

**Office of Undergraduate Studies**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2016**

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## Office of Undergraduate Studies 2016

### 1. Introduction:

In 2001, the Office of Academic Support and Undergraduate Studies was created within the Division of Student Affairs to serve as the reporting home for several student success programs and departments of the university and to handle undergraduate academic issues on the behalf of the Provost. The unit was lead by the Associate Vice President for Academic Support and Undergraduate Studies. In 2004, the title of Dean of Undergraduate Studies was added to the title of the associate vice president. In 2006, the unit was transferred to the Division of Academic Affairs, renamed the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the title of the supervisor was changed to Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

The Office of Undergraduate Studies is home to the Graduation Initiative, Testing Services, the Tomás Rivera Center, the Office of Undergraduate Studies Support and Technology Services, the University Health Professions Office, the Writing Program, and the academic advising community. The Graduation Initiative is dedicated to increasing student retention and graduation rates and consequently to improving student success. Testing Services provides exceptional assessment of our students' achievements. The Tomás Rivera Center provides innovative student support services and outstanding academic advising for a certain population of at-risk students. The Office of Undergraduate Studies Support and Technology Services coordinates academic advising at UTSA and provides support services for the academic advising community. The University Health Professions Office provides outstanding support for students wishing to pursue careers in the health professions. The Writing Program offers the writing courses that fulfill the requirements of the university's core curriculum and assists our students in developing and polishing their writing skills. The academic advising community (including the advising centers serving particular colleges, the Downtown Advising Center, and the Colleges' Freshman Advising Center) provides first-rate academic advisement to our students.

### 2. Office of Undergraduate Studies Mission, Vision and Core Values:

The Office of Undergraduate Studies' mission, vision, and core values statements reflect the purpose of our unit (Mission), our aspirations (Vision), and the guiding principles that we will use to reach our goals (Core Values).

#### *Mission Statement*

To coordinate the undergraduate curriculum, offer writing and learning communities courses, and provide the academic assessment, support, and direction that students need to successfully complete their educational goals.

### *Vision Statement*

Promote the academic success of UTSA students by empowering them to realize their full academic and personal potential, enabling them to better contribute within the global environment.

### *Core Values*

- Integrity: adhering to a standard of core values at UTSA and ensuring that one acts in a fair and ethical fashion.
- Excellence: committing to delivering consistently high quality teaching and service and to preserving the integrity of the undergraduate curriculum.
- Inclusiveness: fostering diversity and providing access to educational opportunities for all regardless of individual backgrounds and philosophies.
- Respect: treating others with civility and openness, recognizing the dignity inherent in each individual.
- Collaboration: working with others toward common goals while valuing teamwork, participation, and commitment to public service.
- Innovation: encouraging ingenuity, creativity, and discovery.
- Promotion of Lifelong Learning: providing the tools and skills to continue the learning process throughout the lifetimes of our students.

### **3. Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Advantages:**

- A common vision of student success and academic excellence that unites the department.
- Diversity of faculty and staff.
- Strong program assessment.
- High level of expertise of the writing program and freshman seminar faculty.
- Diversity of student body.
- High quality and consistency of programs.
- High collaboration among Undergraduate Studies, Student Affairs, and the academic units.
- High level of collaboration of units within Undergraduate Studies.
- Identifications of opportunities to be more inclusive.

#### **4. Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Challenges:**

- Lack of both dedicated space and other space for teaching, testing, student support, and advising.
- Improvement of low retention and graduation rates in spite of the liberal admission policy
- Inadequate professional development and travel budgets
- High student to faculty ratio for writing courses
- Apparent underpreparedness of students
- Lack of shared communication plan

#### **5. Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiatives, Goals, Action Items and Metrics**

In order to meet our vision and fulfill our mission, the Office of Undergraduate Studies is committed to pursuing four strategic initiatives, encompassing eleven goals. Our initiatives reflect support for UTSA's strategic plan as well as the three foundational themes and five areas for collaborative excellence described in the matrix found in Appendix II.

##### ***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Educational Experiences to Enable Student Success***

#### **Goal 1.1: Improve student success by strengthening and enhancing undergraduate and graduate educational experiences to increase graduation rates and other measures of student success and learning.**

Action Item 1. Cultivate the newly established Graduation Initiative to explore initiatives to improve student success.

Metrics: Completion of individual College Graduation Improvement Plans, in partnership with deans and other stakeholders.

Completion of UTSA Master Graduation Improvement Plan.

Percentage of students contacted during the Late Intervention Program that graduate within 6 years of their first matriculation at UTSA.

Completion of the review of current policies and procedures for their potential impact on graduation rates, and completion of recommendations for changes to these policies.

Action Item 2. Advance the recently established University Health Professions Office to promote the success of our students who wish to pursue careers in the health professions.

Metrics:       Number of UTSA students accepted into medical schools.  
                  Number of students accepted into dental schools.  
                  Number of students accepted into nursing schools.  
                  Number of degrees awarded by UTSA in the joint degree program with  
                  The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Action Item 3. Capitalize on the newly acquired additional space for Supplemental Instruction and Quantitative Lab that provides increased capacities for the Supplemental Instruction Leaders and for tutoring in mathematics, statistics, and other quantitative related fields of study.

Metric:         Number of students using the services.

Action Item 4. Increase the number of academic advisor positions in order to improve the quality of academic advising and decrease wait times for students wishing to see advisors.

Metric:         Create additional academic advising positions.

Action Item 5. Fully implement the career ladder for academic advisors to help boost the morale of academic advisors and improve the retention of the best advisors.

Metric:         Promote advisors to the positions for which they qualify in the newly established career ladder for academic advisors

Action Item 6. Improve the effectiveness of the Writing Center by increasing its capacity to handle students.

Metric:         Acquire additional space for the Writing Center.

Action Item 7. Improve the effectiveness of the Supplemental Instruction program by providing adequate space resources for the Supplemental Instruction sessions.

Metric:         Acquire additional classroom space for offering more Supplemental Instruction sessions in dedicated spaces, and thereby decreasing the number of “squat” sessions in hallways and classrooms that just happen to be vacant..

Action Item 8. Fully implement student success initiatives such as Sophomore Day, the 45-hour semester-by-semester degree plan program, and the 90-hour pre-graduation degree audit program.

Metric: Sophomore to junior retention rate.

Metric: Number of UTSA sophomores and above having semester-by-semester degree plans by the time they reach 45 semester credit hours.

Metric: Number of UTSA seniors having 90 hour pre-graduation audits.

Action Item 10. Increase the administration of placement exams for proper placement, retention, and progress toward graduation.

Metrics: Number of mathematics placement examinations taken by UTSA students.

Number of chemistry placement examinations taken by UTSA students.

Number of CLEP examinations taken by UTSA students.

**Goal 1.2: Enhance the educational experience by improving the undergraduate curriculum, in particular, and the undergraduate experience, in general.**

Action Item 1. Support the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Undergraduate Experience

Metric: Produce a report with recommendations on improving the undergraduate curriculum and the undergraduate experience.

**Goal 1.3: Reduce identified barriers to student academic success.**

Action Item 1. Survey students and faculty by the Graduation Initiative to identify perceived barriers to student success.

Metrics: Produce a report identifying barriers to student success as perceived by students.

Produce a report identifying barriers to student success as perceived by faculty.

**Office of Undergraduate Studies *Strategic Initiative III: Promoting Access and Affordability***

**Goal 3.1: Improve the success of students admitted provisionally to UTSA.**

Action Item Increase the success of student participation the Academic Development Program (ADP).

Metric: The first-year retention rate of ADP students.

**Goal 3.2: Improve the seamlessness of students transferring from community colleges to UTSA**

Action Item. Update the existing and develop new articulation agreements and transfer plans with community colleges.

Metric: Number of students transferring to UTSA following transfer plans.

**Goal 3.3: Increase the financial assistance for certain populations of our students.**

Action Item 1. Continue the Writing Program Scholarships Program

Metric: Number of “Writing Scholarships” awarded each semester to students enrolled in either WRC 1013 or WRC 1023.

Action Item 2. Continue the Graduation Initiative Assistance (GIA) Scholarships for participants in the Late Intervention Program, a program that identifies students approaching the sixth year of attendance, but having problems graduating. Many have run out their eligibility for traditional financial aid. The Late Intervention Program encourages and assists these students to successfully complete their degree within the 6-year window.

Metrics: Number of GIA Scholarships awarded.

The on-time graduation rate of the awarded students.

**Goal 3.4: Encourage students to earn credits toward their degrees in a less expensive way by receiving credits by taking CLEP and DANTES tests.**

Action Item 1. Encourage student to earn CLEP credit.

Metric: Number of CLEP credits earned by UTSA students.

Action Item 2. Encourage students to take DANTES tests and to remove the barriers to place those credits onto transcripts.

Metric: Number of DANTES credits earned by UTSA students.

**Goal 3.5: Promote UTSA as an institution for pre-professional health training for students interested in careers in the health professions and provide opportunities for these students to be exposed to institutions offering degrees in the health professions.**

Action Item #6. Continue to sponsor the UTSA Health Professions Fair.

Metrics: Number of students and prospective students attending the Health Professions Fair.

Number of health professional institutions represented at the Health Professions Fair.

***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative IV: Serving the Public through Community Engagement***

**Goal 4.1 Provide expertise to the community at large when requested.**

Action Item: Offering community services from the Writing Program faculty by answering questions on grammar and punctuation, and, in general, providing intellectual expertise to the members of the community.

Metric: Number of inquiries from the community.

**Goal 4.2: Engage community employers to help their employees who are also UTSA students to graduate in a timely manner.**

Action Item: Initiate the “Get-to-Graduation” certification program, in which certified employers will agree to work with their student employees around scheduling and other issues to help them achieve timely graduation. In return, the employers may display their framed certificates to show that they support UTSA students. The program will target larger local area employers.

Metric: Number of employers who become “Get-to-Graduation” certified.

***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative V: Expanding Resources and Infrastructure***

**Goal 5.1: Provide adequate space for UTSA’s academic support services.**

Action Item 1. Acquiring a new academic classroom building by the university with dedicated space for academic support services such as testing laboratories, tutoring services, supplemental instruction, and the Writing Center.

Metric: The construction or leasing of such an academic classroom building with space assigned to academic support services.

## **6. Office of Undergraduate Studies Key Indicators:**

The following metrics will serve as indicators of Office Undergraduate Studies' overall progress in achieving our vision and meeting our strategic goals. Each indicator will have associated targets and will be benchmarked against past performance as well as peer institution performance as applicable.

### ***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Educational Experiences to Enable Student Success***

- Freshman to sophomore retention rate.
- Sophomore to junior retention rate.
- Six-year graduation rate.
- Recommendations to improve the undergraduate curriculum.

### ***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative III: Ensuring Access and Affordability***

- First-year retention rate of the Academic Development Program for students who have been admitted to UTSA provisionally.
- Number of underrepresented students served by Academic Development Program.
- Number of scholarships awarded through the Office of Undergraduate Studies

### ***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative IV: Serving the Community through Community Engagement***

- Number of employers that become "Get-to-Graduation" certified.

### ***Office of Undergraduate Studies Strategic Initiative V: Expanding Resources and Infrastructure***

- Acquiring more dedicated space for academic support programs
- Reducing the number of "squat" sessions for Supplemental Instruction.

## **7. Call to Action and Accountability for the Office of Undergraduate Studies:**

For our *UTSA 2016* Strategic Plan to be successful, we must follow through to incorporate the Office of Undergraduate Studies initiatives into our everyday management, operations, and decision making. The intent of UTSA is to operate as an

integrated whole, with each element and component contributing to the University mission and vision, collaboratively and in a holistic fashion. This approach will transform the institution from our present reality toward realization of our future vision. Thus, we will become a catalyst and crucible for change, inviting and involving all stakeholders to the table as contributors as well as beneficiaries. This approach reflects the notion of citizenship imbedded in our statements of mission, vision, and core values. Citizenship in its truest sense involves a shared responsibility and contribution to the welfare of our entire community.

***Implementation:***

An implementation process that will ensure that the strategic plan is carried out effectively is critical to our success.

<u>Plan Levels</u>	<u>Scope</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>	<u>Content</u>
University Strategic Plan	University Strategic Direction	10 years	Campus Management and Operations (CMO) and Team 2016	Long-term initiatives
University Compact	Operational Goals	2 years	CMO and Deans Council	Short-term initiatives
Vice Presidential and College Strategic Plans	Unit Strategic Directions	5 years	Vice Presidents and Deans	Long-term initiatives
Departmental Plans	Operational Goals	12 months	Colleges and Departments	Implementation details
Task Forces	Cross-divisional Goals	Short-term	Appointed by CMO	Priority initiatives and reforms

- *We must integrate UTSA 2016 into our operational planning (unit-level plans and compacts).*
- *We must integrate UTSA 2016 as the guide for our Office of Undergraduate budget process.*
- *We must participate in ongoing revision and modification of the Office of Undergraduate Studies plan.*
- *We must develop an organizational structure to support the Office of Undergraduate Studies plan and assign responsibilities.*

***Accountability:***

In order for the plan to work, the Office of Undergraduate Studies must ensure that an effective system involving both communication and assessment is established and maintained.

***Communication:***

The Office of Undergraduate Studies must develop a communication system to inform our personnel of our fidelity to our mission and progress toward its initiatives, goals and action items. Routine reporting of metrics on our goals will be a standard part of our meeting schedules. Every month there will be a report on one of the initiatives. The report will include progress (metric review) and issues. Twice a year, progress on all initiatives will be incorporated into a report reviewed by the CMO, Team 2016 and the Executive Leadership Council. UTSA's President will present an annual public "State of UTSA" address that reflects overall progress toward University initiatives and goals to which the Office of Undergraduate Studies contributes.

As a result of our internal system and the public Web site, the university community will be able to assess our progress, and senior leaders will have regular opportunities to discuss and adjust our initiatives as needed.

***Marketing UTSA:***

The Office of Undergraduate Studies will contribute information to the CMO and Team 2016 to help UTSA tell its story and share our 2016 Vision, both of which are essential to attract top students, faculty, research sponsors, and resource contributors and to gain optimal buy-in from all UTSA's community and state stakeholders. Stories demonstrating UTSA's values-in-action work to positively reinforce integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, and innovation. The UTSA image, branding, reputation, and prestige will reflect all the aspirational goals outlined in this plan and inform key audiences about progress, constantly recognizing and celebrating accomplishments along this journey

***Assessment:***

The Office of Undergraduate Studies must develop an assessment system to determine our fidelity to our announced mission and progress toward our vision. There will be clear lines of responsibility for managing and reporting the components of our strategic plan, to include collecting metric data, reporting progress, and resolving issues.

## **8. Appendices:**

### **APPENDIX I: OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES' STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The strategic plan for the Office of Undergraduate Studies was developed through several meetings of the Office of Undergraduate Studies leadership team that includes the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Associate Dean for Retention and Graduation, the Executive Director of Advising, the Director of Testing Services, the Program Director of the Writing Program, and the Director of the University Health Professions Office. The drafts were shared with employees within the various units and their comments and suggestions were incorporated into the plan. The plan has been synchronized with the UTSA 2016, Strategic Plan 2007-2016.

**APPENDIX II.  
OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES MATRIX OF FOUNDATIONAL THEMES AND  
AREAS OF EXCELLENCE**

**The University Foundational Themes and Areas of Collaborative Excellence**

	<b>Foundational Themes</b>			<b>Areas of Collaborative Excellence</b>				
	<b>Globalization</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Transformative Leadership</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Security</b>	<b>Energy &amp; Environment</b>	<b>Human Development</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
<b>Office of Undergraduate Studies</b>	Prepare students for success in a global society	Support for the retention of a diverse student population	Provide opportunities for students to gain experience in leadership roles.					