

6. INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PUBLIC TRUST

6. Assuring Integrity, Accountability, and Public Trust

A comprehensive communications strategy will educate and inform the public about the value added impact of the System and the participating institutions. The UT System will pursue a comprehensive and integrated set of activities that enables it to anticipate issues, track progress, prevent problems, and educate to improve compliance, accountability, and communication about achievements and challenges.

Through initiatives on preventative law, accountability reports, compliance studies and policy improvement, and internal audits, these efforts will result in prevention of problems, institutional improvement, and highly effective communication with stakeholders.

These activities will also enhance the UT System's stature as a national leader in compliance and accountability, and as one recognized for its continuous efforts to improve.

"There is lots of debate about the value-added of public university systems. The UT System is one of the few that are not defensive. It is constantly eager to improve. This is very unusual."

Communicating and educating the public more effectively about the value and impact of the UT System and higher education

The public we seek to educate about the value and impact of the UT System and higher education is composed of a broad group of stakeholders including elected policy makers, the media, alumni, donors, parents, students, faculty, staff, and in fact, the entire general population.

The value added of public university systems is not generally well understood without proactive efforts to communicate accurate, consistent information, simple and unified messages, and align those messages with overarching strategic priorities of the System.

While the UT System is somewhat atypical compared with other university systems in that it demonstrates a responsibility to lead the debate on higher education policy issues, develop and share new value-added practices and models, and communicate both its achievements and areas for continuous improvement in a highly transparent way, it always strives to improve the richness and reach of its messages in order to keep stakeholders better informed.

Goal

A comprehensive communications strategy will educate and inform the public, and all stakeholders who comprise it, about the value-added impact of the UT System and engender trust in the System's employment of resources in carrying out its mission.

Strategies

Position the UT System as a national model of leadership of academic and health care institutions.

Proactively working with the leadership of key System offices to seek national and state platform opportunities (speeches, testimony, panels, white papers, and other publications) in key policy areas such as access, affordability, accountability, and economic value.

Build and strengthen the general public, media, and state leadership's understanding of the importance of the UT System and the 15 institutions in local communities, the state, and nation.

- Developing a highly concentrated work plan with Office of Governmental Relations to craft messages and set meeting opportunities (in district hometowns) between the chancellor, regents, and key elected officials who may benefit from more personalized dialogue with the System.
- Continuing to build and drive legislative staff to robust, "one-stop shopping" web-based data bank of information on matters important to policymakers.
- Developing and maintaining a common and accessible database of information

communicated to the general public and to policy makers, searchable by subject matter as well as by name of individual policy maker or committee.

- Increasing visibility and availability of UT System faculty and staff as policy experts by conducting small group sessions with legislators on matters of high relevance to them; building and maintaining a database of experts in subject matter areas (indexed by subject); promote inventory of experts on issues of importance (security, bioterrorism, epidemics, energy, health, etc.) to national and state media.
- Orchestrating and completing an annual statewide series of meetings with editorial boards in major market areas and in communities that serve high concentrations of UT System students and patients.
- Expanding the reach of electronic communications efforts between Chancellor and System leaders to more statewide opinion leaders; acquire e-mail contact data from key business organizations.
- Executing a statewide promotion of upcoming television series, *Transforming Texas*, demonstrating the role that UT System institutions play in providing solutions to the state's most critical challenges in education, health care, security, and the environment. With proper television, radio, web, and newspaper promotions, the series has the potential to reach millions of viewers.
- Sampling opinions of the public and policy makers on views of the UT System and higher education, particularly immediately before and after major initiatives such as the television series and branding exercise.

Build public trust in the brand of the UT System by increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, the aggregate of the organization — the 15 institutions and System Administration office that comprise it.

Selecting and working with outside agency expertise to "brand" the System. This year-long initiative will require research, focus groups, creation of messages, promotional efforts and other exercises designed to build

public loyalty for the promise that the UT System offers to its constituents — that it is a higher education and health provider of “first choice.” A better informed and involved public may result in greater financial, legislative, and advocacy support.

Metrics

- Increase in legislative appropriations (in raw dollars) to UT System, and no decline in dollars appropriated per FTSE for System institutions.
- Retention of authority to set designated tuition and receipt of share or authority to issue Tuition Revenue Bonds.

- Quantification of national platform opportunities whereby UT System is featured as a leader or key presenter on higher education/health policy issues.
- Substantial and regular positive “earned” media placements.
- Steady and consistent increase in number of subscribers to chancellor’s and executive vice chancellor’s statewide electronic communications.
- Pre- and post-television series and branding exercise polling indicating whether or not public perception of UT System changed.
- Positive changes in responses to opinion surveys.

Enhancing Alignment and Accountability

Goal

Aligning System and institution plans, matching what presidents are asked to do with what they are accountable for.

Strategies

Planning framework.

The UT System will organize its planning framework to align more clearly institution-level strategic plans and Compacts, presidential work plans, and annual evaluations with the Board of Regents and System Administration’s planning and accountability.

Campus strategic plans.

By the end of calendar year 2008, each institution is expected to have or be completing a strategic long-range plan looking ahead five to ten years, with a cycle for updating it on a periodic basis. The Compacts, based on these longer-range ideas, will focus on more immediate priorities and initiatives over a rolling 18- to 24-month period. As relevant and appropriate, campuses will be asked to show the ways in which their internal plans align with the System-wide priorities discussed in this document. The Offices of Academic Affairs, Health Affairs, and Institutional

Planning will work with each campus to identify and pursue opportunities for alignment with the System’s overarching priorities.

Annual updates and measures of progress.

System Administration will provide to the Board an annual update of where the System as a whole and each campus is in its strategic planning process and will monitor and work with institutions to strengthen alignment by considering such indicators as:

- Stage in internal planning cycle (tied to accreditation review as relevant); establishment of internal or external commission on future of institution; development of priorities; drafting and circulating plan; completing and distributing plan (date expected, date completed); plan accessible on Web site (institution, UT System); institution priorities aligned with/reflected in campus Compact; institution priorities aligned with/reflected in UT System planning documents and decision making.
- In 2006-07, the UT System will initiate an inventory, examination, and enhancement of Board of Regents and institution policies, procedures, and communication about regular, robust, strategic, and consistent review of all academic programs.

- Measures of progress will, whenever possible, be tied to the core data sets developed for the institution's and System's accountability reports.

Accountability reporting.

The UT System will remain a national leader in accountability and assessment of educational, research, and clinical outcomes. The System will enhance common, consistent data sets with emphasis on outcome and impact measures. It will pursue a schedule to publish annual, longitudinal, and periodic reports on critical

indicators and key topics to assist the Board of Regents, System Administration, presidents, and external stakeholders in analyzing and evaluating annual progress toward key institutional and System priorities, for example, student learning outcomes, graduation rates, increases in research expenditures, technology transfer, and other metrics noted in earlier sections of this plan. It will continue to enhance its accountability framework with the advice of the System-wide accountability working group.

Enhancing compliance

Goal

Compliance framework. The UT System endeavors to fulfill its responsibilities to the people of Texas in an environment based upon ethical behavior and compliance with all applicable laws and rules which fosters integrity and accountability within each institution's daily internal control infrastructure. In short, it is each employee's goal to do the right things right.

Strategies

Pursue a proactive, noncompliance prevention and detection infrastructure to reduce reports of "minor" noncompliance and eliminate reports of "major" noncompliance issues in the high risk areas below.

The UT System will facilitate and coordinate the Institutional Compliance Advisory Committee, standing committees, and advisory groups; support high-risk assurance activities (computer security, inspections, certifications, self-assessments, audits and high-risk area and compliance program peer reviews); provide institutional compliance committee training; consolidate and communicate institutional compliance program status to the Board of Regents; and provide oversight and consultative services to the various institutions regarding opportunities for audit and compliance program enhancements (e.g., institutional liaisons).

- A strong control environment, or "tone at the top," where defined policies and procedures and risk management plans are established to assure integrity, accountability, and public trust.
- Effective training for each employee so that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities and that they are provided avenues to both receive and provide information necessary for the effective operation of the organization.
- Annual risk assessments to identify and analyze the relevant risks to achieving the goals and objectives of the institution.
- Continuous monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the training and risk identification and risk management processes; there must be a continuous validation process of the compliance.
- An effective reporting structure whereby the citizens of Texas and other stakeholders have confidence that the institution is being a good steward of the assets entrusted to the institution.
- The utilization of a robust internal audit function to provide independent and objective evaluations and assurances to management and the Board of Regents on the operations, policies, procedures, and controls at the institution.

Develop at each institution and for the UT System Administration an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) approach that looks at strategic, operational, financial, and compliance risks as a whole.

- Providing education and resources on the ERM process and facilitating ERM sessions at the institutions.
- Educating executive leadership teams on the value of approaching the risk identification process from an institution-wide basis to include not only financial and compliance risk, but also strategic and operational risk.
- Appointing an executive-level officer of risk management within three to five years at each institution who is well versed and able to manage the broadest level of risk identification.

Create an environment that includes open communication and learning opportunities in order to ensure that instances of failure are not repeated.

- Create and maintain a System-wide Web site where best practices, training materials, and emerging issues are shared amongst the institutions; identify, research, and publish best practices on emerging or existing compliance issues.
- Foster an environment which includes open communication and learning within and between institutions.
- Provide a vehicle by which we learn from identified compliance failures (whether internal to the UT System or to other institutions) so that they are not repeated systematically.

Continue to be viewed nationally as the internal audit and compliance leaders in universities and health-related institutions.

- Continue to host annual compliance conferences.
- Support the creation of a national compliance organization.
- Support the development of a professional certification for compliance and ethics professionals.

Metrics

Emphasis will be on achieving results in the following high-risk areas:

- Medical billing – A consistent billing error rate of less than 5%
- Environmental Health and Safety – Fines and/or penalties well below the national average
- Research – No significant time and effort reporting issues; obtaining and maintaining accreditation by nationally recognized organizations for human subjects, animal safety, and biosafety; no significant audit findings from external regulators; maintaining public trust and confidence when working with the riskiest agents in a safe/controlled/protected environment while allowing/encouraging scientific creativity (within appropriate risk tolerances)
- NCAA – No major violations and limited secondary violations
- Endowments – Assurances to donor and public that contributions are in compliance with donor requests
- Asset management – Resources are safeguarded and used efficiently
- Human resources – “Employer of choice” designation at each institution