



TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Expanded Version of the President's Report
Presented to the Board of Regents
August 10-11, 2023

Texas State University's future continues to unfold with our *Hopes & Aspirations High* vision. In the last year, we have reinforced the strong foundation built over the years to elevate student success, to achieve Carnegie R1 status, to increase enrollment, to grow the Round Rock Campus, to reduce administrative burdens, and to make the university a place where people want to work and grow. Although the full impact of the changes we have been making will take some time to materialize, the fruits of our labor are beginning to bud. This report provides key updates and celebrates how the work of many is advancing TXST and impacting our students in meaningful ways.

BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF PREFERENCE

I am eternally grateful to our faculty and staff. They have worked hard to move us forward -- often with limited staffing and resources. One of my top priorities remains to recognize the exceptional work that they do by addressing the need for competitive salaries and additional positions. I am happy to report that TXST is poised to take a giant leap toward this priority. Effective September 1, 2023, we will:

- Provide a performance-based merit pool for eligible employees,
- Make a cost-of-living salary adjustment for regular staff and faculty members with a start date on or before March 1, 2023, who earn under \$100,000 per year,
- Offer a base salary of at least \$30,000 to all full-time regular employees,
- Create new staff positions,
- Offer new retirement plan options and financial advising,
- Offer new employee insurance plan benefits,
- Fund increases in University Longevity Pay and faculty promotion raises, and
- Address the most significant market gaps within our faculty ranks.

We also have teams working to reduce administrative burdens related to information technology, human resources, and procurement. Many of their recommendations to address inefficiencies and gaps as well as streamline processes have been approved by the President's Cabinet and have been (or are being) implemented. Their work is not done though, and they will continue to meet regularly and bring forth additional recommendations to the President's Cabinet.

ALIGNING UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE TO ELEVATE

As outlined in my previous report, we have already made several changes in our university organizational structure to achieve our *Hopes & Aspirations High*. This summer, we are doing more -- primarily to strengthen student success and address recently passed legislation. The passage of Senate Bill 17 in the most recent legislative session has led all Texas public universities to examine how they handle their work, structure, and processes around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our leadership team has been considering ways to improve how we approach serving our diverse student body even before the most recent legislative session.

In the past several months, Dr. Gigi Secuban, Vice President for Inclusive Excellence (IE), has evaluated the organizational structure of the Division of IE in order to eliminate duplication and to improve services. In November 2022, for example, she identified opportunities to serve our faculty and staff more efficiently by moving Talent Acquisition from IE back to Human Resources.

Effective August 1, 2023, TXST dissolved the IE division. All of the state-funded positions in the division were eliminated.

- The five full-time employees (and graduate assistants and student employees) dedicated to student initiatives were offered positions in the Division of Student Success,
- The TRIO program, which is federally funded to serve primarily K-12 students and schools districts, was moved to the College of Education, and
- Dr. Secuban was offered the position of Senior Advisor to the President to focus on community outreach and presidential initiatives for up to two years.

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. We are projecting to exceed \$140M in total research and development (R&D) expenditures by the end of FY2023. In the third quarter of this fiscal year, total R&D expenditures were \$77.5M, which is a 41% increase over the same period in the previous fiscal year. Of these, restricted research expenditures from federal and private sources (a key measure in the Texas University Fund [TUF] legislation) totaled \$36.3M for the third quarter, an increase of 25% from the previous year. We anticipate that by the end of FY2023 this total will increase to \$56.5M.

Our [Presidential Commission on the Run to R1](#) continues to drive our Run to R1 initiatives:

- On May 1, 2023, TXST hosted an interactive town hall and 1K walk/run to celebrate progress made and next steps in the Run to R1.
- To date, we have invested in our Run to R1 by funding post-doctoral researchers and additional Ph.D. tuition scholarships, stipends, and course release time for faculty members to concentrate on research. The investment continues to bear fruit, with record-breaking numbers of doctoral student applications, admissions, research assistantships, and tuition scholarships. For example, we received 85 doctoral student applications and 45 doctoral student admissions for Summer 2023 and 343 doctoral student applications across

all programs for Fall 2023. The Run to R1 Postdoctoral Researcher Catalyst program attracted over 100 applications and resulted in 30 awards.

We are fortunate to be included in the TUF legislation. Assuming the ballot initiative to create the TUF passes this fall, we will be incentivized to increase our research expenditures from federal sources, and to produce more Ph.D. graduates. With that in mind, we aim to nearly double the number of doctoral degrees offered at TXST in a very short period of time. On May 31, 2023, we submitted planning notifications for an unprecedented eleven doctoral programs to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in the following fields:

- *On-campus*: Integrated Molecular and Biophysical Chemistry, Mathematics, Civil Engineering, Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering, and Electrical Engineering.
- *Online*: Curriculum and Leadership, Business Administration, Construction Management, Engineering Management, Sports Administration, and Nursing Practice.

The six online programs were selected based on their potential to scale up to large enrollments quickly, which will help generate the necessary revenue to help fund the more research-intensive on-campus Ph.D. programs.

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 second undergraduate application option (the “Common App”). To date, we have received 16,229 common applications for Fall 2023, and have seen significant increases in out-of-state (+152% or +3,948) and international (511% or +762) freshman applications.
- Developed external partnerships with the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Public Schools.
- Optimized our scholarship plan to remain competitive. The number of accepted First Time in College (FTIC) merit awards are up 12.8%.
- Implemented a new transfer scholarship program. The overall scholarship acceptance rate has increased 11%.
- Developed a transfer articulation agreement with Tyler Junior College and Laredo College.
- Added additional graduate student recruitment events (e.g., online information sessions, fairs, and outreach to institutions without graduate degree programs).

Our recruitment efforts are paying off. As of June 26, 2023, year-to-year comparisons of application data indicate that we are on track for a record-breaking enrollment this fall:

Enrollment Metrics	Students	% Change (No.)
FTIC applications	42,452*	24% (+8,298 applications)
FTIC admits	28,748*	15% (+3,758 admits)
Transfer applications	5,132	6.9% (+333 applications)
Transfer admits	3,448	1.7% (+58 admits)

Enrollment Metrics	Students	% Change (No.)
Master's applications	3,790	-7.1% (-290 applications)
Master's admits	1,955	8.2% (+148 admits)
Doctoral applications	399*	27.9% (+87 applications)
Doctoral admits	193*	31.3 (+46 admits)

*New record!

Other successes to celebrate include:

- For the first time in our history, TXST is first among Texas universities in freshman applications submitted through “Apply Texas” for Fall 2023.
- Attendance at Bobcat Days, our premier open house event, was the highest ever recorded. Combined, attendance at our four Bobcat Day events for 2022-2023 was 7,085 prospective students, a 42% (+2,105 prospective students) increase over 2021-2022.
- “Bring Bobcats Back,” a unique recruitment program for stop-outs, enrolled 143 former Bobcats this summer and 247 are registered for Fall 2023.
- To date, through the Amazon Career Choice partnership, we have enrolled 158 employees, with 17 actively enrolled this summer and 10 enrolled for Fall 2023.

Growing Online and International Enrollment

A key component of *Hopes & Aspirations High* is the development and implementation of a global strategy focused on growing the TXST brand regionally, nationally, and internationally. To achieve this goal, TXST will: 1) enhance recruiting efforts to bring international students to our campuses, and 2) provide students unable to come to campus an opportunity to earn a TXST degree/credential through online programs or at regional and international locations.

Current metrics show that what we have recently implemented has had some impact:

- *Online:* Today, we offer nearly 150% more sections online than we did pre-pandemic (869 in Spring 2023 versus 349 in Spring 2019).
- *International:* As of June 26, 2023, undergraduate applications and admits for Fall 2023 are up 520% (+764) and 241% (+251), respectively, over last year. Graduate applications and admits are up by 6.6% (+108) and 27.6% (180), respectively.

Despite the positive numbers, we aspire to fully tap into the online and international markets. I am happy to report that after an extensive national search, Dr. Thilla Sivakumaran joined TXST on June 15, 2023, to lead the new Division of TXST Global. Though he has only been with us for two months, he has set in motion several key initiatives including:

- Issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for domestic and international online operational management service providers to help market and recruit international and domestic students to online degree programs offered by TXST.
- Issuing an RFP to add approximately 50 new international recruiting agents.
- Creating continuing education programming for the Round Rock Campus.
- Preparing to launch TXST Online in Summer and Fall 2024, which will offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs.
- Preparing six online doctoral program proposals (as described above).
- Developing partnerships with:

- University of Creative Arts in England (London) and Saitama University (Saitama, Japan) to offer a TXST degree at their respective campuses through transfer credit, online classes, and in-person classes taught by TXST faculty.
- Laredo College to offer several 4-year TXST degrees (e.g., a bachelor's in logistics and supply chain management and a bachelor's in criminal justice) at their campus.
- Collin College (Dallas) to offer 4-year TXST degrees (e.g., bachelor's degrees in computer science and engineering management, and master's degrees in computer science, engineering management, and construction management).
- The flight school at San Marcos regional airport to offer a bachelor's in aviation with commercial pilot certification.

Transforming the Round Rock Campus

We are finalizing an aggressive 7-year plan to expand community/business partnerships, degree programs, research activity; increase the infrastructure; and grow enrollment to 10,000 by 2030 at our Round Rock Campus. Initiatives from Phase 1 of the plan finalized early in the spring have been implemented. For example, we:

- Expanded current degree and added new degree programs for Fall 2023/Spring 2024 to meet market demand and result in at least 500 net new students.
- Committed investments to support expanded programming, including 13 new positions, \$26,000 in technology, and \$340,000 in marketing.
- Developed seamless 2+2 and 3+1 programs with Austin Community College.
- Issued a Request for Quotations to build a Life Sciences Incubator facility in partnership with the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce to support an urgent market need in Austin for locating start-up companies.
- Engaged an outside firm to conduct a space study of the Round Rock Campus.
- Participated in the federal RFP for an Outpatient VA Hospital.
- Hired a new leadership team (Dr. Julie Lessiter, Vice President for the Round Rock Campus and Dr. M. Gary Sayed, Dean of the College of Health Professions) that will refine and implement the rest of the plan.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

We have several recently announced leadership changes:

- Dr. Gene Bourgeois' final year as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will be this upcoming academic year (2023-2024).
- Mr. Ken Pierce, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, will be retiring on September 8, 2023.
- Dr. Jaime Chahin, Dean of Applied Arts, will be retiring on August 7, 2023.

Searches to fill the two vacant vice president positions have commenced. An interim for Dean Chahin's position will be named while the university conducts an academic program organizational review.