

Legislative Appropriations Request-2012

Administrative Statement

Texas A&M University Central Texas

History

Located in Killeen and serving the Central Texas region, Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMUCT) became a stand-alone, upper-level (junior, senior, and graduate level coursework leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees) state university when Governor Rick Perry signed Senate Bill (SB) 629 on May 27, 2009. However, the path to stand-alone status actually began for TAMUCT in 1999 when the University of Central Texas, a private university, transitioned to become a System Center under Tarleton State University (TSU), a member of The Texas A&M University System. The System Center expanded access to affordable, upper-level undergraduate and graduate education in Central Texas previously offered only by private institutions in Killeen, Belton, and Waco.

During the 2008-2009 Academic Year, the System Center reached an enrollment of 1,000 full-time student equivalents (FTE), the threshold level required by the State for stand-alone status, and TAMUCT was authorized to begin operations in Fall 2009, housed in facilities leased from both Central Texas College and the Killeen Independent School District. Established with overwhelming support of the citizens of Central Texas, TAMUCT serves one of the most rapidly growing and economically high-performing metropolitan service areas (MSA) in the nation that is also home to Fort Hood, one of the world's largest military installations.

Immediately following the legislative approval of TAMUCT as a stand-alone university, The Texas A&M University System received the transfer of 672 acres of land from the U.S. Department of the Army as the designated site in Killeen upon which to build a permanent TAMUCT campus. In return for the land, TAMUCT agreed to provide Fort Hood educational and support services, as well as up to 10,000 sq. ft. of classroom space per year for a period of twenty years. A master plan for the new campus was completed in the following months, and construction of the first building began in Fall 2010, funded by a combination of Tuition Revenue Bonds (TRB's) and Permanent University Funds (PUF) totaling \$40M.

Challenges and Accomplishments

TAMUCT is dedicated to achieving success as an upper-level university, joining in partnership with regional community colleges to assure a combination of both access and success along the most cost-efficient pathway to baccalaureate and graduate degrees. In addition, TAMUCT is dedicated to the service of its region, a geographically and ethnically diverse area of the state with a highly mobile, rapidly growing population. Central Texas is home to one of the world's largest military installations, an enormous health care industry that includes medical research and the presence of major medical centers, an array of national and international manufacturers and distributors, and emerging high-tech industries supporting U.S. Army operations.

The regional expectations for TAMUCT are exceptionally high, and its progress toward meeting major milestones in its development includes the following evidence of success:

Transition. TAMUCT is now completing the third year of a coordinated transition from TSU, its parent institution during its operation as a System Center. All essential student support services that were once provided with assistance from TSU have now been staffed to at least a functional level, and the remaining challenge is to transfer the Banner student information software system, currently housed at TSU, to TAMUCT control. The Texas A&M University System has approved the university's request to contract with *Ellucian* (formerly *SunGard*) for the full transition of all student information software by Fall 2014. Blackboard, the software platform used for online programming, was completely transitioned from TSU to TAMUCT during the 2011-2012 Academic Year. Full institutional transition is at approximately the 80% level, with TAMUCT continuing to financially reimburse TSU for the support provided.

Accreditation. Though separately administered, TAMUCT must continue to share TSU accreditation until it secures its own, separate accreditation. A critical step in addressing that challenge was completed in June 2012 when TAMUCT was notified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) that its application for separate accreditation has been accepted, and the university has been approved for a site visit and submission of the required compliance certification document for full accreditation.

Diversification of Curriculum. Though curriculum changes are currently limited by its sharing of accreditation with TSU, planning for curriculum diversification has nevertheless progressed at TAMUCT. Notable accomplishments in program and curriculum development include:

- During the 2011-2012 Academic Year, the university received formal approval from The Texas A&M University System to designate three academic schools: the School of Business, the School of Education, and the School of Arts & Sciences.
- The university now offers more than 50 degree programs at both the baccalaureate and masters levels and will have graduated more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students by August 2012.
- The university has given high priority to developing its capability for Distributed Learning, and after delivering no SCH's online during its final year as a System Center under TSU (2008-2009), it now delivers more than 30% of its SCH's via distributed technology and will offer 10-12 new degree programs online beginning in Fall 2012 that were formerly taught only face-to-face.
- In an effort to advance the diversity of curricula while building partnerships within The Texas A&M University System, the university has developed creative agreements with Texas A&M University-Texarkana (TAMUT) to provide an MS degree in Instructional Technology in demand at Ft. Hood, and a critically needed BS degree in Nursing to be administered and taught through TAMUT until TAMUCT can assume responsibility for program delivery following accreditation.
- Following separate accreditation, TAMUCT proposes to move aggressively into the Biological and Health Sciences, preparing itself to meet the enormous regional demands for health care providers across Bell County, including Scott & White Healthcare, the Central Texas Veteran's Health Care System, Metroplex Health Care, the new Seton Harker Heights Medical Center, and the dramatic expansion of the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center.
- A related curricular expansion will be directed at responding to Fort Hood for an expanded workforce in Behavioral Health to address the growing challenges of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) among soldiers returning from active duty.
- Programmatic expansion into the Biological Sciences will permit an articulated degree program with Temple College (TC) to address the regional demand for baccalaureate opportunities from TC students completing Biotechnology and Middle College programs in the Biosciences at the Texas Bioscience Institute on the research campus of Scott & White Healthcare.
- The university also proposes to develop new baccalaureate opportunities in partnership with Temple College and TSTC-Waco through the East Williamson County Higher Education Center, a multi-institutional facility soon to be under construction along the I-130 corridor in Hutto, Texas.
- The university will continue to develop instructional programming in support of the Operational Test Command (OTC) at Ft. Hood, with the goal of creating a specialized degree program at the master's level for OTC employees engaged in testing battlefield equipment, and it has entered into a partnership with the University of Maryland, University College, to deliver a cooperative program to the Army in Cyber Security.

Campus Consolidation. The TAMUCT permanent campus was opened in June 2012, and a 103,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose building was occupied at that time. It houses the School of Business and the School of Arts & Sciences, as well as most of the student support services, including the campus bookstore. TAMUS has approved \$40M of PUF support for the construction of a second building at TAMUCT, and ground was broken on that facility simultaneously with the opening of the first building. The second building will house the School of Education, the University Library, all Business Office operations, programs for Student Success, a Counseling Center, and a center for the development of online programming. It will also contain the university's first three science laboratories. Support for a TRB to construct a third building to house Science, Health Science, and Wellness programs will be requested during the legislative session.

Cost Efficiency. Although TAMUCT will transition all university functions away from Tarleton State University by no later than Fall 2014, it will do so within a flat, efficient administrative structure of mid-level program directors under the oversight of the President and two vice presidents. Other cost effective accomplishments include:

- The university is building its permanent campus with a commitment to space and energy efficiency, constructing multi-use facilities built to LEED standards that may be re-purposed to address changes in programmatic needs.
- The university has outsourced all facilities and grounds maintenance; bookstore and food service operations; telephone system and employee e-mail; the implementation and a substantial portion of ongoing operations for Banner, its administrative and student support software (including off-site server support); and live, interactive student assistance in support of its online delivery of instruction.
- The university has developed a phase-out plan for the leased space which has supported all of its operations during its first three years of existence, repurposing the cost savings toward utilities and maintenance costs associated with its first two buildings on the permanent campus.

- The university has managed its financial resources to set aside all required start-up costs for the implementation of Banner software, and it will target savings from the gradual elimination of payments to TSU for having previously provided all software support for TAMUCT to the ongoing operation of its IT systems.
- The university will continue to strengthen its online instructional capability as a means of not only expanding its delivery of instruction regionally and to military services around the world in partnership with Central Texas College, but to provide enhanced opportunities for campus based students.

Growth. During the 2011-2012 Academic Year, TAMUCT enrolled students in almost 45,000 semester credit hours (SCH), the highest in its three-year history, and in Spring 2012 reached 1,280 FTE, also the highest in its short history. With the opening of the permanent campus, early enrollment totals for Fall 2012 show an increase in both SCH and FTE of more than 10% compared to Fall 2011, and it appears that TAMUCT should exceed its SCH production during the 2010-11 Base Year by more than 6%. The aggressive recruitment of community college students from four formal affiliations (Central Texas College, Temple College, Austin Community College, and TSTC-Waco) will drive future growth, as will the return of thousands of soldiers to Fort Hood from deployment.

Diversity and Closing the Gaps

TAMUCT continues to enroll the most broadly diverse student body of all TAMUS institutions, with 47% of its undergraduates White, 29% African American, 16% Hispanic, and 4% Asian/Pacific Islander; 64% of the student population is female and 36% male. More than 60% of baccalaureate degrees are awarded to graduates who are the first in their families to attend college. And while 95% of the student population attends the university part-time, and more than 70% of undergraduates qualify as "at risk" according to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board standards, by the conclusion of the Summer Commencement 2012, TAMUCT will have graduated more than 2,000 students in three years, for an annual rate of 43 graduates for every 100 FTE.

Service to Military Students

Approximately 45% of the TAMUCT student body is made up of soldiers on active duty, veterans, and members of military families, and the university enjoys a growing reputation for its ability to address the needs of soldiers and their families, and to work in cooperation with Fort Hood. As one example, TAMUCT provides easily accessible classroom space for use by the Educational Services Office and the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) at Fort Hood in return for the U.S. Army's conveyance of 672 acres of land to The Texas A&M University System for TAMUCT's permanent campus in Killeen. TAMUCT is also a successful pilot site for the Vet Success Program operated through the Veteran's Administration and has been formally ranked in the top 20% of all universities in the nation serving military students for two consecutive years.

Legislative Appropriations Requests

TAMUCT is requesting legislative consideration for the funding of three Exceptional Items specifically tied to the growth and development of the university by supporting its effort to diversify its curriculum in keeping with regional expectations, strengthening its relationships with regional community and technical colleges, advancing its ability to serve U.S. military service members world-wide in partnership with Central Texas College, and assuring a high level of success for its students in completing their degrees and successfully entering the workforce. The Exceptional Item requests are as follows:

Initiate Programmatic Expansion into the Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, and Wellness (\$7.5M for the biennium) -- TAMUCT proposes to initiate and to build an instructional program in the Biological Sciences that will anchor and serve future programs in the Health Sciences while simultaneously addressing a priority need at Fort Hood for an expanded workforce in Behavioral Health specifically trained to care for patients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The initiatives upon which the university proposes to build this capability within a sequenced, 3-year time span (2013-2015) are listed below and include a parallel initiative in Wellness to be addressed in part through a program in Kinesiology:

- Initiate programmatic expansion into the sciences with initial emphasis on the Biosciences for students preparing for the Health Professions.
- Prepare for programmatic expansion into both the Health Sciences and Health Care Administration, including the development of formal transfer partnership agreements with area community colleges and other TAMUS institutions and agencies.
- Prepare for programmatic expansion into Kinesiology and Wellness.
- Expand existing programs in Social Work and Behavioral Health to include specialization in the treatment of PTSD and TBI for active duty military personnel and veterans.

- Create a Baccalaureate Level Degree in Biological Science in partnership with Temple College and its Middle College residing within the Texas Bioscience Institute.
- Provide funding to equip specialized laboratories, including a multi-purpose simulation center, as well as to hire faculty and support staff.

In support of its Exceptional Item request for funding to expand its programs into the Biological and Health Sciences, TAMUCT is requesting an additional 5.0 FTEs in exempt positions. The positions would be in the areas of instruction and academic support. Additional tenure track faculty are needed for biological science instruction, academic support for the biological science program, and library staff for the additional library collection needed to support the program.

Expand Collaborative Programs with Area Community Colleges, Including the Delivery of In-Demand Instructional Programs to U.S. Military Services World-Wide in Partnership with Central Texas College (\$3.5M for the biennium) --

The future growth and development of TAMUCT as a regional university is largely dependent upon its ability to engage and attract students from its partner community colleges. With more than 70% of all new students now entering TAMUCT through a community college, the university needs targeted funding to complete three major initiatives:

- Expand the Warrior Corps Pathway Program with current community college partners while seeking new institutional partnerships.
- Formalize the delivery of cost-effective baccalaureate degree programs with community college partners in high enrollment, employer-demand disciplines.
- Become a full partner with Temple College and Texas State Technical College-Waco in the development of the East Williamson County Higher Education Center in Hutto, Texas, along the I-130 Corridor.

In addition, TAMUCT proposes to strengthen its relationship with Central Texas College (CTC) for the delivery of instruction to U.S. military services shipboard and on military posts across the country and around the world. Targeted funding will be used to address the following initiatives:

- Advance the development of the University's learning technology infrastructure, including the integration of lecture-capture recording and delivery systems.
- Coordinate the delivery of selected baccalaureate degrees with CTC associate degrees offered shipboard and on military posts world-wide.
- Develop the operational capability, including shared space and staff with CTC, to address the demand for instructional programming from all U.S. military services.

Note: While courses taught for U.S. military services world-wide do not qualify for state SCH funding, the university will generate ample reimbursement for the delivery of instruction through formal contractual agreements with the military in partnership with Central Texas College.

Improve Student Retention, Success, and Graduation (\$1.5M for the biennium) -- Since TAMUCT is an upper-level university, it proposes to implement more timely and accurate means of assessing student progress and performance than traditional approaches that rely heavily on first-time, full-time freshmen and a six-year graduation rate. TAMUCT will provide ongoing assessment and intervention, monitoring student performance semester by semester and directly engaging the student with support services that will improve retention and assure higher levels of success from matriculation through graduation and employment. Major initiatives are to:

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- Strengthen and aggressively assess student performance for program completion and for work readiness.
- Implement Learning Analytics to more accurately identify and address the needs of students who are "at risk" while they progress through their programs of study.
- Improve student engagement and intervention through the expansion of advising and counseling services, including the creation of a comprehensive Advising Center.
- Develop a Center for Student Academic and Employment Success in partnership with state, regional, and community agencies and support services at Fort Hood.
- Provide 1) equipment, software, and staff within the Department of Institutional Research and 2) equipment and staff necessary for the development of an Advising Center and the proposed Center for Student Academic and Employment Success.

TRB's for a Science, Health Science and Wellness Building (\$50M, with annual estimated debt service of \$1.7M) -- TAMUCT is requesting tuition revenue bonds for the construction of Building III, a facility dedicated to the integration of

programs in the Sciences, Health Sciences, and Wellness The third building will house specialized laboratories and a multi-purpose simulation center to support the expansion of the initial baccalaureate level program in the Biological Sciences along with the first baccalaureate level programs in the Health Sciences, specifically Nursing and Health Care Administration. It will also support the expansion of programs in Social Work and Behavioral Health, and will be capable of supporting joint initiatives between TAMUCT and Fort Hood as well as cooperative programs in the Health Sciences delivered through partnerships with area community colleges and with other System institutions. Finally, Building III will support a new baccalaureate level program in Kinesiology and Wellness that will be integrated into the provision of mental and physical wellness programs for students, faculty, and staff, and will contain a fitness center and other recreational space. Tuition Revenue funding for Building III is requested at \$50M, with completion projected for the Fall of 2016. In concert with Buildings I and II, Building III will support the growth of TAMUCT to the 5,000 student level and will permit the university to move aggressively into the Biological and Health Sciences, while providing a new curriculum in Kinesiology and Wellness, including badly needed wellness programs for the campus community. In addition, it will enable the university to address critical needs in both the Health Sciences and Behavioral Health identified by Fort Hood in support of the dramatic expansion of the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center that will include a major emphasis in the treatment PTSD and TBI.

Texas A&M University System-wide Funding Issues and Needs

Base Funding – Our highest priority is funding the basic, on-going operations of our institutions and agencies. Given current economic conditions, we request that the Legislature maintain our institutions' and agencies' base funding and put any new funds into the formulas to fund the costs of providing education and support for the additional students enrolled since the last base period, and to fund the facilities costs of our institutions and agencies.

Incentive Funding – We support increased accountability and performance incentives through outcomes-based funding; however, base funding, including enrollment growth through the current formulas, should be funded first.

Higher Education Group Health Insurance – We request funding to cover any increases in employees and retirees enrolled in our group health insurance program and increases in health care costs. Additionally, we request funding to restore some increment of the differential funding level for our employees as compared to the state employees in the ERS group insurance plan.

Student Financial Aid – Increased support for student financial aid is vitally important for our students and families. However, since it is a method of paying for tuition and fees and does not increase much needed funding for the universities, we request any increase in financial aid not be made at the expense of formula funding.

Potential Impact on TAMUCT of a 10% Reduction in Special Item Transitional Funding

For TAMUCT to fulfill its promise of becoming a model upper-level university working in close partnership with regional community colleges and with Fort Hood, assuring the most cost-efficient access to the baccalaureate degree, it must be able to grow its academic programs and student support services during a time of unprecedented funding constraints. And although the opening of the first building on its permanent campus, coordinated with aggressive recruiting efforts, is producing notable enrollment growth, TAMUCT must continue to rely on its Transition Funding allocation until its growth can begin to substantially offset the need for that funding through significant growth in formula funding. Conservative estimates indicate that Transition Funding will be needed by TAMUCT for at least three more biennia.

TAMUCT uses Transition Funding to hire and retain qualified faculty and staff who are providing a unique educational experience to a region previously underserved at the upper-level undergraduate and graduate levels by public higher education. Should Transition Funding be reduced by as much as 10% during the coming biennium, a dramatic slowing of the university's ability to meet the long-delayed needs of this region and its students will be inevitable. TAMUCT is now staffed at a functional level, but the depth of staffing is shallow, as is the coverage of classes in support of the academic curriculum. A reduction in Transition Funding would directly impact the university's ability to maintain even its current level of course offerings and support services, forcing hard decisions on whether to proceed with planned Student Success initiatives and the expansion of instructional programming into the Biological and Health Sciences.

Alternatives that have been discussed by TAMUCT administrative staff include a substantial reduction of course offerings in the summer, the use of more adjunct faculty to retain current levels of course offerings, and a general reduction of course offerings during each academic year. Because so many TAMUCT students are attuned to the military calendar and thus tend to enroll year-round, the summer semester produces a substantial portion of the annual SCH total for the university. Reducing summer course offerings would result in a loss of services to these students. The use of more adjunct faculty could place the university in jeopardy with its accrediting body at a time when separate accreditation is being sought. And a general reduction in course offerings would stall enrollment growth, further reducing formula

funding and placing entire programs in danger of reduction or elimination while impacting the progress of students toward the completion of degrees.

Significant Changes in Policy

TAMUCT is required to follow all policies of The Texas A&M University System, and until recently was bound by all rules and regulations of TSU. Submission of TAMUCT's application to the SACS/COC for separate accreditation from TSU brought an expanded ability to develop policies specific to TAMUCT.

For example, in cooperation with its Faculty Senate, TAMUCT was able to develop its own tenure and promotion policy for faculty and to subsequently submit it to the System for approval. In addition, TAMUCT was able to gain System approval for policy changes affecting administrative structure, specifically permitting the transition of Academic Divisions to Schools, adding department chairs in specific disciplines.

In addition, TAMUCT has developed a university specific curriculum approval process and published its first Course Catalog. One of the most significant academic policy changes was the successful request to System and THECB to add additional online instructional programs. With that addition, TAMUCT also secured faculty approval for quality control measures for those teaching online, including peer review of all online courses in addition to required training for quality course development and delivery through Quality Matters and the Sloan Consortium.

Enrollment management at TAMUCT has been positively affected by the development of comprehensive articulation agreements with four partner two-year colleges, including Central Texas College, Temple College, Austin Community College, and TSTC-Waco. Because TAMUCT is exclusively an upper-level institution, the transfer student is critical to the university's future success. "Warrior Corps," incorporated into the affiliation agreements, encourages incoming freshmen at partner two-year colleges to commit to the pursuit of the baccalaureate degree at TAMUCT, and provides these students with ongoing interaction and support from TAMUCT while they are still enrolled in a two-year college. This policy addition has had a dramatic, positive impact on the university's ability to recruit and retain transfer students.

A major step taken by TAMUCT to assure appropriate policy development and compliance was the hiring of a university Compliance Officer to monitor compliance with federal, state, and TAMUS policies, including but not limited to laws, statutes, codes, policies, procedures, rules, and directives, as well as compliance with TAMUCT's internal regulatory standards.

Background Checks

Criminal background checks are conducted by TAMUCT under Texas Education Code Section 51.215 and Texas Government Chapter 411 Subchapter (f). In addition, TAMUCT abides by a university rule on criminal background checks approved in compliance with System Policy 33.99.14. All employment positions, including student, adjunct, part-time, and temporary, at the university are considered security-sensitive and require a criminal background check.

Commitment and Request

The faculty, staff, and administration of TAMUCT are very proud of their new university. All employees are committed to meeting their fiduciary responsibility of using the dollars invested by the taxpayers of the State of Texas wisely while providing quality educational opportunities and the highest level of service possible to the students and to the communities of our region. The Central Texas region has supported the creation of TAMUCT since its inception as a University System Center under TSU. TAMUCT is now prepared to give back to the region by creating an innovative model for the delivery of higher education, mindful of funding constraints while embracing its commitments to "excellence in teaching, service, and scholarship." The university respectfully asks that consideration be given to the requests contained within this document as "Life's Next Chapter" begins for the many students of TAMUCT.

The Texas A&M University System is governed by a Board of Regents. The current members of the Board are included in the organizational chart.