



**TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Expanded Version of the President's Report**  
**Presented to the Board of Regents**  
**February 23-24, 2023**

**HOPES & ASPIRATIONS HIGH**

Texas State University is poised to soar to even greater heights in 2023. In January, we unveiled *Hopes & Aspirations High*, our vision for the future of TXST. Inspired by a line in our alma mater, the plan reminds us of our noble, higher calling to keep students at the heart of all that we do. It captures the potential and promise ahead for them, and for those of us who have made helping them succeed our life's work. Building on decades of groundbreaking growth, *Hopes & Aspirations High* will guide us as we move TXST forward through our next transformation.

Two pillars define our *Hopes & Aspirations High*: elevating student success and running to R1. Several goals support these pillars such as increasing enrollment (via retention of current students and expanded recruitment efforts among potential transfer, online, and international students), capitalizing on opportunities at our Round Rock Campus, and reducing administrative burdens.

Last Fall, commissions, task forces, and a workgroup were appointed to enhance key areas in the pursuit of *Hopes & Aspirations High*. Their first reports have been submitted. My Cabinet and I are reviewing their recommendations, examining TXST's organizational structure to ensure that it aligns with our institutional priorities, and analyzing how we can better align our resource allocation decisions with our priorities. Infused into this report are updates on the progress we have already made, despite just being at the very beginning of this thousand-mile journey.

**BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF PREFERENCE**

To be successful in achieving our *Hopes & Aspirations High*, we are committed to creating an environment where our staff and faculty members are empowered as valued partners. To that end, my top priorities include improving employee morale, removing barriers to success, and opening pathways to new solutions that support their good work. Since July, we have made some good progress in this effort to "do more with more," including:

- Allocating \$5 million+ to permanently increase salaries of more than 1,400 employees.
- Streamlining the process by which supervisors can recommend salary increases.
- Providing 10% pay raises for 100+ student workers, including those in our Student Learning Assistance Center.

- Awarding more than \$9.6 million in one-time bonuses to employees.
- Adding more than a dozen new staff positions in critical areas.
- Creating a 25% tuition benefit for dependents of eligible employees.

We have also streamlined processes and removed unnecessary barriers for faculty and staff by:

- Reducing the number of SACSCOC outcomes assessment reports significantly for our administrative support units.
- Granting vice presidents greater autonomy in determining which essential offices can operate remotely during times that the university is operating with skeleton staff.
- Increasing efficiency by producing a digital Human Resources policy catalogue.

Based on recommendations from the Administrative Burdens Task Force and the Remote Work Workgroup, additional improvements are forthcoming, which we hope will continue to create a culture where our faculty and staff can thrive.

## **GROWING ENROLLMENT**

Despite record inflation and a national labor shortage, TXST reported an overall Fall 2022 enrollment of 38,262 students, topping 38,000 for the first time since 2019. Among the 37 Texas public universities, TXST is one of only 17 universities to record an increase in overall enrollment. Through strategic investments, including a multimillion-dollar bump in financial aid, and coordinated efforts across the university, TXST set enrollment records in the number of new undergraduate and graduate students (11,344) and freshmen (7,573), and in retention (80.2%).

Indeed, there is much to celebrate, as TXST is currently ranked nationally as:

- The 25<sup>th</sup> largest in undergraduate enrollment.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> largest in transfer students.
- One of the Best National Universities for 2022-23 by *U.S. News and World Report*.
- One of the Best 388 Colleges for 2023 by the *Princeton Review*.

This record new student enrollment brought challenges – particularly in student housing – at both our San Marcos and Round Rock campuses. This is magnified when considering the growth in central Texas industry and the rising cost of housing in urban areas fueling migration to bordering counties (i.e., Hays and Williamson Counties). TXST is tackling this challenge by expanding our residence hall capacity by more than 2,000 beds over the next three years. More than 1,000 new beds are already under construction on the San Marcos Campus.

### Increasing Recruitment Efforts

Last Fall, a [Recruitment Task Force](#) was charged with recommending recruitment practices to increase enrollment of international, transfer, master's, and online students. An early recommendation from the task force was to raise the annual cap that historically had limited how much TXST invested to recruit international students through partner agencies from \$150,000 to

\$1 million. This change has had immediate and significant success. For Spring 2023, applications by international students are up 45% (+236) and admittances are up 24% (+71).

Other recently implemented recruitment initiatives include:

- Launching a secondary undergraduate admissions application, called the “Common App,” to attract more out-of-state applicants. (As of January 17, 2023, out-of-state freshman applications for Fall 2023 have increased by 132% or +2,506 applications.)
- Optimizing our scholarship plan to ensure that our financial aid packages are scaled to have the expected enrollment outcome.
- Adding two new admission counselors to increase our recruitment contacts at Texas community colleges.
- Creating a new transfer student center to help recruit and onboard transfers.
- Entering into new and renewed articulation agreements with several top feeder community colleges, including Austin Community College, Dallas College, and Houston Community College.
- Developing the “Bats to Cats” transfer program with Austin Community College.
- Extending our stop-out recruitment partnership with an external vendor to enroll an additional 130-170 students by Fall 2023.
- Developing a new one-stop student service center to assist students during registration.
- Investing \$6 million over the next five years to recruiting Ph.D. students in programs with the fastest rates of graduation. (For more information, refer to the Running to R1 section on page 5.)

### Elevating Student Success

Fundamental to what we do at TXST is providing a rich experience that will prepare our students for success during their time at TXST and after graduation. The [Commission on Student Success](#) has been tasked with making bold recommendations to increase retention and graduation rates. Increasing retention is critical to our goal of growing enrollment. The commission has analyzed student success programs and metrics of peer and aspirant institutions to benchmark successful student initiatives at top universities. A Request for Proposals for a student success management software platform is currently underway, and commission members continue to review data-informed, evidence-based proposals for new student success programs and initiatives.

As shown in the table below, new recruitment and retention efforts are already beginning to pay off, especially for Fall 2023.

Students	Headcount	Change versus same time in 2022
<b>Spring 2023</b>		
First Time in College	148	16.5% (+21 students)
New Transfer*	847	-12.1% (-117 students)
Continuing Undergraduate	29,196	3.3% (+923 students)
New Master’s*	319	-7% (-24 students)
Continuing Master’s*	2,717	-9.4% (-282 students)
New Doctoral	15	25% (+3 students)

Continuing Doctoral	431	5.1% (+21 students)
<b>Fall 2023</b>		
Freshman applications**	32,829	26.2% (+6,822 applications)
Freshman acceptances	19,341	12.4% (+2,129 acceptances)
Transfer applications	1,069	17.3% (+158 applications)
Transfer acceptances	521	21.7% (+93 acceptances)
Master's applications	1708	-12.4% (-224 applications)
Master's acceptances	128	-18.5% (-29 acceptances)
Doctoral applications	224	7.2% (+15 applications)
Doctoral acceptances	7	-12.5% (-1 acceptance)

\*For Spring 2023, the strong decline in new transfer students as well as new and continuing master's students is most likely due to the high inflation rate and the labor shortage. Implementation of Recruitment Task Force recommendations are expected to reverse this trend.

\*\*TXST currently has the second-highest number of freshman applications submitted for Fall 2023 via Apply Texas (21,268 high school applicants as of January 17, 2023 - second only to Texas A&M University).

## **DREAMING BIG**

A strong future for TXST depends on our ability to advance our priorities together since they support one another. Attaining success in one priority feeds growth in the others. For example, increasing student research opportunities is proven to enhance student engagement and retention which will lead to increased enrollment and more revenue to support other initiatives. Aligning our priorities in this fashion lets us dream big with our aspirations.

### Growing Online Enrollment

Based on another Recruitment Task Force recommendation, we have charged an implementation team with creating a strong focus on online education. That new focus will likely include changing the Office of Distance and Extended Learning to an entrepreneurial enterprise model, engaging with external partners to market programs to both domestic and international markets, and providing incentives and strategic planning guidelines for degree programs to redesign face-to-face or hybrid programs to be fully online, scalable programs that can be marketed to large student populations.

### Transforming the Round Rock Campus

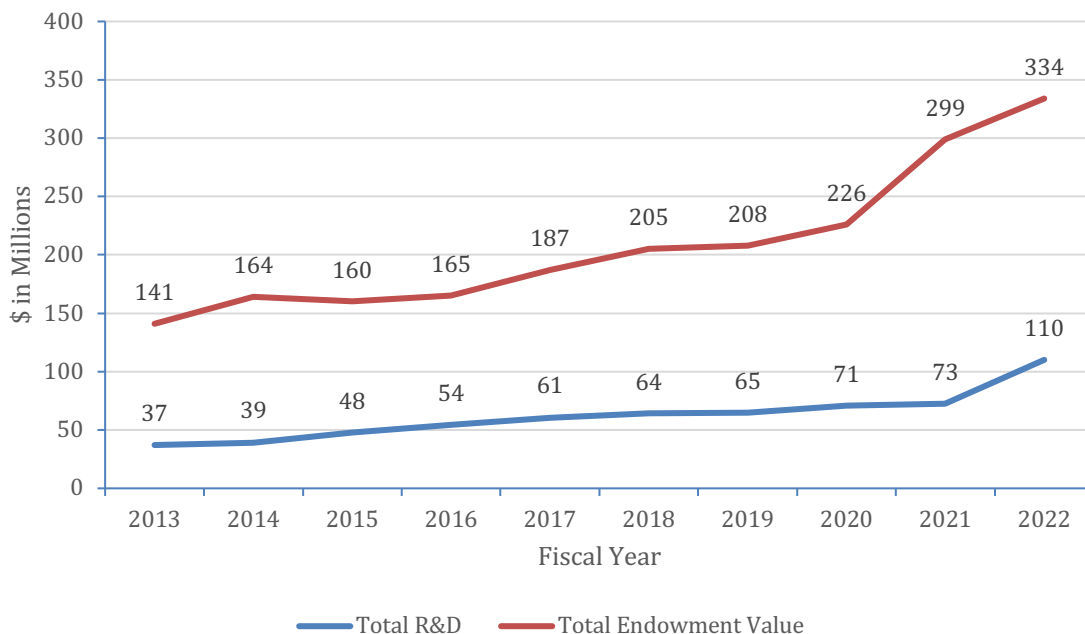
As the population of central Texas is expected to double by 2060, it is up to TXST and the University of Texas at Austin, as the only two large universities in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), to serve the state of Texas by growing commensurately to meet the need. TXST's Round Rock Campus, in particular, is uniquely positioned to be the home of much of that future growth. TXST Round Rock has the potential to serve tens of thousands of college students, to house cutting-edge research that compliments the world-class technology and health care corporate sectors in Round Rock, and to become the Austin MSA's third large campus.

Given its location on the north end of the Texas Innovation Corridor, the Round Rock Campus is perfectly situated to develop strong, robust partnerships that will elevate TXST to greater heights, spur entrepreneurial activity, and allow us to add new degree programs, both in health professions and non-health professions programs, to meet present and future workforce needs. The university is currently pursuing multiple projects that will boldly move TXST Round Rock into the future, and to capitalize on the unique opportunities there, including jointly issuing a Request for Proposals for a life sciences laboratory incubator facility with the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce, participating in a Department of Veterans’ Affairs selection process to host an outpatient clinic, and planning for student housing on campus.

TXST is re-configuring the leadership model that will help us advance the Round Rock Campus. We will soon begin searching for the inaugural Vice President for the Round Rock Campus, and the search for a new Dean of the College of Health Professions is already underway. Together, this new leadership team will lead a task force charged with expeditiously envisioning and executing a plan to establish the Round Rock Campus as a major hub of innovation and learning.

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 an R1 university (Very High Research Activity) by 2027. TXST’s accomplishments over the past several years have positioned us well for this evolution. As shown below, total research and development (R&D) expenditures and total endowment have accelerated over the last decade.



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. We approved their first recommendation to invest \$6 million over the next five years toward admitting 50 new Ph.D. students in 2023 to PhD programs that have demonstrated rapid completion rates: Material

Science, Engineering and Commercialization (MSEC), Computer Science, and Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology. These students will hold research assistantships and receive a full tuition scholarship. In time, as more funds become available, we will invest in other PhD programs. This investment has begun to pay off already. As of January 17, 2023, a total of eight students have been funded by Run –to R1 assistantships (two in Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology, three in Computer Science and three in MSEC). The recruitment for Summer 2023 is underway and interest is high. We have a total of 56 applications at various stages of completeness (eight in Aquatic Resources and Integrative Biology, 25 in Computer Science, and 23 in MSEC).

Appendix A includes Office of Research and Sponsored Program Activities during the first quarter of FY2023.

## Appendix A

### Texas State University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

#### First Quarter 2023 Board of Regents Report

##### *Research Awards and Expenditures*

TXST saw record-breaking growth in annual research expenditures, exceeding \$110 million in FY2022. This momentum in research growth continues in our current fiscal year, and we highlight a few notable awards across the University below:

- The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center was awarded approximately \$9.8 million from the U.S. Department of Justice to provide training that meets the goals of the Protecting Our Lives by Initiating Community Oriented Policing Services Expansion (POLICE) Act under the COPS PASS program.
- Department of Biology's Dr. Weston Nowlin was awarded approximately \$2.5 million by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue research on the importance of different factors in determining the abundance and distribution of native and non-native aquatic species to help develop strategies and balance ecological needs with transportation needs.
- The Translational Health Research Center's Dr. Melinda Villagran was awarded \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a dashboard that will share resources with local mental health service providers and community members to improve mental health through data-driven health tools and services.
- Dr. Alberto Giordano in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies received approximately \$1 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to create an open-access web portal for accounting and reporting of migrant deaths at the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Mr. Rafael Cordero, Senior Director for TXST TRIO Programs, was awarded \$1.3 million by the U.S. Department of Education McNair Scholars program to serve low-income and first-generation undergraduates or groups underrepresented in post-baccalaureate education.
- Dr. Justin Randolph in the Department of History was awarded a \$60,000 American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) fellowship to work on his book *Mississippi Law: The Long Crisis of Policing and Reform in America's Black Countryside, 1890 to 1980*.

##### *Faculty Recognition*

The research conducted by our faculty members has attracted regional, national, and international recognition.

- Sophia Mavroudas, coordinator of the Forensic Anthropology Center and a PhD candidate in applied anthropology, was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to conduct a transnational comparative analysis of the Greek approaches to the identification of migrant skeletal remains.
- Dr. Arzu Ari, professor in the Department of Respiratory Care and associate dean for research in the College of Health Professions, was named the recipient of the Hector

Leon Garza, MD, Achievement Award for Excellence in International Respiratory Care for 2022 by the International Council for Respiratory Care.

- Dr. Elizabeth Eger in the Department of Communication Studies received the 2022 Anita Taylor Outstanding Published Article Award from the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, and two career awards from the National Communication Association.

### *Science, Technology, and Advanced Research (STAR) Park*

STAR Park continues to bridge the University's research capabilities and the private sector. STAR Park is currently home to nine companies that create new commercial products based on chemistry, biochemistry, life sciences, and materials. One of the newly recruited companies, Group1, is engaged in the commercialization of potassium-based battery technology originally discovered by Nobel Laureate Dr. John Goodenough.

STAR Park continues to expand:

- The Infrastructure Research Lab (IRL), the newest facility at STAR Park, will test critical infrastructure components and increase experiential learning opportunities for civil and mechanical engineering students.
- Preliminary space planning has begun for a P3 multi-tenant building with Signet Development to meet the increasing demand for research facilities.
- The TSUS System Office is leading a request for proposals to construct one of the largest field research facilities in the country for solar energy generation, energy management, and utility security technologies.

### *Research Development*

We are pursuing an ambitious strategy to target and secure multi-year, multimillion-dollar awards to increase and diversify our research impact. Two such endeavors include the following:

- We have applied to host a U.S. Department of Agriculture Regional Food Business Center, a \$50 million opportunity to support a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system by providing localized assistance to connect producers with local and regional supply chains, including linking producers to wholesalers and distributors. Led by TXST, the South Central Regional Food Center will create a robust and resilient regional food system while expanding opportunities for communities and producers that have been historically underserved or marginalized.
- We are collaborating with the University of Texas at San Antonio to host a National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engine, a \$150 million opportunity to fund regional coalitions of partnering organizations to catalyze technology and science-based ecosystems and address societal and economic challenges to the region of service. The TX-STARS Engine will provide immediate and evolving technology solutions that will reduce the impact of natural and human-centric disasters.



### *Run to R1*

- The Presidential Commission on the Run to R1 was launched to accelerate TXST's progress toward achieving Carnegie Research 1 (Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity) status.
- The commission has begun benchmarking and data analysis, engaging with stakeholders, and mapping out an aggressive timeline for our goal of becoming an R1 university.
- The data clearly demonstrates that for TXST to achieve Carnegie R1 status, TXST must continue to grow its externally sponsored research portfolio. However, significant improvements are required in the following categories:
  - The number of PhD graduates per year, and
  - The number of post-doctoral researchers in NSF-specific eligible areas.
- The commission made an early recommendation to invest in recruiting PhD students in programs that have demonstrated the fastest rates of graduation. The President supported this recommendation and recruitment of PhD students is underway.
- The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Division of Academic Affairs, and other auxiliary units of the University are creating internal funding strategies to focus on the overarching goal of the Run to R1.
- The commission is developing a strategy to ensure that our initial institutional investment supports growth in sponsored research so that the Run to R1 can be sustained.