

# **ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Effective planning is based on assumptions about future economic, technological, academic, political/legal, social/demographic, and philanthropic trends. It is also based on commonly held assumptions about the planning process itself. Assumptions underlying the Sam Houston State University strategic planning process include the following:

- Strategic planning for a university is the process of constructing a plan for the effective development and delivery of quality education, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Strategic planning at Sam Houston State University begins with the President's vision regarding the future of the institution and a commitment to the fundamental spirit of the Coordinating Board-approved mission statement.
- The Sam Houston State University strategic plan is subject to change as societal, state, and local needs change and as the institutional mission evolves.
- Environmental trends influence institutional directions in the strategic planning process.
- The environmental scans and the general institutional goals and strategic directions are shared with faculty, administrative staff, and students for their discussion, understanding, and input.
- The strategic plan is integrated into the budget planning process.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN 2007-2008**

### **1. Social/Demographic Trends**

- a. Population will continue to grow in The Woodlands and Conroe increasing student demand for offerings in that area.
- b. A higher percentage of beginning freshmen who enroll in institutions of higher education will attend community colleges.
- c. A higher percentage of high school students will seek dual enrollment opportunities.
- d. The potential student body will increasingly become more Hispanic.



- e. More students will be employed and more students will be working more hours while attending school. Affordable child care will become a necessity for students with children.
- f. The requirements of the nontraditional student will necessitate changes in traditional university calendars, schedules, and instructional and student delivery systems including student services at all locations.
- g. The University will face more competition for students from an increasing number and diversity of providers of educational services.
- h. Public concerns related to safety, crime, mental health, and alcohol issues will increase.
- i. The expansion of online courses and programs will increase the number of out-of-state and international students.
- j. The current gender ratio in colleges and universities will remain relatively stable.
- k. The need for continuing professional education will increase.
- l. Demand for certified teachers, school counselors, school administrators, librarians, and school psychologists will grow.
- m. There will be growing populations of students who are best served by web-based programs.
- n. Demand for health care providers and the demand for allied health programs will increase.
- o. Alcohol and illegal drug consumption among students will continue to be an issue of concern for the University and local community.
- p. The need for trained correctional personnel will increase.
- q. Reductions in healthcare benefits will increase the students' dependence upon the student health insurance and the services offered by the student health and counseling centers.
- r. Terrorism or natural disasters will open new instructional and research opportunities and demand more institutional caution.
- s. A higher number of minority students will be first-generation students as enrollment increases.

- t. Religious traditions will come into conflict with one another and with the delivery of information in courses.
- u. More students will use the aid of academic support programs in order to achieve academic goals.
- v. The shortage of qualified faculty will continue to increase in specific disciplines.
- w. Students are becoming more technologically sophisticated.

## 2. **Economic Trends**

- a. Appropriation dollars per student enrolled, controlled for inflation, will decline.
- b. Demands for support of non-educational services statewide will increase.
- c. The information and service sectors of the economy will increase in importance.
- d. Universities will continue to increase scholarship funds in order to provide more financial aid and increase diversity.
- e. Prospective students will increasingly seek student loans and financial aid to finance their education, and their enrollment decisions will be affected by the level of support and advice offered by universities.
- f. The Texas economy will experience modest economic growth.
- g. The Houston economy is experiencing rapid growth.
- h. Small entrepreneurial businesses, shopping, and entertainment between Huntsville and North Houston will increase in number.
- i. TDCJ will continue as a major employer for this area.
- j. Economic changes within the state will impact the types of services provided to students that will result in the reevaluation of existing programs offered.
- k. The current economy will continue to result in more students seeking financial assistance for college expenses.
- l. Lack of funding and budget cuts will affect staffing patterns and student programs.
- m. Increasing fuel costs will impact University budgets and students' college choice based on distance from home.

- n. The need for money management training will increase for all students.
- o. A statewide educational database for K-12 and higher education will provide for student outreach and contact opportunities to include the recording and reporting of data.
- p. Off-site instructional delivery will increase, especially in The Woodlands, to meet growing student demands.
- q. Insurance rates for University employees will rise.
- r. The City of Huntsville economic development activities will increase.

### 3. **Technological Trends**

- a. Technological options will increase in complexity and diversity.
- b. A substantial increase in information resources will demand more technological support.
- c. Nontraditional educational organizations will expand their delivery of higher education via distance learning.
- d. Computer applications will become more user-friendly.
- e. The demands for the teaching of technological skills will increase.
- f. More support services will become available over the Internet.
- g. Challenges presented by viruses, worms, spyware, etc. will grow.
- h. Technological needs will increase as well as the need for increasing the computer services staff to accommodate the expanded technology.
- i. Technological changes will continue to present challenges for control of academic dishonesty and intellectual property.
- j. Access to state-of-the-art technology for all students, faculty, and staff will become more essential.
- k. The growing number of students engaged in the institution through the Internet will need services.

- l. A growing number of students are using cell phones at SHSU, which, in turn, causes long distance charges for the University to increase.
- m. Identity theft will continue to be a security concern.
- n. The growing social use of technology will lead to decreased participation in traditional campus organizations and activities.

#### **4. Trends in Higher Education**

- a. Universities will face increasing pressure for assessment.
- b. New innovations in instructional technology will create alternative methods and locations for instructors and will force alternative services.
- c. College curricula will be internationalized and exchange programs will be expanded.
- d. The variety of community college programs seeking transferability will continue to increase.
- e. There will be greater pressure on universities to understand and to develop their market niche(s).
- f. Interdisciplinary programs will become more common.
- g. Community colleges and alternate routes to teacher certification programs will continue to grow.
- h. Community colleges will continue to seek approval to offer baccalaureate degrees.
- i. Increased salary competition from the public schools and private agencies as well as aging of the workforce will make attracting and retaining faculty and staff more difficult.
- j. There will be increasing pressure to integrate high school and University programs.
- k. The percentage of higher education students speaking English as a second language will increase.
- l. The demand for program-specific accreditation will increase.
- m. Pressure to improve student retention rates will increase.

- n. The traditional definition of faculty workload and productivity expectations will change.
- o. Enrollment at The University Center and other off-campus locations will increase.
- p. Student security will be an increasingly important issue.
- q. Internet competition for higher education programs will increase.
- r. Demand for internships will increase.
- s. Timeliness of financial assistance will become an increasing factor of retention.
- t. Enrollment increases will impact all areas of the University.
- u. Students concurrently enrolling at universities and community colleges will increase.
- v. Legislative action will force restructuring and reduction in size of some programs.
- w. There will be growing competition for students.
- x. There will be more cooperative programs with secondary schools, community colleges, and major corporations.
- y. The need for financial literacy education will increase.
- z. Public school calendars will change.

## **5. Political/Legal Trends**

- a. State and federal regulation of public higher education will increase and will result in increased expenditures to document compliance and quality.
- b. Diversity and equity issues will become more prominent.
- c. There is potential for realignment of higher education entities in Texas.
- d. The formula as a mechanism for state funding of higher education in Texas will not change substantially and will continue to place an emphasis on enrollment.
- e. Changes in the distribution of Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF) resources are anticipated.

- f. Communities will continue to pressure lawmakers for their own locally developed and controlled higher education options.
- g. The demand to purchase University goods and services from historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) will increase.
- h. Universities will play a more active role in addressing student loan default rates.
- i. Universities will face increasing pressure to increase enrollment and graduation of minority students.
- j. More scrutiny by the Texas Legislature will take place when new facilities are being recommended.
- k. The Texas State University System is becoming increasingly centralized.
- l. State appropriates will decrease.
- m. Institutional charges to students will increase.
- n. Legislators will begin to utilize student-learning outcomes assessment as a method of ensuring that colleges and universities are performing at expected levels with respect to the education of students both inside and outside the classroom.

## **6. Physical Facility Trends**

- a. Fees to support computer access and library resources and for field-based, weekend, or distance programs will need to be implemented or raised.
- b. Funding from the legislature for new buildings and maintenance of existing buildings will continue to be modest during the next ten years.
- c. State and federal regulations will continue to require that priority be given to some modification to facilities, e.g., ADA.
- d. New construction, especially on-campus housing, will enhance student recruitment.
- e. Fees for nonstate funded facilities will need to be increased.
- f. Student enrollment increases will require enhanced University infrastructure.
- g. Research infrastructure needs will increase.



- h New construction will address the rising costs of utilities.
- i There is a need to develop a long-range plan for parking and off-campus and on-campus transportation systems.

## **7. Trends in Philanthropy**

- a Providing private funding for the University is increasingly important.
- b The University will draw an increasing portion of its support from philanthropic sources.
- c The growing number of nonprofit organizations will increase the competition for the philanthropic dollar.
- d The growth of the annual giving program will expand the University's donor base and lead to greatly enhanced development activities.
- e The University's first capital campaign will significantly increase private support that will continue beyond the duration of the campaign.
- f An increasingly mobile society will challenge SHSU's ability to track its alumni. Technological advances also will impact the process by which SHSU raises money, especially through the Internet, direct mail, and telefund.
- g Changes in tax laws, both income and estate, will impact fund raising.
- h The importance of researching alumni and friends will increase as the University strives to increase and substantiate its pool of known major gift and planned gift prospects.
- i A greater emphasis will be placed on donor relations and stewardship activities.
- j Grantors and funding sources will look for more multi-disciplinary and multi-organizational proposals and projects.
- k National and global uncertainties (terrorism and natural disasters) may discourage major donors from making financial commitments to the University.
- l Private donors will want increased input in the University and expect better returns from their contributions.
- m Gifts for endowment from individuals will increase, while such gifts will be reduced by foundations.