NRUF).

In May 2015, Texas State engaged a fundraising strategy consultant to conduct a campaign planning study. The study included strategic conversations with 89 internal and external stakeholders, three focus groups, and an online survey sent to over 16,000 recent donors. Based on analysis of historical giving and feedback collected through the campaign planning study, the consultant recommended moving forward with a seven- to nine-year campaign and suggested fundraising targets, timelines, and provided strategic guidance.

During the initial campaign planning period, University Advancement put a strategic focus on implementing new systems, refining processes, and hiring experienced fundraising staff in key positions. These investments have contributed to growth in the fundraising capability of the university. The university finished FY 2015 with the strongest fundraising results ever, raising over $24.4 million from nearly 13,000 donors. This momentum has continued each fiscal year since, with average annual fundraising of $27.5 million between FY 2015 and FY 2018.

Status

Texas State has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance fundraising outcomes since 2015. These include:

Growing the major gifts team. In April 2017, the Texas State University Development Foundation approved a strategic plan that allocated Foundation resources in support of fundraising and communications to support the university in achieving NRUF targets. In the two years since, the university has added six major gift officers, bringing the total to 17, with a plan to expand the number of major gift officers to 24 by 2022. University Advancement will continue to hire additional gift officers and support staff during the campaign, as funds become available.

Building a culture of giving among students and alumni. The Annual Giving department implemented new initiatives to engage first-time donors in support of the university. On October 3-4, 2018, the university held our third annual Step Up for State day of giving event. For 1,899 minutes, in honor of the university's founding year, the Texas State community came together to support 51 projects from across the university. In total, 3,250 donors contributed over $250,000, including more than 1,000 who made their first-ever gift to the university. University Advancement has partnered with Student Affairs and the colleges on Step Up for State and other crowdfunding initiatives to engage the current student population with fundraising in ways that will strengthen their contributions as alumni of Texas State.

Fundraising with international reach. In 2015, the university began assigning major gift officers to "out-of-state" regions, with a focus on major metropolitan areas with clusters of Bobcat alumni. As of 2019, gift officer portfolios include Bobcats across nine states. The first international alumni event was held in 2017 in Mexico City. In 2019, the university expanded its international outreach to alumni with events in Hong Kong and Japan.

Engaging donors in support of Big Ideas. In preparation for the launch of the public phase of the campaign, University Advancement partnered with the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to source visionary ideas from faculty and staff for the next comprehensive fundraising campaign. "Big Ideas" align philanthropic

support with innovative research in areas that build on existing strengths and can make a significant contribution to an important social issue or creative endeavor. Five projects were selected out of 36 proposals submitted. These projects will receive dedicated fundraising support to raise lead gifts for the campaign, with a focus on gifts of $1 million or more. University Advancement anticipates additional opportunities to submit or resubmit Big Ideas on a regular basis throughout the campaign.

Focus on endowments. The university has continued to put an emphasis on endowment gifts in support of our goal to reach the $400 million endowment criterion for NRUF eligibility. The university endowment has grown from approximately $47 million at the start of the Pride in Action campaign in 2006 to over $205 million in 2019. In FY 2018, the university added 66 new endowments, with total endowment contributions of $8 million.

Building university's profile through branding and national media outreach. In 2018, the university engaged the branding firm One Sixty Over Ninety to conduct research directed at measuring Texas State University brand awareness and perception. The report of findings informed the development of messaging to position the university to future students, alumni, and the general public. Additionally, the university and the Texas State University Development Foundation have partnered to engage One Sixty Over Ninety to assist with planning and implementing a national public relations campaign to promote the university in the national media.

Legacy gifts to support the future of Texas State. In FY 2015, Texas State had a three-year average of approximately $1 million in planned gifts annually. Since that time, planned giving has increased to an average of approximately $5 million per year, not including a planned gift of $15 million received in FY 2017. This increase is largely attributable to investments made in the university's planned giving program, including a contract with Thompson & Associates for estate planning services and The Stelter Company to produce and distribute over 5,500 planned giving newsletters twice per year.

Implications

~In preparing for the public phase of the campaign, University Advancement will partner with University Marketing to develop a campaign brand and marketing materials in preparation for the launch of the public phase of the campaign; building upon the branding work of One Sixty Over Ninety.

~In an effort to broaden outreach through new technology, new software will be used to broaden alumni engagement efforts and will also support the Annual Giving and Development teams.

~Colleges, schools, and departments will have the opportunity to support this new fundraising campaign by helping to build a culture of giving among their current students and alumni, as well as by reaching out to other program supporters.

With this solid foundation in place for effective fundraising to support university Big Ideas, Texas State is set to publicly introduce its new campaign, which is anticipated to be our most successful ever, and should move us closer to achieving our university strategic priorities.

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