HISTORY AND CONTEXT

SAN ANTONIO AND UTSA

Located in south-central Texas, on the edge of the Texas Hill Country, San Antonio is not only a city of historic significance, it is now the seventh largest city in the United States with an estimated population of more than 1,328,984. San Antonio has also been a rapidly growing city. U.S. Census statistics from 1990 and 2000 show a population increase from 935,833 to 1,144,940—a 23.3 percent increase. An increase of 16.1 percent is estimated from 2000–2007. The seat of Bexar County, San Antonio occupies more than 340 square miles, and is more than 55 percent Hispanic.

San Antonio is a major international tourist and convention destination. In addition to the heritage sites of the Spanish Missions, including the Alamo, other attractions include the River Walk, Sea World of Texas, Fiesta Texas, the Historic Downtown, the King William Historic District, the Blue Star Arts District, and the HemisFair Park. The City is also blessed with beautiful parks and important museums.

The City boasts an impressive array of educational and research institutions. The Alamo Colleges District includes five campuses in San Antonio serving more than 53,000 students. Other than UTSA, four-year institutions include: St. Mary’s University, Trinity University, Our Lady of the Lake University, and University of the Incarnate Word. A new campus of Texas A&M University is planned for the south side of the city.

UTSA now comprises three campuses: the Main Campus, located on the north side near Loop 1604, the Downtown Campus, located west of the downtown area, and the HemisFair Park Campus, located on the east side of downtown.

Other University of Texas System facilities in San Antonio include The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, which includes the Medical School, the Dental School, the Nursing School, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and the School of Health Professions Sciences.
INTRODUCTION

ORIGINS

Founded by the Texas Legislature in 1969, The University of Texas at San Antonio became the first public university to serve the City of San Antonio. While administrative offices for its first president, Arleigh Templeton, were established in HemisFair Park in 1970, early students attended classes in the Koger Center, a commercial office park.

In May 1970 The University of Texas System Board of Regents accepted a donation of 600 acres in northwest San Antonio near the intersection of I-10 and Loop 1904 that would become The University of Texas at San Antonio campus. Located approximately 17 miles from downtown at the edge of the Texas Hill Country, the 600-acre site offered the campus a splendid natural setting and connections, via freeways, to the central city.

THE ORIGINAL CAMPUS

Planning for the new campus adjacent to Loop 1904 began in 1970. The original academic buildings of the Main Campus—John Peace Library and the Art, Science, Multidisciplinary Studies, and Humanities and Social Science buildings—were designed by the architectural firm Ford, Powell & Carson, who, with the firm Bartlett Cocke & Associates, also developed the initial master plan for the campus. Though institutional in character, these buildings together frame a uniquely beautiful and inviting space: the Sombrilla Plaza. With multiple levels, lush landscape, and a large shaded area (the Sombrilla), the plaza became the hub of campus activity and interaction. Major pedestrian streets, called Paseos, radiated from this central plaza out into the campus and to the landscape beyond.

During construction of the campus's first phase, from 1972 to 1976, UTSA was the largest university construction project in the nation. Constructing seven buildings (over 750,000 gross square feet) in a single phase allowed a more complete integration of the buildings and landscape than is normally possible with single building construction projects. The Multidisciplinary Studies Building, completed in 1980, represented the culmination of the initial building typology of the campus. This initial core is the most cohesive part of the campus.

Facilities were added in the 1980s, but at a more modest rate than the initial construction of the 1970s, even though enrollment grew by 70 percent. The 1980s saw the addition of the first University Center building and the first campus residence hall, Chisholm Hall. These buildings represent a major departure from both the architectural character and the civic, or urban, character of the original core. The movement away from the original principles of the campus plan was continued by subsequent buildings.

THE CONTEMPORARY MAIN CAMPUS

The Main Campus grew significantly during the 1980s, and especially between 2000 and the present. The newer buildings show little relation to one another and engage the Paseos in a less direct manner than buildings constructed prior to 1983. The University Oaks Apartments were completed in the early 1990s, and added approximately 1,500 beds to the campus. The University Oaks Apartments was not a University-built project, but rather a land-lease project built by a private developer on University property. Laurel Village and Chaparral Village, with nearly 1,700 beds, are University owned and managed housing, and were completed after 2000.

As enrollment expanded, so did the need for parking. By the 1990s, surface parking consumed a significant portion of the site. Extensive parking lots were located on the perimeter of campus and separated the campus from its natural setting. A network of easements had to be created, which contributed to difficulties in wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians.

While campus facilities in all areas—aademic, athletic, housing, recreation and wellness, and student life—were added at a rapid rate in this period, construction was unable to keep up with the increase in enrollment. Pressure to identify suitable sites for new facilities at the Main Campus became immense and led to the University’s acquisition of the 125 acres on Hausman Road at Loop 1504 in 2007. Located approximately one and a half miles from the Sombrilla Plaza, the Hausman Road property (now known as UTSA Park West) will allow certain athletic venues to be moved from the 600-acre original campus, thus freeing up area for future academic buildings, housing, and student life functions. These moves allow the University to take a fresh look at planning the Main Campus for the foreseeable future.

THE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

Enrollment grew by 20 percent in the 1990s, and interest in offering classes in downtown San Antonio grew. It became clear that there was both a need and a desire to have a greater presence downtown. Bill Miller Bar-B-Q Enterprises donated the Fiesta Plaza site, adjoining I-35S-I-10, for a new campus for 6,000 students.

In 1997, the new Downtown Campus opened with the Buena Vista Street and Frio Street buildings arranged around a quadrangle at the center of the block. The character of these buildings utilized a palette of materials and shapes intended to break down the enormous size of the buildings into manageable pieces. The later Durango Building utilized the same materials in a simpler way, and in many ways addresses the adjoining street in a more urban manner than the initial buildings.

THE HEMISFAIR PARK CAMPUS

In 1988, The University of Texas System Board of Regents designated the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) as a component of UTSA. Known as the HemisFair Park Campus, the ITC is located in San Antonio’s downtown HemisFair Park. Its incorporation into the University has given UTSA another publicly visible presence in the city of San Antonio.

FIGURE 3
Early concept sketch of the UTSA Main Campus from O’Neil Ford’s files at the Alexander Architectural Archives at The University of Texas at Austin.
ENROLLMENT AND CAMPUS GROWTH

UTSA has experienced phenomenal growth since its inception in 1969 and its original plan for an opening enrollment of 6,000 students.

Growth in enrollment at UTSA for the period from 1960 to 2000 more or less mirrored that of the City of San Antonio with an increase in enrollment for that period from 15,203 to 18,830—23.8 percent. Growth at UTSA from 2000 to 2007 grew at a tremendous rate, however, increasing from 18,830 to 28,543—51.6 percent. Such a staggering growth rate during that period far exceeds the already high growth rate in San Antonio itself. The University grew 88 percent over 17 years, an average of 5.2 percent per year. In comparison, the average rate of growth for American universities over the last 50 years is 1 percent per year.

A new President, Ricardo Romo (appointed in 1999), presided over growth of approximately 50 percent in just the first seven years of this decade. A number of factors contributed to UTSA’s growth: an increase in the populations of San Antonio and Bexar County; the University’s expanded commitment to provide access to quality higher education for all Texans; and the Texas Legislature’s “South Texas Border Initiative” of the late 1990s, which provided over $350 million for new programs and facilities at a number of universities in the South Texas border region.

The rate of UTSA’s growth—especially during the last decade—has placed a strain on virtually all aspects of the University. The basic problem is that the expansion of academic space has not kept pace with the expansion of enrollment. According to State standards, the University has only about half of the space appropriate for its population and academic goals.

This Campus Master Plan seeks to provide a structure in which the University can accommodate the required campus growth over time, as well as provide a high-quality physical environment.
FIGURE 1
Historical and future growth in UTSA building area and student enrollment. Projections are based on a combination of goals set forth in A Shared Vision UTSA 2016 (the University’s Strategic Plan) and the University’s enrollment projections.

This chart assumes future facilities growth at a rate of about 3.5 percent, or 250,000 gallons; with the majority of growth occurring at the UTSA Main Campus. The UTSA Downtown Campus is anticipated to grow at a more gradual rate. No growth is currently anticipated at the HemisFair Park Campus. More specific projections for the HemisFair Park Campus will be determined as part of a later phase in this Campus Master Plan.

CAMPUS GROWTH AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

With space utilization at the highest rate of any public institution of higher learning in the state, and enrollment that has grown by more than 10,000 in the last eight years, UTSA is experiencing a critical shortage of space—academic, research, office, and support space—at both the Main and Downtown Campuses.

The University currently has approximately 4.4 million gross square feet (gsf)—or 154 gsf/student—of Educational and General (E&G) space. Housing, and other non-E&G space (excluding parking) in its combined facilities. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has established a “Five Factor Model” for projecting E&G space needs. According to this model, the E&G space alone on an appropriately sized campus for UTSA’s fall 2008 enrollment of 28,543 students would total about 42.2 million gsf, about 1.8 million gsf more than UTSA’s three campuses currently provide.

A Shared Vision UTSA 2016, the University’s Strategic Plan, sets several goals for the University’s growth, including increasing student enrollment, increasing faculty and staff, increasing on-campus housing to accommodate 20 percent of its undergraduate and 7.5 percent of its graduate population, and achieving premier public research university status. Each of these goals represents additional space needs. The University anticipates increasing student enrollment to 30,000 by the year 2016. Space projections indicate that a 30,000-student population, with attendant faculty and staff growth, adequate research space, and the University’s desired levels of on-campus housing, would require approximately 9 million gsf—or about 267 gsf/student—in facilities. This represents an addition of 4.5 million gsf by 2016, or about 640,000 gsf in new construction per year.

Constructing 4.5 million gsf in such a short timeframe is unlikely. Buildings of an institutional quality take on average about 4-5 years to program, fund, design, and build. The University has instead set a goal of adding an additional 1.5 million gsf in facilities by 2016, for a total of 8 million gsf, or about 260 gsf/student.

The Campus Master Plan cannot predict how the University will grow in the future, but it provides a framework within which the University can expand its facilities as enrollment increases. Although 200 gsf/student is the University’s short-term goal for expansion, the Master Plan anticipates that the University will ultimately achieve the more desirable rate of 267 gsf/student. The Long Range Plan illustrates a total capacity of approximately 12 million gsf at all three UTSA campuses, to serve approximately 40,000 students at the rate of 297 gsf/student.
INTRODUCTION

CAMPUS CAPACITY

Growth projections indicate that UTSA will require approximately 4.5 million gsf in additional buildings to provide adequate Education and General space, housing, and auxiliary space to achieve the goals set forth in its Strategic Plan and to accommodate its target population of 30,000 students. In addition to these built facilities, the University will require an increase in athletic and recreational fields and an increase in parking.

The plan on the left illustrates the areas of the Main Campus that are not encumbered by existing buildings, floodplains, or endangered species considerations—the areas where new facilities can be constructed. The site area required for the construction of new buildings, parking structures, and athletic and recreational fields to accommodate projected growth is represented by the colored rectangles. These areas represent athletic and recreational fields required, additional buildings required (assuming existing buildings at all UTSA campuses remain), at an average of 4 floors; and additional parking required (assuming that structured parking at all UTSA campuses remains), at an average of 5 levels. There is also an allowance for campus open space, maintaining a ratio of 7 acres open space to 3 acres built area, and resulting in a site coverage of 30 percent. This represents a typical percentage of coverage for a university campus.

As illustrated in the plan, the 243 unbuilt acres of the Central Campus alone provide sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated future growth.

FIGURE 2
Capacity Plan of the UTSA Main Campus