The strength of a university and the vitality of the region it serves are correlated. Educational attainment, public healthiness, economic growth, average household income and quality of life all are positively impacted by a thriving higher education center.

The University of Texas at Tyler is the premier comprehensive, public university of East Texas. We operate with the understanding that the wellbeing of the region and the success of UT Tyler are intertwined. Our passion is to see the continued success of East Texas.

Often, positive higher educational impact is organic, a natural byproduct of the normal operations of a university. However, unlocking the full potential of the university requires intentional, strategic planning around a clear vision and mission. This strategic plan is meant to provide a structural outline for success, measured by the standards set out in the university vision: To be the educational and economic driver of East Texas.

East Texas has a proud history and a unique subculture within the state of Texas. The region of nearly two million people embodies diversity in its many dimensions. Economically however, the region has not been as diverse as its people, primarily relying on an agrarian base and riding the booms and busts of the petroleum industry for nearly a century. Additionally, opportunities exist to improve regional public health indicators and educational attainment.

Less than 50 years old, The University of Texas at Tyler has emerged from its original senior college mission with many outstanding, highly-regarded academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level. UT Tyler has strong programs including arts and sciences, engineering, health sciences, business, education, psychology and pharmacy. Students enjoy excellent value as well, with one of the lowest tuitions, smallest class sizes and highest graduation rates in the region. With more than 10,500 students and nearly 400 full-time faculty, the foundations of UT Tyler are solid. This plan is built around the “cycle of success” model for higher education, supported by four “pillars of success.”

The cycle of success model predicts institutional success as a reciprocating and ultimately self-perpetuating function of the relationship between 1) brand development, 2) alumni careers, 3) student development/success and 4) resource opportunity. In other words, successful students become successful alumni who boost the reputation of, and contribute financially and intellectually back to, the university. This draws more resources to the university, enabling even more student success.

The four pillars that, when developed, support the cycle of success include: 1) student success, 2) student engagement, 3) research and scholarship, and 4) community engagement.

This plan for success is not the vision of any one individual, but rather was crowdsourced through dozens of open sessions of brainstorming, ideation and refinement with the students, faculty and staff of UT Tyler over a ten-month period. These ideas are from the people of The University of Texas at Tyler, who every day bring their passion to help our students and communities find success.
VISION STATEMENT
Our aspiration is to be the primary educational and economic driver of East Texas.

MISSION STATEMENT
UT Tyler is committed to student success by providing a uniquely balanced student experience in an environment of innovative teaching and research shaped to serve and advance the educational, economic, technological, and public interests of East Texas and beyond.
Initiatives for Success

The initiatives that make up the action items of this strategic plan were culled from an open submission process, where all faculty and staff were encouraged to generate innovative ideas to advance the newly articulated vision and mission of UT Tyler. The initiatives have been sorted into the four pillars of success, and further sorted by areas of impact under each pillar. Brief summaries of each initiative follow in the next four sections.

We believe the passion that the people of The University of Texas at Tyler will bring to these initiatives will yield successes for our students, our communities and all of East Texas.
“Transferring here as a sophomore from a smaller university, I was nervous at first, but everyone at UT Tyler was very welcoming. I play NCAA volleyball and my team is like family. Some of us are far from home, so having a sense of belonging with our teammates and coaches is huge.”

REIGHANNA GUZMAN
Junior, Kinesiology
Patriot Volleyball Athlete
Pillar I
Student Success

The initiatives of Pillar I focus on supporting educational and career goals with high impact, data-driven solutions.

Strategic Goal:
Catalyze student retention, graduation and career progression.

Impact Area: A Campus Community Focused on Student Success
We will reaffirm our commitment to growing a student-centered campus culture.

Initiative 1. Provide Student Service Training.
Opportunities for student service training will be available to all faculty and staff of The University of Texas at Tyler to support our core initiative to be a student-centered campus wholly focused on student success.

Impact Area: Supporting Academic Success from Recruitment to Graduation
We will launch data-driven programming to help improve our recruitment, persistence and graduation efforts.

Initiative 1: Establish the OnCourse Program for FTFT Freshmen.
UT Tyler will launch a suite of course-level supports to improve the first-year grade point averages and retention of first-time, full-time freshmen, and ultimately increase their graduation rates. This will include a series of on-demand digital course-related supports in first-year classes along with professional development for faculty.

Initiative 2: Encourage Adoption of Open Educational Resources.
The cost of textbooks can be a prohibitive factor for students. The university will create a faculty incentive grant program to support the adoption of OER, which include freely accessible textbooks, workbooks and other course materials.

Initiative 3: Pilot On-demand Degree Programs.
This initiative will be piloted with the RN-BSN program, which provides a baccalaureate degree to registered nurses who hold associate degrees. On-demand programs will offer a flexible alternative for working students pursuing a second degree or graduate degree from UT Tyler. This program differs from the accelerated seven-week programs in that it has much more flexibility to accommodate the working/professional student.

Initiative 4: Redefine and Broaden the Recruitment Funnel.
UT Tyler seeks to improve the academic preparedness of its students to increase retention, persistence and student success. We are implementing changes to the freshman holistic admission review criteria; redefining and expanding our communication plan; and hosting regional events to recruit students ranked in the top 10 percent of their class.

Impact Area: Innovative, Student-Centered Teaching
Our faculty will be properly equipped to deliver learner-centered teaching.

Initiative 1: Provide Professional Development for Faculty Emphasizing Learner-centered Teaching.
The UT Tyler Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will provide faculty with resources and opportunities including comprehensive workshops, conferences and seminars on best practices for student-centered teaching.

Impact Area: Funding Success
We will expand grant- and scholarship-based financial aid.

Initiative 1: Align Financial Aid Programs to Enrollment Management Strategies.
UT Tyler seeks to recruit and retain high ability students with financial aid incentives. Those include leveraging institutional, state and federal grants in conjunction with scholarship redesign. Undergraduate new
student scholarship criteria, award amounts and processes will be implemented to align with our desired student academic profile.

**Impact Area: Position Every Student for Career Success**

Career success begins with intensive coaching and career services for students.

**Initiative 1: Establish Career Placement Services Within Each College.**

UT Tyler career services will be expanded with the creation of an Office of Career Placement Services in each college. Each office will provide students with career path information, career building opportunities and placement services relevant to fields of study within the college.

**Initiative 2: Establish Mentoring Programs.**

In partnership with UT Tyler Alumni Relations and University Advancement, the College of Engineering will form a pool of professionals in engineering industries to mentor students and expose them to best professional practices in the workplace. The College of Education and Psychology will establish a mentor center to support student retention and ultimately position students to launch successful careers. Graduate assistants trained to provide academic, social and emotional support will staff the center.

**Initiative 3: Initiate Honors 360.**

The UT Tyler Honors Program will implement a holistic approach to engaging honors students, including advising, peer mentoring, career counseling, experiential learning and academics. Combining these strategies will impact graduation and retention rates to position students for success.

**Initiative 4: Create Student Success 360.**

Implemented through UT Tyler’s Student Success Division, Student Success 360 will be designed to strengthen each student’s ability to engage through a unified communication platform. It also will serve to augment the student’s sense of belonging and promote academic success, personal development and financial literacy.
“I enjoy connecting with people and want to make an impact. My career passion is to pursue a future in university student affairs administration. I found that path because of my experience in the Student Government Association.”

PRESTON TEMPLEMAN
Senior, Accounting
SGA President
Pillar II
Student Engagement

The initiatives of Pillar II are meant to ensure each UT Tyler student has access to a rich, individualized educational experience.

Strategic Goal:
To stimulate the growth of traditions and programming that engages students in unique and compelling ways.

Impact Area: Encouraging Student Involvement in Research & Discovery
We will promote the UT Tyler student experience by incentivizing engagement in faculty-led research.

Initiative 1: Implement Incentive Programs to Support Student Involvement in Research.
Incentives are being developed in several colleges to support student engagement in faculty-led research, and the expansion and strengthening of internal grants.

Impact Area: Connecting Students with Successful Alumni
Creating opportunities for students to connect with alumni from their discipline/field will improve student engagement.

Initiative 1: Design and Deliver the Alumni Career Success Conference.
UT Tyler will hold an annual one-day event in which alumni will be invited to campus to share their stories and advice to business students. The event will foster career-focused engagement of students and engagement of alumni with the university. Additionally, colleges will work to develop innovative activities to connect their alumni with current students.

Impact Area: Connecting Students to Campus
We will stimulate the growth of student clubs, participation in the arts and general student development.

Initiative 1: Formalize a Student Organization Activity and Engagement Contest.
The College of Engineering will create a yearlong tournament of student organization activities, which will be scored on a rubric based on participation, quality and impact. The contest will be designed to increase faculty-to-student and student-to-university connectivity while enhancing opportunities for career and professional interactions.

Initiative 2: Provide Opportunities for Students to Attend Annual Arts Education Performances.
The Cowan Fine and Performing Arts Center will provide opportunities for UT Tyler students to attend Arts in Education Series performances. Student attendance will be integrated into university course curriculum.

Initiative 3: Create Distinguished Lecture Series Engagement with Honors Students and Faculty.
Through the Cowan Center, students in the UT Tyler Honors Program will have opportunities to attend Distinguished Lecture Series events followed by a post-lecture discussion with faculty members. Students will report back to their professors as part of their course curriculum.

Initiative 4: Graduate Student Workshops.
The university will establish a Graduate Student Professional Development Center, which will sponsor a Workshop Series with Live Zoom and on-demand recorded workshops on topics relevant to graduate students. Programming will include networking, social and special events; panel discussions with industry professionals and alumni; and international student development programs.
Initiative 5: Pursue the Advancement of Athletics from NCAA DIII to NCAA DII.

The university is moving forward as a candidate for Division II membership. The successful transition to DII will elevate student enthusiasm for athletics with more exciting, competitive events.

Impact Area: Improving Campus Accommodations for Students

We will expand campus facilities in ways that promote success and engagement.

Initiative 1: Launch a Campus Master Plan.

The university will form a new master plan of facility improvements to enhance student life and engagement as well as the overall student experience on campus.

Initiative 2: Create “Third Spaces” for Student Engagement Around Campus.

UT Tyler will enhance existing and create new third spaces — social areas designed for organic engagement, innovation and discovery.
“Research with my marketing professor made me excited about brand management. My academic advisor pushed me to apply to a transformative internship at Disney. I’ve seen in my own experience how the people at UT Tyler are passionate about helping students succeed.”

CAYLA WARD
MBA Student
BBA Marketing ’17
Pillar III
Research and Scholarship

The initiatives of Pillar III will foster discovery through scientific, technological, intellectual and creative expression.

Strategic Goal:
To endorse discovery that expands knowledge and transforms East Texas.

Impact Area: Expanding the Field of Knowledge
We will incentivize research that expands knowledge in ways that connect the campus to the region.

Initiative 1: Launch an Early Career Tenure-track Faculty Research Support Fund.
The Soules College of Business will make grants available to support the research of tenure-track faculty and expand the field of knowledge in business and technology. Progress will be measured in the increase of journal articles published.

Initiative 2: Develop a Health/Wellness Interdisciplinary Research Collaborative.
The College of Nursing and Health Sciences, College of Education and Psychology and Fisch College of Pharmacy are working with the Faculty Senate to expand interdisciplinary research at UT Tyler. A range of complex health and wellness-related problems exist in the greater East Texas area, requiring this type of interdisciplinary approach to produce positive outcomes.

Initiative 3: Foster Research Programs Targeting Health and Wellness in East Texas.
A UT Tyler center for health and wellness will be developed to improve the quality of life in East Texas. This effort, led by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is a collaboration with the Fisch College of Pharmacy and the College of Education and Psychology. The primary center will be located near the Tyler campus, with satellite centers developed in high-need areas of East Texas.

The university will fund publication fees for faculty, students and staff who publish in quality Open Access Journals. This will ensure the scholarship of our university is openly accessible.

Impact Area: Expanding Student Research Activities
We will increase the use of student research as a tool for engaged learning, critical thinking and the creation of knowledge.

Initiative 1: Provide Workshops to Guide Students through the Research Cycle.
Honors Program faculty and staff will host an annual series of workshops covering various aspects of the research cycle. Open to all students, the workshops will promote a culture of strong student research at UT Tyler.

Initiative 2: Create Graduate Assistantships Across All Programs.
The Division of Academic Affairs is making semester teaching assistantship stipends available to thesis-track students in each college. Nominated by faculty, students awarded the stipend will be committed to completing a thesis. Faculty will be committed to supporting the graduate assistant’s thesis work.

Initiative 3: Implement Grad School 180.
The university will launch a Three-Minute Thesis type event for dissertations, master’s theses and graduate projects to promote knowledge creation and enhance student success and engagement. Participants will present their research to a live audience and online. The event will include a Graduate Student Excellence in Visual Arts Award.
“I’m following in the footsteps of my grandparents, studying to be teacher. UT Tyler has a great reputation for teacher preparation, but it also has a vibrant student life. Serving on the Campus Activities Board allowed me to meet great people – so many have pushed me closer to my educational goals.”

JADE PERRY
Junior, Interdisciplinary Studies
Campus Activities Board Vice President
Pillar IV
Community Engagement

Pillar IV initiatives will encourage local and regional collaborations and partnerships with governmental entities, businesses and nonprofit organizations to improve the quality of life in our communities.

**Strategic Goal:**
To successfully deploy the university’s intellectual capital to address regional needs.

**Impact Area: Improving East Texas’ Economic Diversity**
We will connect the region to the university’s intellectual capital to improve economic development.

**Initiative 1: Strengthen and Expand Partnerships Between Academic Units and Regional Organizations.**
This initiative includes enhancing the Soules College of Business partnership with the Tyler Innovation Pipeline (TIP), which is operated under the auspices of the city of Tyler. The college will provide its expertise by serving as co-director of TIP, with UT Tyler technology students operating the program’s Maker Space.

**Initiative 2: Launch the East Texas Policy Summit.**
The university will bring together the top leaders in business, government, education and the nonprofit sector for substantive conversations about leveraging regional resources to advance economic development throughout East Texas. The East Texas Policy Summit will be an annual event.

**Initiative 3: Diversify procurement of products and services in all areas of campus.**
The university will maximize opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses to provide services, materials, supplies and equipment to serve the needs of the campus.

**Impact Area: Educational and Cultural Engagement**
We will launch lifelong learning and continuing education opportunities for the region.

**Initiative 1: Create a Hearts for the Arts Program.**
The UT Tyler Cowan Center has been a major contributor to the arts and cultural fiber of the region. Hearts for the Arts will be an outreach program for those who have not had the opportunity to experience the arts. Donors will be matched with recipients for a select number of shows annually.

**Initiative 2: Support Free Course Voucher for UT Tyler Alumni.**
To encourage lifetime learning in the region, the university will send a UT Tyler-branded graduation gift to all of its graduates, along with a free course voucher that can be redeemed by the alumnus or shared with a friend.

**Initiative 3: Strengthen the Project Lead the Way Partnership to Promote STEM Engagement.**
The College of Engineering will partner with PTLW at the high-school level to promote dual credit opportunities available to precollege students. Pre-engineering students will have opportunities to receive college credit while increasing their STEM readiness.

**Initiative 4: Establish an Adopt a School District Program.**
The College of Education and Psychology’s East Texas Center for School Based Research and Instruction will provide high quality professional development opportunities for school districts to increase K-12 student achievement. School districts throughout Northeast Texas will be invited to be members of the center and receive its services.

**Initiative 5: Launch Comprehensive Overnight Summer Camps.**
The university will engage the youth of East Texas in educational and recreational camps in several areas of campus, including athletics, academic units, the Honors Program and the Cowan Fine and Performing Arts Center.
Supporting Success

Any successful plan builds new initiatives on a foundation of operational support. The elements of these operational foundations support success, and we expect to continue to enhance these tools as part of this five-year plan. One could consider this a fifth pillar of the plan, supporting the other initiatives behind the scenes, as we work toward institutional success.

**Strategic Goal:**
To operate using effective, efficient and creative strategies.

**Impact Area: Design and Launch New Centers of Excellence**
The University of Texas at Tyler faculty and staff will work together to design and launch new Centers of Excellence. A successful center of excellence will interconnect the four pillars of the strategic plan in a unique and innovative manner, cutting across multiple academic and support units on campus. This will bring together different constituencies of the university including members of the community to help elevate the brand of the university at a national level.

**Impact Area: Support College and Departmental Faculty and Staff Development**
Recognizing that faculty and staff play an important role in student success and student engagement both in and out of the classroom, the university will invest resources in their professional development. UT Tyler will form communities of practice (learning communities) as campus experts and stakeholders come together with a shared interest in one focal area. These areas will tie to the four pillars of the strategic plan, ultimately developing the culture of teamwork across campus with high-impact practices.

**Impact Area: Create New Marketing and Advancement Strategies**
Recognizing the significance that marketing and advancement play in meeting our institutional goals, both units will be realigned and reorganized with a new focus on brand management and alumni engagement, respectively. Where appropriate, centralization should occur to realize operational efficiency, quality improvements and better adherence to industry best practices.

**Impact Area: Initiate Sustainable Financial Management Strategies**
The University of Texas at Tyler is committed to a sustainable financial model in support of the strategic plan. Steps taken to ensure this support include:

- Realignment of departments and divisions to ensure effective operations and organizational communication;
- Adopting a philosophy of having highly developed and motivated employees for a workforce of quality personnel rather than quantity;
- Continuous analysis to ensure the best use of faculty resources through course scheduling and class size guidelines;
- Revised budgeting practices that make the best use of all available financial resources;
- A commitment to continuous improvement efforts toward increased efficiency, a paperless environment, automated processes and reduced costs;
- Efforts to work with the UT System on initiatives to leverage the size of the University of Texas System to obtain better pricing for commonly purchased commodities and services.

**Impact Area: Create and Sustain IT Infrastructure to Support Strategic Educational Initiatives**
The University of Texas at Tyler will work to continuously improve its IT infrastructure to find efficiencies and help improve the business processes and educational initiatives of the university. Additionally, IT will continually assess new initiatives, many of which will be brought online as a part of this strategic plan, to assure they are supported with the appropriate IT infrastructures in the most efficient and effective manner possible.
“A friend who is an engineer recommended UT Tyler, and that was great advice. My construction management professors are phenomenal. They are not only training us to be construction managers, but they are also preparing us to be construction leaders.”

DEKEISTAN “STONE” KEMON MOSLEY
Junior, Construction Management