

INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY MISSION

Sam Houston State University is a multi-cultural institution whose mission is to provide excellence by continually improving quality education, scholarship, and service to its students and to appropriate regional, state, national, and international constituencies.

UNIVERSITY GOALS

- Promote students' intellectual, social and leadership growth.
- Recruit and retain qualified, dedicated faculty and support staff.
- Recruit and retain qualified, motivated students.
- Provide the necessary library and other facilities to support quality instruction, research, and public service.
- Provide an educational environment that encourages systematic inquiry and research.
- Promote and support diversity and provide equitable opportunities for minorities.
- Offer a wide range of academic studies in preprofessional, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs.
- Collaborate with other universities, institutions, and constituencies.
- Provide instructional research and public service through distance learning and technology.

BEARKAT

Sam Houston State University's athletic teams have been nicknamed "The Bearkats" since 1923 when the University's name was changed by the Texas State Legislature from Sam Houston Normal Institute to Sam Houston State Teachers College. (Prior to 1923, the varsity sports teams were nicknamed "The Normals.")

It is doubtful those who coined the "Bearkat" nickname had a particular animal in mind, however. More likely, the name came from a popular local saying of the time, "tough as a Bear-kat!" The late Reed Lindsey, who was a student/athlete in the 1920s and later retired as University registrar, once said that "it was a good fighting name of the time." Since the animal in the saying was thought more mythical than real, the spelling settled upon was "Bearkat."

In the late 1940s, then SHSU president Harmon Lowman attempted to change the SHSU mascot from Bearkats to "Ravens" (after General Sam Houston's Cherokee nickname). Mrs. Vernon Schuder reported that the alumni were polled; she voted for the raven but that "all those old Bearkats beat us out!"

The current Sammy Bearkat mascot character began appearing at SHSU sports events in 1959.

SCHOOL SEAL

Sam Houston State University has adopted as its official seal a high-contrast image of the statue of General Sam Houston, which stands in front of Austin Hall on the north end of the campus Quadrangle.

Around the image in the seal are the words "Sam Houston State University," two stars, and the year in which Sam Houston Normal Institute was founded — 1879.