Laying the Foundation for the Next 150 Years

**Texas A&M University Mission Statement:** Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

**Our Vision**

Students, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M University are united by our Core Values – respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, integrity, selfless service – in everything we do. We are a community of problem-solvers, scholars, and creators with a mission of service, arising from our founding land-grant heritage. Our quest for excellence as a preeminent public land-, sea-, and space-grant university will be realized through our commitment to transformational education, ground-breaking research, and a university community unfettered by discipline boundaries but focused on society’s vital challenges. We will do so with integrity and respect as we prepare the next generation to lead by our example.

The foundation of the next 150 years is anchored by four strategic pillars:

**THE UNIVERSITY AS COMMUNITY**

Embedded within our local communities, forged by Texas, and embracing our global presence, Texas A&M University is committed to enriching the learning and working environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Diverse perspectives, talents, and identities are vital to accomplishing our mission and we are enriched by the rich global and varied tapestry that is present on our campus. As a community, we will facilitate a secure and supportive environment where we each can pursue a world-class education and conduct world-changing research. It is this richness of the Texas A&M community that keeps former students engaged lifelong with the university and their education.
TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION

Providing students with the premier programs and transformative experiences inside and outside of the classroom remains our highest priority in order to prepare each individual for roles of responsibility in service to society. Melding technological advances with sound pedagogy, Texas A&M will transform the way universities interact with students yet remain committed to the principle of accessible education.

Mirroring the population of Texas, the ever-changing composition of our student body will enrich the learning environment for all. Excelling at developing graduates with creative and innovative approaches to solving problems at every scale while preserving our core values. In order to meet real-world challenges and improve the quality of lives, we will redefine the boundaries of higher education and the value of being a graduate for every level of student with continued impact throughout their lives.

DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION

Answering important questions requires thinking differently. Texas A&M’s investment in creative people and the cutting-edge tools to support their research and scholarship will continue to accelerate. The advancement of disciplinary fields yields the knowledge to tackle the most difficult interdisciplinary challenges at every scale. Encouraging a research environment based on synergies among faculty will drive a culture of discovery and innovation that moves beyond compartmentalized fields and creates a university that is an incubator of ideas and a community of scholars who benefit from and contribute to the success of each other. Working alongside our faculty and staff, A&M students will have opportunities to experience the joy of discovery and creation, while being grounded in the highest standards of ethics and professional conduct.

Our shared missions of providing a premier education while enhancing creativity and discovery brings value to the contributions of faculty, students and staff that will in turn play a critical role in attracting, developing, and retaining the next generation of talent here. Consequently, Texas A&M will continue to increase its competitive advantage by combining expertise across disciplines on research opportunities that are strategic, unique, and impactful. Texas A&M will continue to be known for solving problems.
IMPACT ON THE STATE, THE NATION, AND THE WORLD

Texas A&M champions higher education’s vital role in contributing to society in meaningful ways. Through purpose-driven research and groundbreaking discoveries, the university will demonstrate strong connections between the research conducted here and its impact on the state of Texas and communities around the globe.

Embracing our land-, sea-, and space-grant missions, we innovate solutions that serve the public good, address inequities, guarantee access to health, embrace diversity, and ensure robust and sustainable communities. Leveraging the Aggie network in conjunction with our faculty and students, we will excel at harnessing our thought leadership in developing solutions with impact throughout the public sphere. Aggies will continue to make a difference!
The Four Pillars

THE UNIVERSITY AS COMMUNITY

Within and beyond the boundaries of campus we aspire to create an environment where all are welcomed, valued, and affirmed. Texas A&M serves as a connecting point for the individual and the community, both local and global. Our students, faculty, and staff bring the world to Central Texas as we take Central Texas to the world. Indeed, it is the responsibility of Texas A&M to graduate active and engaged citizens of the world, grounded with an appreciation of the value of their contribution.

By embracing the breadth of experiences and strengths inherent among the members of our community and providing resources and support for each to be successful, Texas A&M strives to embody a compassionate community that enables individual and collaborative successes. Hosting a climate founded on the core principle of inclusion, where differences are genuinely understood and celebrated, we will provide support wherever needed to create an optimal environment for learning and working. The barriers to access and engagement for marginalized groups will be erased, regardless of whether the individuals are faculty, permanent staff, contract staff, students, or community members.

Our community meshes the physical, cultural, and the human environment, recognizing the interplay between them. The university will continue to partner with the cities of Bryan and College Station to plan for sustainable growth and livability. Enhancing the quality of life will require attention to infrastructure, green space, biking/walking trails, parks, alternative energy sources, affordable housing, and accessible and sustainable transportation alongside continued support for scholarly and public advancement of the arts.

The benefits of residing near a Tier One university will be consistently felt by local residents. Telling the stories that result from our work to the community and beyond in a way that is meaningful and accessible will invite them to participate with us. The investments in our physical infrastructure should be seen as a shared investment that also supports those living as our neighbors through local community events. Texas A&M should proudly develop the evidence that documents the institutional practices required to receive Carnegie classification in Community Engagement, ensuring bidirectional communication is strong and fluid so that we are all fully engaged in the decisions that universally impact us.
TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION

Education will remain the primary mission of every university. It is the delivery of that education, the audience, and the expectations that continuously evolve. Texas A&M University will be prepared to meet those changes taking place in higher education.

First, students are changing. A more diverse student body will enhance and enrich the learning environment for all students. This will include an increase in non-traditional students, such as veterans, those in mid-career, those who stopped out, and active senior citizens. Conversely, universities are likely to play a larger and more varied role in designing and perhaps delivering education to future college students. As there is likely to be increasing demand for non-traditional degrees that compete with the baccalaureate, Texas A&M needs to develop alternatives that look beyond the traditional classroom to provide new opportunities for advancement through degrees, certificates, and other lifelong learning programs. As we promote “lifelong learning” we want to become a national leader in creating publicly accessible continuing education and develop models that provide continued value for our graduates to stay engaged with Texas A&M.

Second, technology is changing. Technological advancements will impact the way we interact with students. New forms for delivering education to 21st century students will permeate the university, from technologically enhanced classrooms to other modes of delivery, such as web-based courses. We must discover ways to employ new technologies to provide wider access to knowledge while preserving a highly personal educational experience. Texas A&M will be a university that reaches beyond its traditional boundaries to deliver on the promise of educational opportunities for all. Recognizing the persistence of technological advancements across virtually all realms of our lives, Texas A&M will position itself to be a leader in the creation of technology to meet practical challenges and answer the needs of people. Hence, it is important that we continue to develop critical and innovative thinking in our students, while at the same time holding true to the traditions and Core Values that give Texas A&M its distinctive character.

Third, the economy is changing. The cost of higher education and the demand for relevant job skills is likely to be greater for graduates in 2030 and beyond. We must find ways to enhance the value to our graduates while keeping costs within reach. Demands will continue for job-relevant education and discussions on costs and financial burdens will continue to monopolize many discussions about college education.

Accepting our status as a premier public university, we must provide a truly globally-infused curriculum that positions our graduates to be leaders on the world stage as well as locally. Our students will have unparalleled “hands-on” research and professional training at a depth and scale rare among public institutions, applied to all our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, developing the skills needed to find, validate, and interpret information – the new hallmark of an educated citizen.
It is this combination of world-class education infused with an ethos of discovery and appreciation for research, yet broadly affordable and accessible in a supportive community, that will make Texas A&M a highly attractive destination among nationally recognized public universities.

**DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION**

The global pace of knowledge creation and dissemination is dizzying and will only accelerate. This necessitates the Texas A&M community of faculty, students, and staff working together in the shared mission of addressing societal challenges in an environment focused on creativity, discovery, and innovation. The university will incentivize and reward success, but especially collaborative success that transcends individual disciplines by shedding the constraints of organizational hierarchies. Inspired leadership will play a critical role in organizing and identifying strategic areas of excellence, and will recognize and reward faculty members who build successful interdisciplinary academic and industry partnerships. Moreover, students at all levels will integrate research as a key component of their educational experience to enhance career opportunities and recognize the value of these contributions to society and the economy.

Groundbreaking discoveries and innovations most frequently emerge when the expertise of multiple contributors is combined. For many research problems, a hyper-competitive funding landscape and the scale and complexity of the challenges often surpass the capacity of single investigators. Instead, a research ecosystem based on synergies between multiple and diverse faculty and students is needed to drive a culture of discovery and innovation. By moving beyond an institution focused on compartmentalized fields, Texas A&M will become an incubator of ideas and a community that benefits from the successes of each other. Consequently, we will increase our competitive advantage by combining expertise across disciplines to research opportunities that are strategic, unique, and impactful. Texas A&M will continue to be known for solving problems.

In order to lead at the highest levels, we must attract outstanding talent and provide an environment in which creativity and discovery can flourish and be translated into world-changing ideas and technologies. We must be willing to invest in people and in the tools of scholarship that both advance disciplinary fields and facilitate their collaboration and integration to tackle challenges at all scales.

**IMPACT ON THE STATE, THE NATION, AND THE WORLD**

Through purpose-driven research and groundbreaking discoveries, Texas A&M will support strong connections between the work that is conducted here and the impact of that research in the state of Texas and communities across the globe. The thought leadership of our faculty and students will have impact throughout the public sphere as well.
The university’s reach is not bounded by Aggies who happen to be on the scene. When called on, Texas A&M can put an Aggie anywhere, anytime, in an internet-connected world. Aggies are the first to volunteer in times of crisis. But our greatest talent is directed at building and understanding resilience so that our collective future can be marked by developing opportunities rather than responding to dangers. The world knows us not by a uniform or a way of speaking, but by the stronger society that we will continue striving to build.

A central question that frames an audacious impact vision for any university is: What are we, as a university, good for? How do our values and commitments, in turn, align and help prioritize the defining challenges that we will address over the next 20 years? This highlights a charge for the university and its alumni to figuratively “Put a finger on the scale” to develop innovation to serve the public good. Tipping the scales can be accomplished through transformative education, research, programmatic delivery, and policy innovation, but it also demands that a university must help direct broad social discourse on public values and priorities.

Local communities, the state, and the world will see Aggie citizen leaders engaged in civil, commercial, and political life. We will see Aggies bringing their voices and talents to the betterment of community and country, whether as private citizens, elected officials, or corporate leaders. Aggie citizens will be fearless on every front!
The Strategies from the Strategic Implementation Plan 2020-2025

Engage Texas & Beyond to Enhance Our Impact

Developing reciprocal community connections and partnerships, locally, regionally and globally, is essential for universities, especially those with a public and land-grant mandate.

Extending knowledge to, for, and with communities is at the center of the teaching, research, and service mission of Texas A&M University. Building on these historical strengths, Texas A&M will enhance engagement across Texas and beyond by structuring strategic coalitions and services to partner with communities in addressing economic, social, environmental, health and educational issues of the day.

To ensure our work is relevant to current and future generations of Texans, the nation and the world, Texas A&M will seek mutually beneficial engagement and meaningful partnerships to advance the human condition, build public trust, and ensure the impact of our scholarship.

Embrace and Refine our Mission as a Land-, Sea-, and Space-Grant University for the 21st Century

- Extending knowledge in all its forms (e.g., leadership training, continuing education, workforce development) to communities and constituencies for which is mutually beneficial
- Maximize local and state wide relationships where there are strategic opportunities for alignment
- Meet the issues where they exist. Engage our knowledge through discovery and innovation to the needs of Texas citizens in rural and urban communities
- Introduce and engage research, discoveries, and innovations through knowledge transfer, commercialization, and partnership opportunities
Become The University For Texas by extending our engagement in rural and urban communities

- Adapt capabilities of the university to align with the needs of the state
- Create an annual “heat map” of issues, challenges, or opportunities facing the state
- Take knowledge gained through scientific discovery and innovation, to develop strategies that respond accordingly to the needs of urban and rural Texas communities
- Review and examine the issues map biennially, reposition and adapt resources to meet new and existing issues
- Promote existing and develop a broader set of university continuing education, professional development, leadership training engagements
- Enhance utilization of existing and targeted presence with economic development and community business organizations in uniquely strategic sites across Texas

Enhance Our Global Engagement

- Advance elements of “A&M Abroad: Global Engagement Plan” (2016) to improve experiential learning, empower faculty, enhance operations, and partnership collaborations
- Develop new and enhance existing signature global partnerships where unique presence or aligned resource opportunities exist around the world
- Promote existing and develop a broader set of university continuing education, professional development, leadership training engagement
Aggies Impact Our Communities and the World

- Our graduates create positive impacts by adding value to communities. Texas A&M should develop a methodology to accurately determine and share former student impacts on their communities
- Coordinate with The Association of Former Students to develop an annual survey for an inventory of Texas A&M former student impacts

Accelerate Commercialization and Entrepreneurship

Our land-grant mission requires that we not only lead our scholarly disciplines but that we also improve lives in Texas and beyond. To accomplish this we must empower our faculty, students, and staff to solve problems for individuals, families, and communities by moving their innovations from the library, studio, and laboratory to the world.

- Weave education into the commercialization mission by integrating both internal and external resources into a cohesive educational program
- Provide support and programs for students interested in careers in commercialization and entrepreneurship
- Provide training for faculty, staff, and students on start-ups, intellectual property, and business development
- Drive innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the university that will encourage start-ups, social entrepreneurship, and business development by faculty, staff, and students

Connect the Texas A&M ecosystem with the statewide network of entrepreneurship support.
Addressing Demands on Infrastructure

The unprecedented growth in student enrollment since 2012 has strained every aspect of the campus environment, imposing burdens on staffing, faculty, and teaching resources, space, transportation, technology, and virtually every campus service. The university has not yet caught up.

Although growth has significantly slowed – with freshman class sizes holding relatively steady for the past few years – slow growth is expected to continue. Over the next few years enrollment is likely to approach 75,000 students, although much of that is anticipated to be in graduate and professional school enrollments. The issues created by this growth need to be at the forefront of every planning endeavor.

**People:** The faculty reinvestment program initiated around 2003-04 added nearly 500 faculty to the university roster in an effort to improve the student-to-faculty ratio. That net positive change has subsequently been lost with the recent influx of students such that this ratio is now higher than it was in the early 2000s. Faculty reinvestment at all levels is critical and comprises a key element throughout this strategic plan.

Moreover, despite an increase in both students and faculty, there has not been a concomitant change in staff across the university. Advances in technology, automation, and organizational efficiencies have significantly helped, yet many parts of the university are struggling to provide needed services in a timely manner at the scale of this institution. The lack of adequate support staff has become a significant issue, hindering Texas A&M’s competitiveness with the top tier of public institutions.

Beyond the teaching, research, and business operations of the university, the demands for other services continue to increase and stress the existing infrastructure. We must continue to attend to issues of campus safety and ensure an appropriately staffed UPD. The requirements for compliance across a variety of state and federal domains remains unabated and has required significant increases in personnel to manage. If we are serious about becoming a Best Place to Work, then investments in services to support the university community will be needed, such as improving access to child care, resources for mental and emotional health and well-being, and the overall benefits provided to all of our university employees.

**Places:** Space remains an issue on most parts of campus. Despite an ambitious building program over the past decade, quality space remains a significant constraint. There is a need to increase high-quality research space even without any increase in faculty numbers. Classrooms and especially teaching laboratory space remains a significant constraint, especially at peak times, and very few classrooms are
designed and equipped for modern pedagogy and technology. The increase in students has stressed space for community, and limits the ability to hold student meetings, study on campus, and congregate. Building a stronger sense of community across the university will build a better climate for all employees and students. One important way of achieving this is to have places where we can congregate and meet in addition to work.

The growth of the university population additionally requires careful attention to issues of transportation and parking, energy efficiency, lowering our carbon footprint, and waste management.

**Technology:** Although Texas A&M has managed to stay abreast of changing technology demands, the investment to do so will continue and only increase. The university wireless network sees nearly 1M connections per day (check number), the campus footprint is expanding, and the demand for digital connectivity for both communication, conferencing and teaching will increase every year. There can be no slowdown in our investment in technology and technology infrastructure.

**Finances:** Significant investments will be called for to implement much of this strategic plan. Although tuition revenue has been a significant component of university revenues, Texas A&M must remain true to its land-grant mission and remain affordable. It will be important to explore and develop new revenue streams from fundraising, commercialization, and continuing and professional education, but it will be equally important to ensure existing revenues are used effectively. Exploring new budget models that reflect the true cost of operations and encourage entrepreneurial innovation by leaders across campus will be a key element.

**Achieving the goals detailed in this strategic plan will require investment. Moreover, it will require adequate faculty, physical infrastructure, support staff, and administrative structures to efficiently do the work required. Only by managing both will Texas A&M become extraordinary.**
Measuring Our Progress

Enhance our Impact Indicators

1. Community stakeholder survey shows partnerships and collaborations are seen as effective, coordinated, and data oriented to ensure impact

2. Create “heat map” of issues across the state, and develop dashboard of university-wide impacts and efforts in addressing these issues
   a. Survey and assessment of metropolitan partnership efforts, in particular Brazos Valley, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and McAllen

3. Expand leadership development programs serving rural communities and business development organizations

4. Enhance continuing education and leadership development opportunities with military or national defense

5. Collect annual data on our knowledge transfer and its impacts to include commercialization, engaged scholarship, and partnership development

6. Gather qualitative and quantitative evidence toward strategies of Texas A&M Abroad: Global Engagement Plan, increased study, internship, and partnership abroad

7. Create annual alumni survey and measure results longitudinally on former students and their impacts on community across a broad set of parameters

8. Develop a Former Student Impact Award, or enhance existing former student recognitions to include elements of measured impact

Best Place to Work Indicators

1. Percent of students and employees participating in flourish activities
2. Increase staff-to-student ratios
3. Increase leadership quality index (i.e. improve engagement scores and leadership succession)
4. Assess number of employees with growth and development plans
5. Increase job categories with defined career ladders
6. Achieve “Best Place to Work” with Chronicle of Higher Education
Undergraduate Success Indicators

1. Increase URM undergraduate enrollment to 30%
2. Increase first-year retention to 95% with a stretch goal of 97%
3. Increase four-year graduation to 65% with a stretch goal of 70%
4. Increase six-year graduation to 85% with a stretch goal of 88%
5. Ensure all graduates have three high-impact academic experiences

Graduate and Professional Success Indicators

1. Improved time to degree and completion rates
2. Increase in institutional training grants and external fellowships
3. Career outcome
4. Increase in diversity enrollment and success

Faculty Success Indicators

1. Increase faculty diversity to better reflect the diversity of our student body
2. Increase retention rates of faculty
3. Develop a clear career ladder for APT faculty (measured by number of APT faculty who are promoted and have multi-year appointments)
4. Increase number of faculty with prestigious and highly prestigious awards
5. Increase national and international recognition of our faculty as educators

Research Success Indicators

1. Visibility and number of national/international recognized scholars
2. Growth in multidisciplinary collaborations and partnerships
3. Increase in publications in the highest-tier journals
4. Increase in citations and recognition of scholarly work
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