INITIATIVE BRIEF

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Amplifying the economic and cultural strengths of San Antonio's Westside through strategic community partnerships.

INITIATIVE LAUNCH   September 2019

OVERVIEW

As an urban-serving university, UTSA seeks to deepen relationships with the city of San Antonio with a particular focus on historically underserved neighborhoods. This initiative, focused on the culturally rich Westside, is a natural place to start given the neighborhood's proximity to UTSA's Downtown Campus. Task forces will marshal UTSA talent and resources to strengthen and define UTSA's existing partnerships while opening doors wide to new ones to engage in strategic community partnerships.

THE CHALLENGE

UTSA's Downtown Campus sits at the gateway to San Antonio's near Westside neighborhoods. As such, the university's intentions to expand the campus over the next decade must be informed and influenced by the historical and cultural context of the Westside. Campus growth and development will need to be balanced with the preservation of existing community assets – the heritage, artistic legacies, social movements and strong neighborhood identity that shape San Antonio's Westside. Toward that end, UTSA partnered with the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) to develop this initiative and to conduct research on vulnerable people and institutions on the Westside.

THE IMPACT

This initiative will help to contextualize UTSA's existing partnerships and seek new ones while clarifying how they fit into a broader framework. The intent is to positively impact the Westside community around four key themes:

» Creating Pathways to Economic Prosperity

» Creating Pathways to Educational Excellence

» Community-Based Research, Sustainable Partnerships and Advocacy

» Fostering Community-Campus Engagement

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mary Diaz
Vice President for
University Relations
210.458.5149 | mary.diaz@utsa.edu

Elvira Leal
Assistant Vice President for
Community Relations
210.458.4009 | elvira.leal@utsa.edu

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FRAMEWORK

This initiative will be led by the Vice President for University Relations, working in conjunction with an internal Steering Committee and a Westside Community Advisory Council made up of key external stakeholders and community partners.

TASK FORCES

» **Creating Pathways to Economic Prosperity**

With a focus on creating economic opportunities, this task force will explore and develop localized employment and small business development pathway programs for Westside residents.

» **Creating Pathways to Educational Excellence**

This task force will work to explore and establish UTSA enrollment pathways for Westside youth, as well as continuing education and professional development opportunities for adults. The group will integrate efforts among university faculty, K-12 school leadership, school staff, families and communities, ultimately increasing the number of students from the community that matriculate to, and graduate from, UTSA.

» **Community-Based Research, Sustainable Partnerships and Advocacy**

This task force will provide scholarly expertise and facilitate community-based research efforts to inform pressing policy issues affecting residents and business owners in the Westside. The task force's initial focus will be to increase understanding of the public policy issues most impacting Westside neighborhood integrity, including housing displacement, historical preservation, access to higher education and social service challenges.

» **Fostering Community-Campus Engagement**

This task force will oversee UTSA's efforts to engage and support the Westside community through programming, services and institutional policies. Priorities will include supporting Westside arts and culture organizations, conveying UTSA's services and programs into the Westside and ensuring that the Downtown Campus is welcoming to the community.

IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Each task force will have individual goals and metrics for measuring impact. The Office of University Relations will act as a clearinghouse for information about the university's engagement in the Westside and will share information gathered in an annual Westside Community Impact report.