



Organizational Structure for New University Planning

Establishing a new university, particularly when it involves combining the talent, assets and resources of two existing institutions, is a monumental undertaking and extremely complicated. Such a task requires a process that involves the necessary stakeholders and sets benchmarks and deadlines that keep us on track to open the doors as a new, single institution ready to enroll students in fall 2015.

The planning process in place for the new university is organized around committees and working groups both at the System level and at the campus level.

The overall [organizational chart](#) (PDF) shows how all activities flow from the UT System Board of Regents to four major teams: three teams at the system level (steering team, medical school team, and communications and engagement team) and the New University Transition Team (NUTT) at the campus level.

At the campus level, activities flow from the NUTT to a New University Steering Committee (NUSC) and from there to four major sets of working groups: 13 academic program working groups, 14 academic/administration working groups, 15 operational administration working groups and one students-only working group.

In total, there are 50 committees and working groups and more than 400 faculty, administrators, staff, and students fully engaged in the planning of the new university.

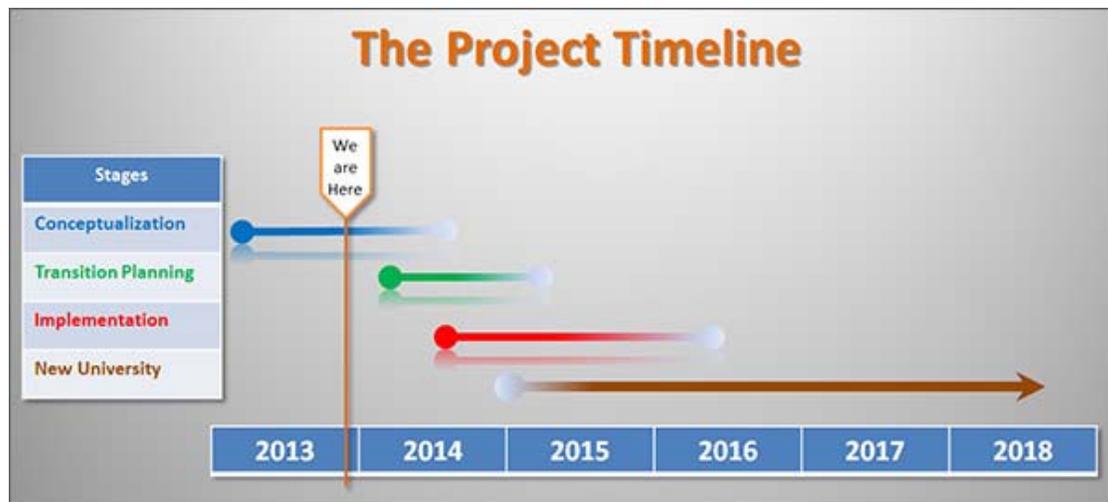
Project Management

The overarching goal of Project South Texas is to open the doors of the new university in the fall of 2015 to some 30,000 students. With a project of such magnitude, there must be a mechanism by which a central locus of control can keep track of the hundreds and hundreds of tasks that must be accomplished. At last count, some 600 tasks, both academically and operationally, must be completed to launch the new university, including establishing the new administration and organizational structure, deploying the assets, facilities and human

resources of the existing campuses, combining and creating new programs, and adding a new school of medicine. Many of these tasks will unfold in parallel while many other key tasks cannot start until a predecessor is successfully completed. The ever-changing series of predecessor and dependent tasks that most directly affects the targeted completion date of the project is the *Critical Path*, which is most sensitive to an overall project delay and thus *most closely monitored*.

A formal project management system, centrally managed by the UT System, will coordinate and monitor the progress toward a successful launch of the new university. This system is presently being installed and will carry the project from conceptualization through transition design, implementation and new university launch. The project will also stretch past university launch to the new medical school launch in 2016. We have begun the project planning stages.

Project manager, Michael Putegnat, assisted by UT System and campus leaders will oversee the development and implementation of the project plan.



Community Participation and Engagement

As the planning process unfolds, the University of Texas System wants as much community participation and involvement as possible. Several activities and functions have taken place so far to provide the Rio Grande Valley community with up-to-date information about the new university and to seek input.

Monthly Chancellor Visits to the Rio Grande Valley

One of the most effective means of community engagement and outreach has been Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa's monthly visits to the Rio Grande Valley. His visits have reinforced the feeling of "regionalism" that has begun to emerge in the Valley as a direct result of the creation of the new university. Chancellor Cigarroa has come to the Valley three times already to speak about plans for the new university. During those visits he took special care to meet and interact with high school students at Dr. Abraham P. Cano Freshman Academy in Harlingen, La Joya High School and Lyford High School. During those meetings the Chancellor responded to very perceptive and insightful questions from the students.

During his visits Chancellor Cigarroa also met with faculty and staff at the University of Texas at Brownsville and the University of Texas Pan American. He has also reached out to civic and community leaders. Chancellor Cigarroa met separately with civic and community leaders in Harlingen, the Rio Grande Partnership Chamber of Commerce and area leaders of the religious community.

One of the most important visits by the chancellor took place November 20 at the Harlingen Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC). Two events served to enhance the emerging feeling of regionalism among civic and community leaders of the Rio Grande Valley.

First, there was the presentation by Chancellor Cigarroa and Regents Powell and Aliseda of a Permanent University Fund check for \$196 million for building facilities for the new university and medical school. The presidents of the two campuses, civic leaders and legislators praised and celebrated the action and the implications for the region.

After the ceremonial check presentation, Chancellor Cigarroa met with the presidents of the two campuses and members of the development and alumni boards of the two universities. Upon being asked by one board member about the boards consolidating into one, Chancellor Cigarroa responded: "I think we should do what we are going to do on the academic side. For example, if we have two Colleges of Fine Arts and two deans, we are going to consolidate them into one College of Fine Arts with one dean." After that guidance by the chancellor, members of the boards of development and alumni expressed a strong desire to join forces into one new unit for the new university, thus, once again, putting in evidence the growing feeling of regionalism the new university has generated in South Texas.

Forum On Community Engagement

On November 8, the University of Texas System and RGV non-profit organizations sponsored a Forum on Community Engagement to discuss the impact of the new university and how the new institution might be engaged in the well-being and education of colonia and low income residents. The forum participants were divided into four working groups to discuss ways in which the new university can become an integral part of the life of colonia students and their families.

With the help of expert group leaders, the participants discussed education, healthcare, economic development and regional planning. The discussions were quite lively and it was clear at the conclusion of the forum that there is an expectation, a hope and an excitement like never before about the enormous potential of the university's meaningful engagement in the advancement of the well-being of the people who live in the colonias.

Colonia residents number in excess of 300,000 in the Valley, and a significant percentage of the student body at both UTPA and UTB come from the colonias -- as much as 30 percent at UTPA.

If the new university can help *transform the colonias*, it will help *transform the Rio Grande Valley*.

Ask a Question

Another way those interested can learn about the new university in South Texas is by

submitting an anonymous question to the **Ask a Question** section of the Project South Texas Website (link) Every effort will be made to post a response within 24 hours.

As an example, here is the latest anonymous question and the posted response:

Question:

Would the colleges and departments be distributed over the two universities? I don't see how UT-Brownsville will survive this merger. It feels like it will be just a service center for the new university. Can you please clarify? Thanks for your efforts!

Posted Response:

*Your question asks about the distribution of functions "over the two universities." The fact is that there will not be "two universities". There will be just **one** new university with multiple instructional sites across the whole Rio Grande Valley. One of the instructional campuses will be in Edinburg, another one in Brownsville. There will also be a Medical School campus in Harlingen and another one in Edinburg. A number of other sites will be utilized to distribute teaching, research and public service across the entire Valley.*

*As for colleges and departments, there will not be a duplication of colleges or departments. The new university will have a **single** academic and administrative structure all the way down to the program level. In other words, there will be just one college or department of "X" operating programs throughout the Valley. Additional details on academic programs and the new organizational structure will likely be finalized in 2014.*

After the assets, facilities, and human resources of the two universities have been consolidated into a new, single, accredited university to begin classes in August of 2015, and upon determination by the Board of Regents, the University of Texas PanAmerican and the University of Texas at Brownsville will be abolished. (Senate Bill 24)

"What's In a Name" Campaign

Perhaps no other outreach activity generated more response, participation and interest than the "What's In A Name" Campaign. The campaign garnered more than 3,500 comments through Twitter, Facebook, email and phone messages. Outreach to community centers in colonias throughout the Valley produced hundreds of handwritten comments. There was widespread media coverage of the campaign and spirited debate on social media channels. The campaign ended on Dec. 6, with a live Twitter chat hosted UT System's Executive Vice Chancellor Pedro Reyes and Associate Vice Chancellor John Hayek – two key leaders in the new university transition. The Board of Regents unanimously voted to select The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley as the new university's name at a meeting on Thursday, Dec. 12. UTRGV was the clear favorite among the thousands who participated in the campaign.

Special Advisor Presentations

In a further effort to reach out and inform key segments of the Rio Grande Valley about the new university, I have taken advantage of invitations to speak before important civic and educational groups. On November 12, I spoke before some 120 members of the Asociacion de Empresarios Mejicanos, AME, (Association of Mexican Entrepreneurs, AME) in Rancho Viejo (http://www.elnuevoheraldo.com/el_valle/noticias_locales/article_7096ce0c-4c8d-11e3-8251-001a4bcf6878.html#.Uqt49eF9KYs.email)

On November 13, I spoke about the new university before some 100 educators from the Regional P-16 Council and the Regional Counselors Network in Edinburg.

Consultants and Visitations

To provide expert assistance to the Working Groups, the New University Transition Team plans to engage presentations by consultants as well as provide opportunities for some members of the appropriate groups to visit places where innovative best practices are taking place. At its November meeting, the UT Board of Regents approved a budget to cover transition planning expenses.

Special Advisor to the Chancellor, Dr. Kenneth Shine

On November 20, Dr. Kenneth Shine, Special Advisor to the UT Chancellor visited the UTB and UTPA campuses to discuss plans for the new medical school with faculty and members of the Academic Working Groups. Dr. Shine is the former University of Texas System Executive Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs. After his retirement in 2013, he was appointed Special Advisor to provide leadership, guidance and support for the creation of the new medical schools in the System at the University of Texas at Austin and at the new university in the Rio Grande Valley.

Dr. Shine discussed with the faculty and Working Groups the history of medical education in UT System, the search process for the founding dean of the medical school of the new university, as well as innovative curriculum approaches to be used, new facilities, funding issues, and the relationship between health and science programs at the new university and the curricular needs of the prospective medical school students.

Kati Haycock, President of the Education Trust

The Preamble to the Guiding Principles states clearly that *“the new university will transform Texas and the nation by becoming a leader in student success, teaching, research and healthcare.”*

The most common metric to measure a university’s performance in student success is the six-year rate of graduation of its students. On the student side there are many factors that affect a student’s persistence to graduation, chief amongst them being the student’s level of preparation, personal motivation and financial sustainability. There are many factors that contribute to student success on the university side as well. Amongst these many university factors are, chiefly, the quality and timely availability of programs and courses, the quality of teaching, the availability of programs to support those who need assistance, and the general university policies designed to help the student move seamlessly through the institution’s programs.

Kati Haycock, president of the Education Trust, is one of the foremost authorities in efforts to close the achievement gap and success rate of low-income and students of color. On November 25, she spoke before faculty, staff and members of the many engaged Working Groups. Her presentation showed how there are many colleges and universities that perform significantly better than similar colleges in terms of the graduation rate of their students. Similar colleges refer to institutions with similar missions, serving students with the same

level of preparation and the same economic and social background.

Haycock then showed what the better-performing colleges were doing to keep track of and support their students individually, from the time they entered the university until they graduated. The feedback received from her presentations was very positive, with many faculty expressing interest in exploring the possible installation of these best practices in our new university.

You can view Kati Haycock's enlightening presentation at UTPA here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVq51Kbnzjs>

Steve Mintz and Marni Baker-Stein from the Institute for Transformational Learning

Steve Mintz and Marni Baker-Stein of the University of Texas System Institute for Transformational Learning spoke to a joint meeting of the New University Steering Committee and the UT System Steering Committee about two possible innovative initiatives for the new university.

One of the initiatives would be creation of a personalized, competency-based, adaptive degree program with a substantial number of modules online. The other initiative would seek to create a Personalized EcoSystem Structure where there would be integration of student information systems data in order to create a Life-Cycle Personal Management System that provides real-time information on students as they advance through the academic life-cycle from admission to graduation.

Both university provosts will work with Mintz and Baker-Stein to create a team that will work on these innovative initiatives.

Meeting of the Academic Working Groups.

On December 13 there will be a meeting of all Academic Working Groups to hear preliminary reports about the work that has taken place and the groups' innovative ideas and recommendations for current and new academic programs for the new university.

Respectfully submitted,

Julio S. Leon

Special Advisor to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
The University of Texas System