

The Graduate School

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2016

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	4
2. The Graduate School’s Mission, Vision and Core Values	5
3. Strategic Advantages	6
4. Strategic Challenges	7
5. The Graduate School’s Strategic Initiatives, Goals, Action Items, and Metrics	7
The Graduate School’s Initiative(s) Related to UTSA Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Education Experiences to Enable Student Success	7
The Graduate School’s Initiative(s) Related to UTSA II: Serving Society Through Creativity, Expanded Research, and Innovations	10
The Graduate School’s Initiative(s) Related to UTSA III: Promoting Access Access and Affordability.....	10
The Graduate School’s Initiative(s) Related to UTSA Initiative IV: Serving the Public through Community Engagement.....	11

	Page
The Graduate School’s Initiative(s) Related to UTSA Initiative V: Expanding Resources and Infrastructure	11
6. Key Indicators	12
7. Call to Action and Accountability	13
8. Appendices	15
Appendix I. Graduate School Strategic Planning Process	16
Appendix II. Matrix of Graduate School Contribution to University Foundational Themes and Areas of Excellence	17

Graduate School 2016

1. Introduction:

The Office of Graduate Studies was established in 1996 to specifically address the needs of the current and prospective graduate population. On July 20th 2004, the Office of Graduate Studies officially became the Graduate School to further support the graduate population. This was due to an increased interest in providing services designed for current and prospective graduate students. Our profile has expanded to include more full-time masters and doctoral students. Since its inception, the Graduate School has made significant strides in the following areas:

- Contributing to UTSA's goal of becoming a premier public research university
- Expanding support services for graduate students
- Increasing graduate enrollment (From Fall 1996 to fall 2006 graduate enrollment has increased from 2660 to 3981. This is an increase of 40%.)
- Increasing the number of graduate programs offered
- Working with new and emerging technologies to assist our graduate population
- Streamlining processes and communication to better serve our students and the UTSA community

The Graduate School has created our strategic plan to complement the strategic initiatives specifically in the areas of enriching educational experiences to enable student success; expanded research and innovations; promoting access and affordability; serving the public through community engagement; and expanding resources and infrastructure.

2. The Graduate School's Mission, Vision and Core Values:

The Graduate School's mission, vision, and core values statements reflect the purpose of The Graduate School, (Mission), what we aspire to be (Vision), and the guiding principles that we will use to reach our goals (Core Values).

Mission Statement

The Graduate School promotes and supports academic excellence in the graduate education provided at UTSA and success for the diverse population of students who enter our graduate programs. The Graduate School communicates the benefits of a graduate education within and beyond the UTSA community. It fosters collaborations to insure that high academic standards are maintained, that diversity across graduate programs and graduate students is valued and respected, that policies and procedures related to graduate education are fair and consistent, and that providing graduate education and serving graduate students are integral parts of the university mission.

Vision Statement

The Graduate School will be recognized as the central student-centered resource for graduate education, research, and services. We will work with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and the community to promote and support the success and development of our diverse graduate population.

Core Values

The Graduate School shares the University's core values, as they reflect how we will fulfill our mission and realize our vision. Each value included in the UTSA Strategic Plan guides the mission and vision of the Graduate School:

- Integrity: adhering to a standard of core values in The Graduate School and ensuring that all who work here act in a fair and ethical manner.
- Excellence: commitment to delivering consistently high-quality service through superior performance and to supporting consistently high-quality service, teaching, and research across our three campuses.
- Inclusiveness: fostering diversity and providing access to educational and socioeconomic opportunities for all—regardless of individual backgrounds and philosophies.
- Respect: treating others with civility and openness, and 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 public service.

3. The Graduate School's Strategic Advantages:

The Graduate School has been instrumental in the development of UTSA into a doctoral institution, and works closely with the academic colleges and the campus community to contribute to excellence in graduate education and graduate student development. There are a number of advantages that will assist The Graduate School as we work to address our strategic initiatives. These include:

- Our location in a region with a vibrant multicultural population and a dynamic growing economy;
- The opportunity to offer graduate programs that take advantage of our three campuses—the downtown campus that provides opportunities to offer programs that take advantage of San Antonio's urban setting, our 1604 campus, that offers state-of-the-art laboratory facilities for students and researchers across a wide number of disciplines, and the Institute of Texan Cultures, which provides students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience working with historical documents and artifacts;
- Excellent graduate education that is affordable;
- A Hispanic- and Minority-Serving Institution that is noted for its contribution to the education of Hispanic students and that offers a climate that supports and respects diversity;
- Staff members who are dedicated to providing prospective and current students with excellent customer service, and who are enthusiastic about making significant contributions to the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students;
- Rapid growth of the graduate programs and graduate student population that offers opportunities for developing excellence in all aspects of graduate education and graduate student development;
- Support for and active interest in graduate students and graduate education is provided by the academic colleges, led by their deans and associate deans for graduate studies;
- Recognition as a quality university of choice by our students;
- Significant increase in number of faculty recognized for intellectual achievements in their fields increases the visibility and quality of our graduate programs;
- High number of multidisciplinary research projects and faculty with multidisciplinary expertise provides students with the opportunities to broaden their training focus;
- A common vision of student success and academic excellence that unites the Graduate School with other members of the UTSA community;
- Support from the University of Texas System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for developing and offering high-quality graduate programs;
- Collaborations with partners in graduate education, such as the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, the University of Texas School of Public Health, San Antonio Regional Campus, and Southwest Research Institute, have increased opportunities and funding available for graduate students.

4. The Graduate School's Strategic Challenges:

Although there are a number of strategic advantages that will benefit the Graduate School as we address our strategic initiatives, we also recognize that there are challenges that we will need to address as well:

- As a young university with many recently-implemented graduate programs, UTSA is still developing the infrastructure and expertise necessary to achieve status at the level of a mature research university;
- The Graduate School must adjust to the rapid increase in doctoral programs, and develop appropriate policies and procedures to successfully maintain these programs, as well as find additional resources for our graduate students;
- We must develop more online and hybrid graduate programs in order to optimize our resources and increase the accessibility of graduate education to qualified individuals;
- We must support the increase of research opportunities, productivity, and funding in order to attract and retain high-quality faculty members and graduate students;
- We must increase support for our doctoral and master's students;
- We must improve retention and increase graduation rates and time-to-degree-completion rates;
- We must be sure that our graduate programs are teaching students the skills that translate into professional success;
- We must build a comprehensive marketing plan that promotes our accomplishments and contributions, shares our goals for the future, and communicates this message in a manner that will increase interest in and support for our graduate programs, regionally, nationally, and internationally;
- We must clearly define metrics to measure our goals and communicate our progress toward them to the broader university community and beyond.

5. Strategic Initiatives, Goals, Action Items and Metrics

In order to meet our vision and fulfill our mission, **The Graduate School** is committed to pursuing four strategic initiatives, encompassing seven 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.

The Graduate School's Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Educational Experiences to Enable Student Success

Goal 1: Increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rate of excellent students

Action Items:

1. Increase support to academic colleges and departments for recruitment efforts.
2. Increase on campus recruitment and events designed to assist students with the application process, such as GRE preparation workshops

3. Promote awareness and visibility by enhancing website and developing a newsletter that highlights our graduate programs.
4. Streamline the process between admissions and registration for students.
5. Increase staff focused on retention activities
6. Increase networking opportunities for graduate students
7. Work with Office of Student Affairs, the TEAM Center, the Writing Center, The Tomas Rivera Center and others to coordinate and expand appropriate enrichment programs and services offered to Graduate Students
8. Increase Grant Writing workshops and communication to students about available research grants and other sources of funding
9. Work with International Programs to address special needs of international students that assist in their integration into the academic community
10. Work with colleges to improve mentoring of graduate students

Metrics:

1. Increase in number of recruitment events that the Graduate School co-sponsors with academic colleges and departments.
2. Increase in applications
3. Newsletter highlighting graduate program and graduate student accomplishments is developed and sent twice each academic year.
4. Streamline process that allows admitted international students to obtain visa, so the time between admission and obtaining visa is reduced.
5. Hire one additional staff member to focus on retention activities.
6. Hold one student networking meeting/reception each long semester.
7. Increase number of workshops offered to graduate students that are designed to improve their skills in areas relevant to their degrees.
8. Develop more formalized mentoring programs for graduate students.

Goal 2: Prepare graduate students for their roles in academic and nonacademic workplaces

Action Items:

1. Work with academic programs to adopt a standard set of milestones for “good progress” in graduate programs and institutionalize these
2. Encourage and support colloquia
3. Encourage and support graduate student participation in regional and national conferences
4. Support TA training workshops and increase the number of developmental activities offered for TA’s
5. Recognize outstanding teaching by graduate students by providing annual awards
6. Foster independent learning and self-initiated scholarship by encouraging the enhancement of programs’ standards for courses and capstone experiences/byproducts
7. Respond to student feedback pertaining to the quality of their graduate school experience

8. Promote the relevance of programs to academic and research communities to ensure that our students are competitive for positions
9. Support the TEAM Center in offering a course on diversity and college teaching
10. Encourage the research efforts of UTSA graduate students by establishing funds to assist their research efforts and attendance at regional and national conferences for the purpose of presenting their research
11. Increase training on issues related to academic honesty and ethics
12. Support more career development and interview-preparation workshops and activities by the Career Center

Metrics:

1. Develop and communicate a set of milestones that define “good progress” in graduate programs.
2. Increase number of research colloquia offered across campus.
3. Increase number of graduate students who present papers at regional and national conferences.
4. Increase number of developmental activities offered for TA’s.
5. Introduce a formal awards process for TA’s and publicize results
6. Increase capstone courses/experiences offered by graduate programs
7. Send results of graduate student surveys to relevant academic and student services offices and ask them to integrate the feedback relevant to their office into their own strategic planning process and office procedures
8. Increase number of formalized meetings with prospective employers to determine the congruence between programs’ preparation of graduate students and employers’ needs.
9. TEAM Center implements a course on diversity and college teaching.
10. Ethics and research compliance training mandated for all graduate students.
11. Increased services offered by Career Center to assist graduate students

Goal 3: Support a Climate of Diversity

Action Items:

1. Expand development programs, mentoring, programming, and networking opportunities targeted toward a diverse group of graduate students
2. Hold at least one event per year for part-time students
3. Establish a graduate student resource room with materials for diverse students
4. Develop more extensive relationships with institutions and organizations that serve underrepresented groups
5. Work with departments and offices on campus to support the recruitment, support, and graduation of a diverse graduate student population
6. Provide expanded support by increasing number and competitiveness of diversity scholarships and awards

Metrics:

1. Increase in retention and developmental programs, as well as networking meetings that highlight issues related to diversity
2. Implement a networking session each year for part-time students.

3. Open a graduate student resource room.
4. Increased number of formalized relationships with other institutions and organizations who serve underrepresented groups. Increased number of faculty exchanges and student visits.
5. Increased numbers of students from diverse backgrounds enter and graduate from graduate programs.

Goal 4: Pursue opportunities that will facilitate the growth and enhancement of graduate education in selected areas consistent with the university's mission and goals

Action Items:

1. Increase the number of doctoral programs that have been targeted for excellence
2. Reward programs that are successful in recruiting, retaining, and graduating students
3. Develop new master's and certificate programs in areas of distinctive competency and demand
4. Work with the Office of Institutional Research to develop assessment methods and measures for determining progress in meeting established goals for graduate programs

Metrics

1. Increased number of doctoral programs in content areas that contribute to UTSA's strategic goals.
2. Implementation of an incentive program to reward programs that have significant numbers of students who make good progress through the program.
3. Increased number of targeted master's and certificate programs.
4. Identification and communication of clear assessment methods and measures for graduate programs.

Graduate School's Strategic Initiative II: Serving Society through Creativity, Expanded Research, and Innovations

Although the Graduate School has not developed a specific goal to address Strategic Initiative II, please see Strategic Initiative I, Goal 2, Action Items 2, 3, and 10, for specific planned actions to address this initiative.

The Graduate School's Strategic Initiative III: Promoting Access and Affordability

Goal 1: Increase access to graduate programs for a broader population of students

Action Items:

1. Develop programs and initiatives with other institutions to enhance recruitment of a diverse population of students
2. Work with academic colleges and offices across campus to provide expanded support for recruitment efforts that target underrepresented populations of students
3. Collaborate with undergraduate studies to develop pipeline programs to recruit talented UTSA undergraduate students into our graduate programs

4. Facilitate the offering of graduate programs to nontraditional students at times and locations that will make these programs more accessible to them
5. Develop the technologies, policies, and procedures that will facilitate the use of distance learning in graduate education

Metrics

1. Increased number of formalized recruitment efforts with other institutions, and UTSA academic and student services units to target qualified underrepresented students
2. Increased funding to recruit and retain qualified students from underrepresented populations..
3. Increased distance learning and hybrid programs, as well as more weekend courses, that make graduate education more accessible to a broader population of qualified students

The Graduate School's Strategic Initiative IV: Serving the Public through Community Engagement

Goal 1: Expand the Graduate School's Outreach Efforts

Action Items:

1. Send newsletter to alumni and other community leaders.
2. Expand and improve website.
3. Expand hours that Graduate School is open on a regular basis
4. Share more stories about graduate programs and related topics with the Office of Communications.
5. Hold periodic open house events for employers, civic leaders, community leaders, and alumni for the purpose of sharing our vision and information about our programs, and to seek input and advice.
6. Develop an advisory board.
7. Raise public awareness about the contribution that graduate educations make to the region, state, and nation.
8. Hire a development officer.

Metrics:

1. Newsletter developed and sent twice each academic year.
2. Increase in number of students who access website and find it useful.
3. Increase in number of communications about graduate students and programs that are found in UTSA Today and other university communications.
4. At least one open house hosted for the broader community by the Graduate School each academic year.
5. Advisory board is developed and begins meeting at least twice each academic year.

The Graduate School's Strategic Initiative V: Expanding Resources and Infrastructure

Goal 1: Streamline Business and Information Technology Services

Action Items:

1. Eliminate the need for hard copy delivery of documents.
2. Review our mission and progress toward strategic goals on a regular basis.
3. Ensure that the Graduate School has adequate staff, space, and resources to meet our goals.
4. Ensure regular review about the activities and procedures of the Graduate School.
5. Ensure that the Graduate School staff members remain current in procedures that contribute to efficiently reaching our goals.

Metrics:

1. Utilize scanning technology to convert student transcripts and other documents to digital format so that all applicant information can be sent to colleges in electronic format.
2. Deliver application packet to admitted students electronically
3. Increase number of theses and dissertations submitted in electronic format.
4. Place all student petitions and waiver forms on-line for electronic submission and signature.
5. When each staff member receives annual evaluation, identify areas where additional training is needed in order to ensure that they remain current on relevant policies and procedures, and require that this training be obtained.
6. Perform an annual evaluation of the Graduate School's progress toward reaching our strategic goals, and take appropriate measures if timely progress is not being made.

6. The Graduate School's Key Indicators:

The following metrics will serve as indicators of **The Graduate School's** 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.

The Graduate School's Key Indicators for Strategic Initiative I: Enriching Educational Experiences to Enable Student Success

- Master's and doctoral student graduation rates by ethnicity and gender
- Master's and doctoral student conference papers and publications
- Master's and doctoral student post-graduation employment

The Graduate School's Key Indicators for Strategic Initiative II: Serving Society through Creativity, Expanded Research, and Innovations

The Graduate School does not have a goal listed under this initiative.

-
-

The Graduate School's Key Indicators for Strategic Initiative III: Ensuring Access and Affordability

- Master’s and doctoral student enrollment by ethnicity and gender
- Funding available for graduate students
- Number of new distance education and hybrid programs and course offerings at the graduate level

The Graduate School’s *Strategic Initiative IV: Serving the Public through Community Engagement*

- Number of collaborations and partnerships with community organizations and individuals
- Number of programs and activities developed with community collaboration

The Graduate School’s *Strategic Initiative V: Expanding Resources and Infrastructure*

- Space adequacy and number of adequately trained staff
- Number of functions that become paperless

7. Call to Action and Accountability for the Graduate School:

For our *UTSA 2016 Strategic Plan* to be successful, we must follow through to incorporate the **Graduate School’s** 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	Unit Strategic Directions	5 years	Vice Presidents and Deans	Long-term initiatives

and College Strategic Plans				
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 **The Graduate School’s** budget process.*
- *We must participate in ongoing revision and modification of **The Graduate School’s** plan.*
- *We must develop an organizational structure to support **The Graduate School’s** plan and assign responsibilities.*

Accountability:

In order for the plan to work, **The Graduate School** must ensure that an effective system involving both communication and assessment is established and maintained.

Communication:

The Graduate School 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 semester 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 Graduate School** 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 Graduate School 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 Graduate School 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:

- I. **The Graduate School's** Strategic Planning Process
- II. **The Graduate School's** Matrix of University Foundational Themes and Areas of Excellence

APPENDIX I: THE GRADUATE SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The University of Texas at San Antonio Graduate School planning process focuses on promoting and supporting academic excellence in graduate education within and beyond the UTSA community.

UTSA began work on *UTSA 2016*, a collaborative effort involving the University community, establishing institution-wide priorities and strategies. Work began spring 2006 with a retreat which followed the formation of nine strategic theme teams. Dorothy Flannagan, Dean of the Graduate School, served as the Graduate School. The thematic teams' progress came to a close in mid-October. In late October 2006, the Dean of Graduate School began initial discussions of the Graduate School strategic plan with her Executive Committee.

Fall 2006, UTSA created focus groups to involve all the students, staff and faculty in UTSA 2016. In November 2006, the Graduate School embarked on a series of regular staff office meetings to work on developing a strategic plan. Four teams met to discuss each issue and then the entire office staff discussed the teams' conclusions.

In early spring 2007, the Graduate School continued to meet and work on its strategic plan. To strengthen team work, team members from admissions, recruiting and administrative units were rotated in groups to continue to share their ideas and suggestions with other staff members. This provided an opportunity to observe ideas from all members within the graduate units. The teams worked on mission, vision, strategic goals, objectives and strategies.

Ideas and suggestions generated from the different teams were then shared during office meetings and incorporated into the final draft. In August 2007, Dean Flannagan met with her Executive Committee to finalize the draft.

In September 2007, the office staff met to discuss the final draft. It was then sent to the associate Deans for Graduate Studies representing each college for comments.

