

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Accountability in Higher Education: Promoting Excellence in Texas Public Universities through Institutional Groupings, Peers, and Benchmarks

BACKGROUND

Texas' *Closing the Gaps* plan calls for each public higher education institution to engage in an ongoing pursuit of excellence. A strategy for carrying out that goal relies on the selection of institutional peers and benchmarks of performance against which progress can be measured. Because Texas has a wide variety of institutions, the state will need to develop an approach that acknowledges institutional differences, yet focuses on attaining and enhancing excellence in a broad range of equally important tasks. The following brief presents in concept form an approach that the state might take. Examples illustrative of what might result from such a process are provided in regard to universities.

Because comparisons between institutions are inevitable, institutions have been grouped according to general academic mission and certain key academic indicators such as size and number of graduate programs, research expenditures, and other factors. (A broader, but not complete, array of indicators is attached.) *The groupings are intended to be neither permanent nor prescriptive.* Rather, they are to be considered permeable, subject to revision as institutions evolve. These proposed groupings will be reconsidered biennially with appropriate full participation by institutional leaders.

OVERVIEW

Making accountability more transparent and promoting excellence in Texas universities through institutional groupings, peers, and benchmarks will require:

- Establishing groupings of institutions of similar types and missions
- Determining for each group appropriate measures that reflect institutional performance
- Determining benchmarks against which to measure success
- Assessing progress annually and taking steps to improve performance

For purposes of this document, Coordinating Board staff presents the general characteristics we have used to differentiate groups of universities and the groupings that result from applying those characteristics. As the "General Characteristics of University Groupings" chart at the end of this brief illustrates, no institution is purely a "teaching" or purely a "research" institution. Rather, each institution makes its contributions in ways that reflect its mission, its programs, and its students and faculty.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Research universities provide a broad range of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, place a greater emphasis on research than universities in other groups, and serve their regions, the state, and beyond. Excellent undergraduate education is a central function, but a significantly higher proportion of these institutions' students will be enrolled in graduate and professional programs than is the case in Master's, Comprehensive, Doctoral, or Emerging Research universities.

Research institutions:

- Offer a comprehensive range of excellent undergraduate and graduate programs
- Award 100 or more doctoral degrees annually in excellent programs that span at least 15 disciplines
- Place significant emphasis on research and creative activities and generate at least \$150 million annually in research expenditures

Texas institutions that presently meet the above criteria include:

- Texas A&M University
- The University of Texas at Austin

	Doctoral Programs	Doctoral Enroll Fall 2009	Doctorates Awarded FY 2009	Research Expenditures FY 2008
Texas A&M University	89	3,464	597	\$539,426,088
The University of Texas at Austin	114	5,172	776	\$527,141,322

EMERGING RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Emerging Research universities are educational, scientific, engineering, business and cultural resource centers committed to the three-fold mission of teaching, research and service. As universities with extensive educational programs, academic efforts are directed to applied and basic research in selected fields, teaching and scholarship, and creative activities. The universities encourage faculty members to be active researchers/creators in their respective disciplines and to involve both undergraduate and graduate students in research and creative pursuits.

As the Texas population increases, some of these institutions – especially those located in metropolitan areas of more than one million people – will develop additional breadth and increase their research expenditures (now at least \$14 million per year) to address the need for additional access to research universities.

Emerging Research universities offer a wide range of baccalaureate and master's programs, serve a student population from within and outside the region, and are committed to graduate

education through the doctorate in targeted areas of excellence. The institutions award at least 20 doctoral degrees per year, offer at least 10 doctoral programs, and/or enroll at least 150 doctoral students.

Texas institutions generally within the above criteria for Emerging Research Universities include:

- Texas Tech University
- The University of Texas at Arlington
- The University of Texas at Dallas
- The University of Texas at El Paso
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Houston
- University of North Texas

	Doctoral Programs	Doctoral Enroll Fall 2009	Doctorates Awarded FY 2009	Research Expenditures FY 2008
Texas Tech University	58	1,759	201	\$52,839,081
The University of Texas at Arlington	28	969	113	\$66,610,534
The University of Texas at Dallas	24	1,080	117	\$59,300,868
The University of Texas at El Paso	16	473	59	\$47,907,759
The University of Texas at San Antonio	21	548	46	\$34,601,445
University of Houston	53	1,268	235	\$84,852,078
University of North Texas	42	1,577	175	\$16,798,880

DOCTORAL UNIVERSITIES

Doctoral universities are educational and cultural resource institutions committed to the three-fold mission of teaching, research and service. With extensive educational programs, academic efforts are directed to both applied and basic research in selected fields, teaching and scholarship, and creative activities. The universities encourage faculty members to be active researchers in their respective disciplines and to involve both undergraduate and graduate students in research and creative pursuits.

Doctoral universities offer a wide range of excellent baccalaureate and master's programs and are committed to graduate education through the doctorate in targeted areas of excellence and/or regional need. The institutions each award at least 10 doctoral degrees per year, offer at least 5 doctoral programs, and/or enroll 150 doctoral students. They generally have research expenditures of at least \$2 million per year.

Texas institutions generally within the above criteria for Doctoral Universities are:

- Sam Houston State University
- Texas A&M University-Commerce

- Texas A&M University-Kingsville
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
- Texas Southern University
- Texas State University at San Marcos
- Texas Woman's University

COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

Comprehensive universities offer a wide range of excellent baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. Comprehensive universities may also offer doctoral education in targeted program areas to address particular regional needs and/or in disciplines in which the university is nationally recognized for excellence. In most cases, this will be one or two areas, but may be as many as five.

Comprehensive universities are expected to:

- Provide access to a broad range of excellent baccalaureate and master's programs
- Possibly provide doctoral-level education in targeted area(s) of excellence and/or regional need
- Provide excellent preparation not only for the workforce, but prepare students for professional schools and graduate education
- Focus on serving the student population within the region

Texas institutions generally meeting those criteria include:

- Lamar University-Beaumont
- Prairie View A&M University
- Stephen F. Austin University
- Tarleton State University
- Texas A&M International University
- The University of Texas-Pan American
- West Texas A&M University

MASTER'S UNIVERSITIES

Access to exemplary undergraduate institutions is critical to students and communities across Texas. Currently, almost 80 percent of public university students are at the undergraduate level. Master's institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. Excellent undergraduate education is the primary mission of these universities, which generally offer smaller classes than would be expected in other universities.

Master's institutions are expected to:

- Concentrate on providing excellent broad-based undergraduate education
- Establish seamless transfer and facilitate success for Associate of Arts and Associate of Science graduates
- Offer smaller undergraduate class sizes
- Provide excellent developmental education and retention programs
- Provide access to critical and other excellent master's programs
- Provide excellent preparation not only for the workforce, but for professional schools and graduate education
- Have a critical role in the preparation of certified teachers
- Provide specialized programs recognized for their excellence

Master's Universities could include:

- Angelo State University
- Midwestern State University
- Sul Ross State University
- Sul Ross University - Rio Grande
- Texas A&M University-Central Texas
- Texas A&M University- Galveston
- Texas A&M University-San Antonio
- Texas A&M University-Texarkana
- The University of Texas at Brownsville
- The University of Texas at Tyler
- The University of Texas of the Permian Basin
- University of Houston- Clear Lake
- University of Houston-Downtown
- University of Houston-Victoria
- University of North Texas at Dallas