



**TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Expanded Version of the President's Report**  
**Presented to the Board of Regents**  
**May 25-26, 2023**

## **HOPES & ASPIRATIONS HIGH**

With the January launch of our *Hopes & Aspirations High* vision for TXST's future, several imperatives became our guiding principles: elevate student success, achieve Carnegie R1 status, increase enrollment, grow the Round Rock Campus, and reduce administrative burdens. Since my last update, we have gained incredible momentum. We aligned the university organizational structure to support these imperatives; implemented recommendations submitted by presidential commissions, task forces, and a workgroup; incorporated the imperatives in the strategic planning process; set the transformation of our Round Rock Campus in motion; and launched national searches for two inaugural positions, a Vice President for Global Education and Online and a Vice President for the Round Rock Campus. This report celebrates the achievements that we have made so far and provides key updates.

## **BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF PREFERENCE**

First, I must acknowledge our great faculty and staff for generating this momentum. They have done amazing work on this front while continuing to run university operations and carry out their day-to-day responsibilities to serve our students and each other. For that, I am truly grateful. I remain committed to improving employee morale and am happy to report that in the last 18 months, we have:

- Made market salary adjustments for more than 1,800 faculty and staff.
- Initiated a 25% tuition discount for employee dependents, effective Fall 2023.
- Created a new discounted meal plan for employees with a cost of less than \$6 per meal.
- Implemented a new faculty title series that will start in Fall 2024. The new title series, consisting of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor of instruction, will provide recognition and advancement opportunities for faculty dedicating their talents to teaching, learning, and instructional activities that enhance student success.

We have initiated the process to conduct a salary study with an external partner that will help us be strategic as we work to ensure that our faculty and staff compensation is competitive.

## **ALIGNING UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE WITH IMPERATIVES**

We have made changes in our university organizational structure to help sustain momentum toward reaching our *Hopes & Aspirations High*. This process has provided an opportunity to

comprehensively integrate offices, departments, and divisions with like functions that are directly engaged in our university imperatives. The most substantive changes have included:

- Creating a new Division of Research (formerly the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs reporting to the Provost) to lead the Run to R1.
- Merging the Office of University Marketing and the Office of University Communications and Public Relations into the Division of University Marketing and Communications to more efficiently support and promote university priorities.
- Creating a new Division of Student Success, comprised of departments from the former Division of Student Affairs and specific student success services units from the Division of Academic Affairs, to better coordinate the delivery of student success initiatives.
- Moving University Libraries from the Division of Information Technology to the Division of Academic Affairs to enhance the integration of academic and scholarly endeavors.

## **ELEVATING STUDENT SUCCESS**

Preparing our students for success at TXST and after graduation is at the heart of what we do. Historically, student success initiatives have lived primarily in different units, reporting to different vice presidents. As I described above, we have brought like teams together under a new Division of Student Success to reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and repurpose positions to optimize student support – all with the goal of creating a holistic student success mechanism that gives every Bobcat the opportunity to reach their full potential. Dr. Cynthia Hernandez is leading this new division, and her title has changed from Vice President for Student Affairs to Vice President for Student Success.

Dr. Hernandez and Dr. Michael O’Malley, Dean of the College of Education, have been appointed as co-chairs of the [Commission on Student Success](#), which was established last Fall to make bold recommendations to increase retention and graduation rates.

Under their leadership, we are moving forward with critical investments that will enhance student success:

- Launching a Student Success Center, which will include a student success software platform that will allow the university to collect, compile, analyze, and act on data that are known to predict student success.
- Expanding student access to virtual mental health counseling and other initiatives supporting student well-being.

Though the full impact of these changes will take some time to materialize, I am happy to report that we retained a near record 92% of our First-Time-In-College (FTIC) student 2022 cohort from Fall to Spring.

## **RUNNING TO R1**

TXST is a national research university with a Carnegie Classification of Doctoral University: High Research Activity (R2) and a Texas-designation as an Emerging Research University. We are focused on raising our national research profile and achieving national prominence as a Doctoral University: Very High Research Activity (R1) by 2027. Recent numbers show we are

on the right track. Compared to the same quarter the previous year, all FY2023 second quarter key research metrics have increased significantly:

- Total sponsored program expenditures were \$28.4M, a 22% increase (+\$4.9M).
- Total research and development expenditures were \$47.9M, a 40% increase (+\$13.7M).
- Restricted research expenditures were \$20.3M, a 25% increase (+\$4.1M).

Last Fall, the [Presidential Commission on the Run to R1](#) was established to develop an intentional and strategic plan to achieve R1 status by 2027. Based on their recommendations, we have made investments to increase our profile in key Carnegie Classification metrics:

- Providing three years of funding for up to 50 assistantships and scholarships for our Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology, Computer Science, and Materials Science, Engineering and Commercialization PhD programs.
- Providing funding for up to 50 additional assistantships and tuition scholarships for students in all other TXST doctoral programs.
- Supporting ~30 postdoctoral researchers for two years each.

The results have been positive thus far. Our doctoral applications are up 21% (+61) and our admissions are up 40% (+40) for Fall 2023 over last year.

## **GROWING ENROLLMENT**

We are making significant advances in fulfilling our mission to help more people join in the college experience by implementing new recruitment strategies. Namely, we:

- Added a secondary undergraduate application (the “Common App”) to increase out-of-state applications.
- Made competitive cost adjustments to out-of-state tuition for online programs.
- Developed external partnerships with Harmony and IDEA Public Schools.
- Optimized our scholarship plan to remain competitive.
- Implemented a new transfer scholarship program.
- Developed community college transfer articulation agreements with Coastal Bend College, Dallas Community College, and Laredo College.
- Developed new ways of promoting online programs (e.g., Alamo Colleges, with 66,000 students, is now promoting the Department of Organization, Workforce and Leadership Studies online degree program on their website).
- Increased fellowships for new incoming master’s students beginning in Fall 2023, more than doubling funding for fellowships currently available from The Graduate College.

### Celebrating Our Successes:

Our recruitment efforts are paying off. As of April 17, 2023, year-to-year comparisons of application data indicate that we are on track for a record-breaking enrollment this Fall:

<b>Enrollment Metrics</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>% Change (No.)</b>
FTIC applications	40,643*	24% (+7,943 applications)
FTIC admits	27,322*	14% (+3,431 admits)
Transfer applications	3,476	15% (+448 applications)
Transfer admits	2,141	7% (+132 admits)

<b>Enrollment Metrics</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>% Change (No.)</b>
Master's applications	3,256	-8.9% (-318 applications)
Master's admits	1,334	17.5% (+199 admits)
Doctoral applications	369*	23.8% (+71 applications)
Doctoral admits	150*	15.4% (+20 admits)

\*On record pace!

Other successes to celebrate include:

- For the first time in our history, TXST is second among Texas universities, in applications submitted through Apply Texas for Fall 2023 (only Texas A&M University has more applications than TXST).
- Attendance (2,376 prospective students) at April's Bobcat Day, our premier open house event, was the second highest ever recorded. Combined, our four Bobcat Day events for 2022-2023 increased by 42% (+2,105 prospective students) compared to 2021-2022.
- "Bring Bobcats Back," a unique recruitment program for stop-outs, enrolled 259 former Bobcats this Spring and projects another 170 by Fall 2023.
- The Amazon Career Choice partnership enrolled 131 employees, and 17 graduated in the first year. There are 100 actively enrolled this Spring.

#### Growing Online and International Enrollment

There are two markets that we have yet to fully tap into – online and international.

- *Online.* The pandemic showed us that indeed we can offer classes online when we converted more than 5,000 sections to an online format. Today, we offer nearly 150% more sections online than we did pre-pandemic (869 in Spring 2023 versus 349 in Spring 2019). There is, however, room to grow with only 13% of our sections and 9% of our degree programs offered online.
- *International.* Based on recommendations from the recruitment task force, we recently removed a cap that historically limited the funds we could invest to recruit international students through partner agencies, and we immediately began to reap the benefits. For example, undergraduate applications and admits for Fall 2023 are up 401% (+594 applications) and 155% (+166 admits), respectively, over last year. International graduate applications and admits are up by 5% (+71 applications) and 21% (101 admits). Despite this shift, international students only make up 2% of our overall student body and 13% at the graduate level.

With that said, a key component of our *Hopes & Aspirations High* is to develop and implement a targeted strategy to grow our online and international enrollment. To help support these aspirations, we are in the process of bringing together our International Affairs units and Office of Distance and Extended Learning to form the Division of Global Education and Online to be led by a Vice President for Global Education and Online. We are in the final stages of the selection process and expect to have the vice president in place by mid-summer. Our global and online enterprise will play a key role in shaping TXST's future. It has the potential to provide affordable, high-quality, and convenient higher education access to tens of thousands of future students.

### Transforming the Round Rock Campus

TXST's Round Rock Campus was established in 1996 at Westwood High School in Round Rock. In 25 years, it has grown to three large academic buildings on 101 acres. Today, the campus is a non-residential campus that offers upper-level bachelor's, master's, and doctoral courses and degrees. Total enrollment is currently 1,300 students, but our bold plan is to increase to 10,000 students by 2030.

The population of Central Texas is expected to double by 2060, with Williamson County contributing significantly to that growth. TXST is committed to expanding commensurately to meet the needs of those future students. Our Round Rock Campus is uniquely positioned to:

- Provide affordable, high-quality, and convenient higher education to thousands of future students in and around Williamson County.
- House cutting-edge research and training that complements the world-class technology, life sciences, bioengineering, business, and health care sectors in the north Austin area.
- Drive economic development and job creation by creating academic programs to support research and development and business incubation. Together with our San Marcos Campus, the Round Rock Campus can become the source for much of the workforce that is needed to support the growth of Central Texas as the economic engine of the state.

Our goal is to make the Round Rock Campus the third largest college campus in the Austin MSA. To increase enrollment at our Round Rock Campus to 10,000 students by 2030, our academic leadership has already developed an aggressive plan for expanding TXST's existing educational programs in Round Rock beginning Fall 2023. Further, we have established a long-term strategic plan for the coming seven years, broken into two phases:

#### ***Phase 1 (2023-2025):***

- Expand current degree and add new degree programs to meet market demand.
- Develop seamless programs with Austin Community College.
- Introduce freshman and sophomore classes.
- Establish a new School of Professional Studies for professional development.
- Complete the move of the College of Health Professions to the Round Rock Campus.
- Build a life-sciences incubator to support research, industry demand, and job creation.
- Remove barriers to growth (e.g., space utilization, food service, marketing, technology, and data management).
- Cultivate community and business partnerships.

#### ***Phase 2 (2026-2030):***

- Add student housing to make Round Rock a residential campus.
- Open a VA Clinic (pending VA selection).
- Create new high-demand bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs.
- Continue to grow degree programs currently offered.

To lead efforts to transform and grow the Round Rock Campus, we are in the middle of a national search for an inaugural Vice President for the Round Rock Campus. The new vice president is expected to be in place by August 2023.