



# From the Panhandle to the World

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*A Regionally Responsive  
Research University*



*Executive Briefing*



*From the*  
**PANHANDLE**  
*to the* **WORLD**

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**A Regionally Responsive  
Research University**

*Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of the WT 125 Executive Advisory Committee for West Texas A&M University. We appreciate your willingness to contribute toward a vision, a generational plan that will aid in determining what WT will be in 2035, when we celebrate our 125th anniversary: our quasiquintennial.*



# WELCOME

*From President Wendler*

**WT 125 has the mission of defining a positive and ever improving future for West Texas A&M University.**

Never assume this implies that West Texas A&M University is not a well-functioning organization that serves thousands of students exceedingly well. However, I live by the simple idea that every organization, no matter how effective it may seem, can improve with a sharp focus and intentionality on the part of all of those associated with it.

## **A REGIONALLY RESPONSIVE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY**

Our goal is to attain doctoral status and in so doing, become a university for which no designation currently exists: a Regional Research University. We will focus on solving the complex and demanding problems and challenges associated with the constellation of many small communities served by a single metropolitan area. We should aspire to stand alone as an institution that understands the needs of rural communities in pursuits related to agriculture, economic development, education, engineering, health care, and social and cultural progress in a way that is distinctive.

[wtamu.edu/WT125](http://wtamu.edu/WT125)

*We will define a university that is unlike any other, that is well suited to the people, place and progress of the Texas Panhandle. In serving this distinctive region, we will be able to transfer our insights and ideas to other similar regions in the nation, and even beyond our national borders.*

I believe this to be a particularly high calling and consider it a privilege to engage and embrace all of you in this creative process. I will say this many times in the coming year, but I would like to start with it right now:

**Thank you all for your willingness to serve West Texas A&M University, The Texas A&M University System and the great State of Texas.**

In closing, the process and procedures outlined with WT 125 are similar to one that I helped develop and lead at Texas A&M University called *Vision 2020: Creating a Culture of Excellence*. WT 125 also has components of a process that was used at The Texas A&M University System when I was vice chancellor for Planning and System Integration called *The Integrative Plan: Promise for a New Century*. Lastly, as chancellor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, we developed a plan called *Southern at 150: Building Excellence Through Commitment*.

It is my passion to look ahead—gleaned insight accumulates along the way. I would encourage anyone interested to look at these documents and processes. They have commonality with what follows and constitute my full experience as an academic planner. Each produced a clear and useful future perspective—vision—for each organization.

Our effort, *WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World* will be the best of the lot.

*Walter V. Wendler*

# A LOOK AT OUR EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

## [wtamu.edu/about/wt-125-intro-and-overview.aspx](http://wtamu.edu/about/wt-125-intro-and-overview.aspx)

Via our webpage, you will have the opportunity to review data of many analyses of universities that have some relationship to West Texas A&M University.

While WT 125 is a visioning process for the future, a well-developed, clear understanding of where WTAMU fits within the current educational landscape is extremely important. To this end, three distinct groups of “peer” institutions have been identified that help position WTAMU in 2017-2018 as we seek to define what we intend to become by 2035.

Even though more than 80 variables were included in analyzing institutional peers, one of the primary factors considered in creating the peer groups was the current Carnegie Classification of each institution. These Carnegie designations are reflected in the following descriptions of each group:

- **Comparison Peers:** This group represents institutions currently similar to WT and is comprised of Master’s Colleges and Universities.
- **Aspirant Peers:** Most of the institutions in this group have, within the past seven years, moved from Master’s designation to Doctoral University status within the Carnegie Classification system. This group is key to WT 125, as Aspirant Peers are models for WTAMU’s goal of achieving Doctoral status in the future.
- **Geographic Peers:** This set of peers includes both Master’s and Doctoral institutions that are similar to WTAMU in many ways, including geographically.

Although we have identified geographic peers, we recognize that there are “competitive peers” that could have been considered. Our students frequently choose between WT and Texas A&M, the University of Texas, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech. Some potential students have legacy connections, where their parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, and/or grandparents may have attended those institutions, and students consider these institutions carefully.

While we legitimately compete with these institutions for some of our students, we will not compare ourselves to them in this analysis. These are national research universities that produce hundreds of millions of dollars of funded research annually, manage endowments in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars, and field Division I intercollegiate athletics programs. These institutions are fundamentally different. In each and every case, they do not have the distinctiveness of WTAMU that is reflective of the Texas Panhandle.

The selection of peer institutions should not be misinterpreted. We do not want to be exactly like any other university on these lists. That would be foolhardy. Rather, we want to be considered in the same family of these universities while maintaining our identity as WT. Much of our uniqueness is an “accident of geography” that gives us something that none of those other institutions possess. None are part of the Texas Panhandle. WT is distinguished from all others in a remarkable way, and it is the culture and geography of the Texas Panhandle that will drive everything we do in the coming decades.

As you consider the WT 125 Planning Principles and Theme Groups in the pages to come, we encourage you to review the institutional peer groups included in the appendices at the end of this Executive Briefing.

# WT 125 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The following 12 planning principles should be evidenced in all of the decision making as reflection on the future of WT is accomplished.

## 1. Servant Leadership—Inverted Hierarchies

The foundation of all leadership decisions in the planning process will be the extent to which a decision allows WT to lead by serving. This does not imply a set of working priorities with no rudder, but rather that decisions will be made by understanding the highest interests of WT in its many dimensions. Work will be directed to serving those interests through leadership. Included in this concept is the idea that the traditional pyramid of decision-making is inverted. The system will get better because the people doing their jobs at every level are empowered to make effective decisions and expected to do so. The peak of the pyramid is where students are.

## 2. Learner-Centered University

West Texas A&M University must provide a nurturing, as well as rigorous educational environment for learners of all levels, both on- and off-campus, degree seeking and non-degree seeking. All actions suggested by planning should value and reinforce the importance of the educational opportunity afforded students as the central purpose of WT. This is our focusing purpose, and it is academic in nature.

## 3. Core Programs and Distinctive Competencies

At West Texas A&M University, various core programs define us. There should be access to excellence in basic educational programs, the core body of knowledge that allows a person to be an educated human being. Each academic program should provide distinctive, excellent core experiences for students. On the other hand, each program should provide something to the greater university, and therefore the State of Texas and the student, which is available nowhere else in the state. Strength in core programs and distinctive competencies will mark West Texas A&M University.

## 4. Deep Interdependence

As West Texas A&M University evolves into a Regional Research University, the variety and type of offerings must be tailored to the strengths of each program represented. Distinctive competencies should be shared to avoid inappropriate redundancies in capabilities. Some programs and capacities should be resident in only one college or program, while others should be available everywhere. The commonly available programs should build a foundation for educational excellence. The special attributes should give character to particular offerings and build distinctiveness, while strengthening all parts of the campus.

## 5. Quality as the Cornerstone

Defining and assessing quality is an immense challenge. Quality is not always easily characterized in words and numbers. Some aspects of quality in higher education defy any quantification; most require multiple indicators. For example, student retention—a measure some value highly—should never be misinterpreted to mean our educational efforts are of high quality just because student retention is good.

Rather, given success in this indicator, our chances for achieving quality educational opportunities will probably increase, but only other indicators of effectiveness will demonstrate that. The way that we nurture students, the number effectively placed for employment or graduate/professional study, their performance on professional examinations for certification all indicate quality in other dimensions. The synergy and interaction of the dimensions discussed are themselves an indicator of our aspiration for making WT a place known for a pervasive commitment to student achievement.

#### **6. Serving Texas**

The genesis of the Morrill Act that established the land grant universities in America was the demand created by the Industrial Age for educated people to serve the agricultural and mechanical needs of a growing nation. This landmark legislation recognized that education could and should lead to the improvement of the human condition and that learning should be for the many rather than the few. A strong commitment to service still prospers at WT. The challenge as we enter the middle of the 21st century is to capture and confirm a contemporary notion of a Regional Research University coupled with a great land grant institution. This creates a distinctive philosophy. Our current understanding of how higher education can transform society will have an impact on American life equal to or greater than that of the Morrill Act in the late 19th century. WT should lead in extending and amplifying what it means to be service-oriented in the 21st century through action consistent with the ideals of the Morrill Act. We are a part of that mission.

#### **7. Participatory Decision Making**

People affected by the plan and process should be directly involved in the decision-making that produces the plan. While it is impossible to include everyone, it is possible to include representatives of those affected. For example, learners involved in course work through the various parts of the University can be effectively represented in the planning process through the agency of dedicated faculty and staff. The key players in the planning process should seek participation from their constituencies to the greatest extent possible. As the plan unfolds, this input will assist in guiding the effort to serve all best.

#### **8. Flexible Organizations**

West Texas A&M University should be known as an efficient organization. Many sources suggest it is at the top and that resources for administration are effectively distributed when compared to other institutions. Increasing competition from private, for-profit universities and demands for efficiency from Austin and The Texas A&M University System offices means we must become more adept yet from an administrative standpoint. Necessary bureaucratic procedures should be transparent and easy to negotiate, not an obstacle to success. People, rather than organizations, should be responsible for making decisions. We should do all that we can to create funnels of responsibility and to have decisions made by people at the lowest, most appropriate levels that adds value. The best universities will be responsive to change, adaptable, agile and able to provide support and assistance for the knowledge work of the institution.

#### **9. Risk-Friendly Environments**

The best universities of the 21st century will encourage informed risk-taking. Taking risks may produce failure, but from failure, comes discovery. The most profound ideas, the greatest inventions, the most compelling masterpieces grow from an environment that tolerates, even encourages, risk. People identify with the entrepreneurial spirit of Texas, and especially of the Panhandle. This spirit—that pushes the edge

of thought and action and sees possibilities and opportunities where others may not—needs to be present in the faculty, staff and students of West Texas A&M University and its plan. Faculty, staff and students should be encouraged to be entrepreneurial in every aspect of university life, to be bold in seeking opportunities that benefit the life of the university, its citizens, and ultimately, the citizens of the Panhandle, state and beyond. This entrepreneurial spirit will mark WT.

#### **10. Facilities**

The campuses and facilities of West Texas A&M University must provide welcoming environments that are aesthetically pleasing as well as appropriate to their purpose and efficiency. All should be proud of the physical facilities and resources of West Texas A&M University.

#### **11. People First**

West Texas A&M University is first composed of people. Every effort will be made to recruit, retain and reward students, faculty and staff who challenge us with their commitment and excellence. Students are WT's cause for being. Recruiting and retaining the very best, by our measure, requires much more than test scores and class rank. We will seek those who will lead. Faculty are needed to work with excellent students. The quality of our faculty and the work settings we nurture are important to our future success. Graduate students, that special breed who are at once learners and leaders, will form the foundation for excellence in teaching, research and scholarship for faculty. Staff, who support the academic enterprise, should be regarded for the commitment to excellence that they bring.

#### **12. The Future**

The desire to be good, the fear of failure and the comfort familiarity provides are three fundamental conditions of human nature. Our vision should address these through a careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and steadfast determination to build on strengths, eliminate weaknesses, seek opportunities and face threats creatively and energetically. WT will be more distinctive in the future than it is today. That distinctiveness will be created on a foundation of quality that is widely recognized and measured by worldly standards.

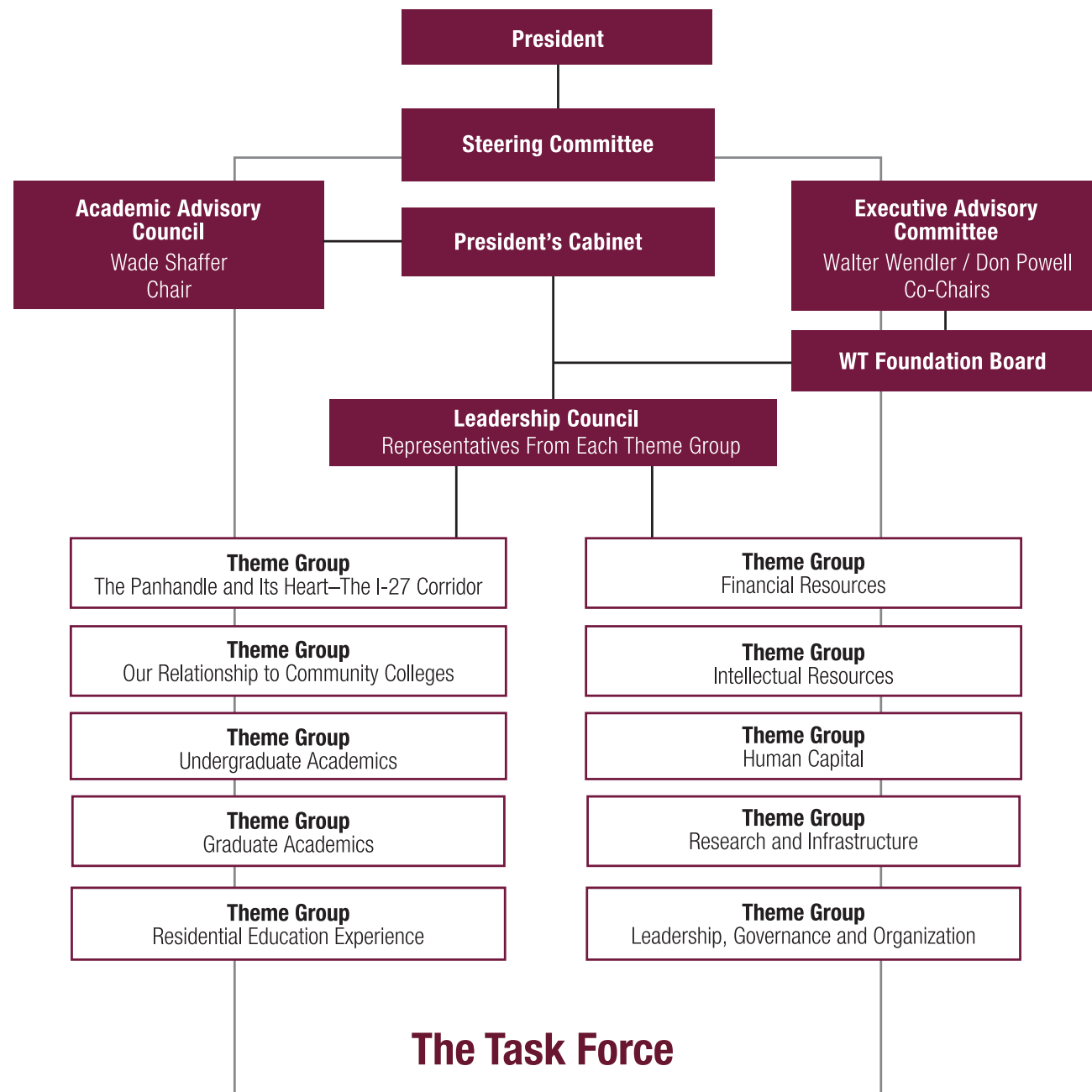
Because of our efforts over the next few decades, the legislature and the people of Texas will have a deeper appreciation for the role that WT plays in the state's economy. The general population will be more aware of what WT does for the economy and for their quality of life. An understanding of our deep responsibility will provide the foundation for this, but it will be built upon by a new view of how we can provide leadership. We will take our responsibility to inform in a way that serves as a benchmark for other universities.

New alliances and new forms of teaching and learning will emerge. These will shape educational programs that go beyond the individual and impact learners from childhood to old age, in primary and secondary schools, in corporate offices and places of production, individually and in groups, for profit and for fun. This is the changing nature of higher education, and it will mark WT.

# THEME GROUP KEY IDEAS



## WT 125 ORGANIZATION CHART



### Theme Group

## The Panhandle and Its Heart— The I-27 Corridor

#### Aspiration

*Our relationship to our community is critical. Schools, industries, businesses and cultural activity all play a pivotal role in building a quality place to live and study. This is a mutually reinforcing phenomenon.*

#### Key Ideas

- The Heart of the Panhandle: Canyon—Amarillo—I-27 Corridor
- Economic Development; Economic Impact
- Outreach to Public and Private Schools
- Commerce that Supports Study and Study that Supports Commerce
- Campus to Community: WT and Beyond; Quality Enhancement Plan
- Strategic Community Relations; The University as a Neighbor
- Strengthening Partnerships: WTAMU—Canyon—Amarillo—The Panhandle
- The WTAMU Amarillo Center
- Importance of Basic Programs; Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Contributions of Best Public Universities at Local/Regional Levels
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Stature of Institution Relative to the Effects of Conservatism or Liberalism
- Relationship to K-Community College Education and Future Importance
- Shared Leadership in Community; Benefits of Community that Impact the Institution
- Job Opportunities in Community
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

#### Key Idea with Relevant White Paper

- The Panhandle

#### Actions

The theme group should identify key areas of mutual interest and focus suggestions for even stronger university-community cooperation in areas critical to the University's development as a preeminent institution. This is especially important in uniting Amarillo and Canyon in service to each and to our students. The heart of the Texas Panhandle is the I-27 Corridor.

## Theme Group

# Our Relationship to Community Colleges (CC)

### Aspiration

We must have a modern notion of WT and understand what the historical imperatives of such an institution are, especially as these imperatives affect our role in serving students through a 2+2 model for undergraduate education as a means to cost effectiveness, and reach into various communities.

### Key Ideas

- Serving the Panhandle and Texas by Serving our Students
- Role of a Regional Research University as a “Transfer To” Institution
- Impact on Local Students and Economy
- Impediments from Within and Without Regarding Seamless Opportunity
- Dual Credit and Transfer to WT
- Panhandle High Schools Outreach Efforts
- Increase Visibility of Freshmen Class
- Transfer Articulation and Community College Partnerships
- First-Choice Destination for Transfer Students in the State
- Student Engagement
- Buff Branding for Transfer Students
- Reverse Transfer
- Residential Education Experience for Transfer Students
- Trendsetting Partnerships with Community Colleges
- Importance of Basic Programs; Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Impact of Residential Experience for Transfer Students; Dual Credit Associate Degree Completers and Graduate Students
- Makeup of Student Populations from Undergraduate and Graduate Student Levels
- Relationship to K-Community College Education and Future Importance
- Shared Leadership in Community; Benefits of Community that Impact the Institution
- Nature of Undergraduate Degrees (Core; Elective Study; Requirements)
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution’s Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Idea with Relevant White Paper

- Why Transfer from Community Colleges is Critical

### Actions

Create a culture of acceptance and responsibility in the relationship of WT to community colleges, in the Panhandle, in the state and in the nation. Focus on the cost effectiveness of education when placed in the hands of those educated.

## Theme Group

# Undergraduate Academics (UA)

### Aspiration

The quality of our student body, the quality of teaching and advising available to them, and the quality of the faculty who work with undergraduates all contribute to the undergraduate academic experience. The strength of a regional research university is defined in part, by the quality of the basic arts and sciences programs offered. While our programs are sound, improvement and strength of identity are needed. The foundation, though, is the quality of the student. We need the very best.

### Key Ideas

- Responsiveness to Excellent Students in the Top 26 Counties
- Indicators of Quality; Pool, Acceptance, and Retention of Undergraduate Students
- Student Mix: Class Size and Character
- Resources for Undergraduate Students; Curriculum; Study Abroad; Scholarships
- Undergraduate Enrollment Growth Cap/Targets
- Hispanic-Serving Institution
- Distance Education: Creating Affinity
- 100 Percent Internship Initiative; Stronger Career Fairs
- Ideal Mixture of On-Campus and Distance Education
- Responsiveness to Industry across Disciplines; Marketable Skills
- New Academic Programs to Meet Emerging Regional/State/National Industry Needs
- Promoting Academic Innovation
- Competency-based Education
- Top-Three Destinations for Panhandle High School Graduates in Top 10 Percent of Class
- Setting More Stringent Automatic Admissions Targets (Top 20 Percent of Class)
- RELIS Program Offerings
- Building Future Alumni with Current Undergraduate Students
- Marketing Perceptions and Strategies; True Product/Services Price Comparisons
- Importance of Basic Programs, Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Program Ranking and Relationships of Rankings and the General University Rankings
- Quality of Undergraduate Students by Increasing the Quality of Primary and Secondary Educational System
- Aspects of Faculty (Full-Time or Part-Time; Matters of Tenure; Faculty Work Life)
- Relationships of Graduate to Undergraduate Enrollment and Effects of Residential and Non-Residential Students
- Relationship to K-Community College Education and Future Importance
- Nature of Undergraduate Degrees (Core; Elective Study and Requirements)
- Quality of Teaching Metrics
- Classroom Instructional Issues (Size; Quality; Learning Environment)
- Teaching by Graduate Students, Impact of Teaching Quality and Graduate Fellowships
- Makeup of Student Populations from Undergraduate and Graduate Student Levels
- Relationship Between Class Size and Teaching Quality
- Leadership Training
- Impact of Basic Sciences Emphasis
- Role of Honor Societies and Prestigious Scholarships
- Definition and Roles of Professional Programs
- Degree Completion Time and Impacts on Funding
- Graduate Academics Marketing Strategy
- Impact of Residential Experience for Transfer Students, Dual Credit Associate Degree Completers and Graduate Students
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution’s Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Ideas with Relevant White Papers

- Enrollment in Higher Education: Challenges and Management
- A College of Arts and Sciences or a University College
- Pipeline Programs to Texas A&M University (College Station)

### Actions

Review all aspects of the undergraduate academic environment including admission, development and retention policies in order to enhance the undergraduate academic experience. Undergraduate study at WT must respond to and support the values and culture of the Texas Panhandle. We should not apologize for who we are, but herald our traditions and fabric as our greatest strength.

## Theme Group

# Graduate Academics (GA)

### Aspiration:

Good faculty attract good graduate students. The best universities have the best graduate students and research programs. It is that simple. Our move to doctoral status is driven and sustained by carefully conceived graduate programs. These programs must be responsive to the needs of the Texas Panhandle and similar geographic regions.

### Key Ideas

- Graduate Student Population; Enrollments
- Professional Programs
- Resources for Graduate Students
- Attractiveness for Industry and External Resource Streams
- Pipeline Programs (Relationship with the System as a Regional Research University)
- Hispanic-Serving Institution
- Enrollment Growth Cap/Targets
- Residency (Campus Visit) Requirement for Fully Online Students
- Competency-based Education
- Increasing Employers at Career Fairs
- Building Future Alumni with Current Graduate Students
- Marketing Perceptions and Strategies
- True Product/Services Price Comparisons across Complementary Goods
- Aspects of Faculty (Full-Time or Part-Time; Matters of Tenure; Faculty Work Life)
- Relationships of Graduate to Undergraduate Enrollment and Effects of Residential and Non-Residential Students
- Support of Graduate Students Through Fellowships and Impact on Graduate Student Quality
- Quality of Teaching Metrics
- Classroom Instructional Issues (Size; Quality; Learning Environment)
- Teaching by Graduate Students, Impact of Teaching Quality; Graduate Fellowships
- Makeup of Student Populations from Undergraduate and Graduate Student Levels
- Program Ranking and Relationships of Rankings and the General University Rankings
- Leadership Training
- Leadership of Graduate Programs and College Autonomy
- Impact of Basic Sciences Emphasis
- Role of Honor Societies and Prestigious Scholarships
- Definition and Roles of Professional Programs
- Faculty Chairs and Professorships and Support for Hiring and Retaining Faculty
- Structure of Centralized or Decentralized Graduate School
- Degree Completion Time and Impacts on Funding
- Graduate Academics Marketing Strategy
- Types of Research Funding
- Impact of Residential Experience for Transfer Students, Dual Credit Associate Degree Completers and Graduate Students
- Contributions of Best Public Universities at Local/ Regional Levels
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Impact of Graduate Student Recruitment and Graduate Student Quality on Research
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Ideas with Relevant White Papers

- A Regional Research University—The Needs of the Panhandle
- Responsiveness to Industry Across Disciplines: Market-Informed Education

### Actions

Work to define a culture and environment that supports excellence in graduate study in all dimensions in the core disciplines of a Regional Research University. Embrace and trumpet the idea of a Regional Research University.

## Theme Group

# Residential Education Experience (REE)

### Aspiration

Our identification with and capabilities for providing a complete experience that includes leadership development and life skills should never fall below any other priority of the institution.

### Key Ideas

- Leadership Training and Development; Honors Programs
- Traditions
- National Measures, Leadership in Action
- Learning Communities
- International Students
- Student Engagement
- Student Employment Opportunities (On Campus Internships)
- Career Services
- Student Campus Experiences (On Campus and Off Campus)
- Campus Master Plan
- Housing Master Plan
- Housing Partnerships (Public and Private)
- Building Alumni Relations
- Veterans Services Support
- Title IX
- Effects of Intercollegiate Athletic Programs
- What it Means to Be a Buff and Alumni Perception
- Addressing Extracurricular Activities Concept
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Impact of Residential Experience for Transfer Students, Dual Credit Associate Degree Completers and Graduate Students
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Ideas with Relevant White Papers

- Residential Life
- Residential Living Cost Analysis

### Actions

Describe initiatives that will continue to enhance campus life and personal development opportunities for all students and develop national awareness of our strength in this area. Build on the institution's distinctive tradition of Panhandle values and de Tocqueville's American exceptionalism, citizenship, character and leadership.



## Theme Group

# Financial Resources (FR)

### Aspiration

*The quality to which we aspire will be achieved with appropriate material support. Resources may not lead to quality, but quality always leads to resources. Quality first.*

### Key Ideas

- Financial Resources
- Funding
- Who Bears the Cost
- Giving
- Parsimoniousness
- Relationship between Public and Private Resources
- Industry Responsiveness/Industry Resources
- Cost Effectiveness
- Scholarship Funding Opportunities
- Philanthropy Efforts
- Offsetting Losses in State Support
- Investing in Successful Programs/Initiatives
- Strategic and Unique Fundraising Initiatives
- Top Panhandle Performers Scholarships
- Types of Research Funding
- Faculty Chairs and Professorships and Support for Hiring and Retaining Faculty
- Faculty Compensation System and Issues Comparative to Industry Model
- Importance of Extramural Funding
- Discussion of Orders of Impact and Cost Effectiveness
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Idea with Relevant White Paper

- Student Debt

### Actions

Develop strategies that will build the resource streams—state, federal, corporate and private—required to support the University's rapid evolution toward a doctoral university that embodies the notion of a Regional Research University.

## Theme Group

# Intellectual Resources (IR)

### Aspiration: *The core of the campus, its heart, is the flow of intellectual resources, insight and wisdom.*

*No aspiration of WT 125 will be achieved without substantial commitments in information technology, the library, the PPHM and other resources that power the mind and provide insights to students, faculty and the Panhandle community.*

### Key Ideas

- Information Technology
  - IT and its Impact on Learning
  - IT and its Impact on Creative and Scholarly Work
  - Developing Access to Distant Resources, Our Connections to Everything
  - Toolsets to Lead the Region and Beyond
  - Budgeting/Costing
  - Research and Development
  - IT Supply and Demand Needs
  - Resources to Support Expanding Doctoral Programming Needs
  - Pedagogical Support
  - Data and Analytics (Civitas Learning; AdmitHub)
  - Innovative Technology Initiatives; Mobile; Web Accessibility and Compliance; Security; Database; Web Applications and Development; Internet of Things (IoT)
- The Library
  - Nature of the Library at a Regional Research University
  - Library Holdings, Quality; Staff; Expenditures
  - Ranking System of Library
  - Special Collections
- PPHM
  - PPHM Fully Integrated with the University
  - How PPHM Complements Library
- Online Programs; Quality
- Focus on and Funding Spent on Information Processing
- Distance Education (Define Distance Education; Role of Distance Education as Regional Research University); Accreditation; Class Size; Branding; US NEWS Ranking; Courses Offered; Percentage Student Enrollment; Education on Demand
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Ideas with Relevant White Papers

- Information Technology
- Cornette Library: The Portal to Scholarship and Discovery
- Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum: Calling Upon the Past to Shape the Future

### Actions

The theme group should identify strategies that will increase the power to learn while equipping students and scholars with the best insight, access and widely distributed intellectual resources, simultaneously reflecting the past and projecting the future.

## Theme Group

# Human Capital (HC)

### Aspiration

Faculty and staff are the University. We must recruit, reward and retain, retain the very best. The *conditio sine qua non* of all faculty and staff, at every level, must be teaching and the support thereof in its diverse manifestations.

### Key Ideas

- Faculty and Staff
  - The Work and The Needs
  - Measures of Excellence
  - Support Structures
  - Reward Structures
  - Qualifications
  - Recruitment Efforts
  - Hiring Efforts
  - Orientation Program
- Diversity
  - Mentorship Program
  - Recognition Program
  - Retention Efforts
  - Competitive Salaries
- Faculty
  - Work Load Symmetry and Fairness; Shifting Allocations of Teaching, Service, Research/Scholarship
  - Scholarship, Creative Activity and Research
  - Faculty Resources and Needs
  - Endowments; Research Stipends; Signing Bonuses; Performance
  - Tenure and Promotion Expectations
  - Doctoral-Level Faculty
  - Student-Faculty Ratio
  - Faculty Depth and Critical Mass
  - Faculty Compensation System and Issues Comparative to Industry Model
  - Recruit, Retain and Reward Faculty
  - Aspects of Faculty (Full-Time or Part-Time; Matters of Tenure; Faculty Work Life)
  - Faculty Chairs and Professorships and Support for Hiring and Retaining Faculty
- Title IX
- Job Opportunities in Community
- Importance of Administrative Costs
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Institution's Size in Relation to Best Higher Education Institutions
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Idea with Relevant White Paper

- Diversity

### Actions

The theme group should identify issues that will support excellence for faculty and staff, in teaching, research and service that extends the University's reputation within the academic and extended communities in teaching, research and service.

## Theme Group

# Research and Infrastructure (RI)

### Aspiration

Sustain excellence in research, scholarship and creative activities. Excellence in research and scholarship will attract human and material resources. This is our goal.

### Key Ideas

- Quantity of Research and Scholarship
- Quality of Research and Scholarship
- Sources of Funds
- Management
- Focus Areas
- Adequacy of Lab Spaces for Research
- Faculty/Industry Collaborations
- Emerging Research Needs of the Panhandle
- Aspects of Faculty (Full-Time or Part-Time; Matters of Tenure; Faculty Work Life)
- Impact of Graduate Student Recruitment and Graduate Student Quality on Research
- Program Ranking and Relationships of Rankings and the General University Rankings
- Discussion of Orders of Impact and Cost Effectiveness
- Types of Research Funding
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Key Idea with Relevant White Paper

- A Regional Research University—The Needs of the Panhandle

### Actions

The theme group should identify key areas for growth in research, scholarship and creative activity based on extant strength, new focus areas and Panhandle, state and national needs—and identify key actions required to pursue these opportunities. Niches that lead to recognition as a Regional Research University are essential. We must do what few, if any aspiring regional universities do—use our context not as a limitation or an excuse, but as a driver of scholarship, knowledge generation, insight and unique experiences for our students and faculty to pursue and expose new ideas that benefit our society.

## Theme Group

# Leadership, Governance and Organization (LGO)

### Aspiration

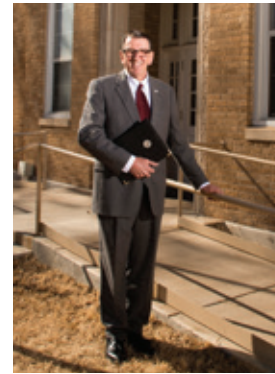
*Great universities exist where there is enlightened leadership. This is true at the state, system and university levels. It is true from within and from the outside. It comes from every rank of university life: staff, faculty and administration. No segment has the corner on the market of innovation and insight, and recognition will make WT better.*

### Key Ideas

- Organizations that Respond to Excellence
- An Empowered Faculty
- WT, the System, the Panhandle and the State
- Risks and Rewards for Leaders
- Overall Organizational Structure (Organizational Chart)
- Academic Organization Structure
- TAMU System Collaboration
- Consistency in University Processes and Services (Registration, Admissions, Advising)
- Alumni Engagement and Membership
- Government Relations; Local, State, National Elected Delegation
- Stature of Institution Relative to the Effects of Conservatism or Liberalism
- Aspects of Faculty (Full-Time or Part-Time; Matters of Tenure; Faculty Work Life)
- Capital and Resources for Building Image
- Discussion of Orders of Impact and Cost Effectiveness
- Leadership of Graduate Programs and College Autonomy
- Distinctiveness and Market Niche
- Nature of Relationship to the System
- Importance of Administrative Costs
- Defining Our Relationship to the Texas Industries
- Shared Leadership in Community; Benefits of Community that Impact the Institution
- How Leadership Elevates High Visibility Programs
- Things People Like About Good Universities
- Defining a Regional Research University
- WTAMU Compared to Comparison Peers, Aspirant Peers and Geographic Peers

### Actions

Identify structural impediments to institutional excellence and suggest such changes to the governance framework as may be required to support the University's continued development and further enhance its reputation as a Regional Research University.



# FINAL WORDS

*From President Wendler*

**We have worked diligently to begin the process of defining WTAMU as a regionally responsive research university.**

A guiding goal is to gain doctoral status. That requires a sustained production of doctoral degrees. In attaining this status, it is not our intention, nor will it be the result, that our commitment to excellence in teaching be diminished. In addition, it is not our intention to change the fundamental systems of our university that drive the values of family, work, faith and community life in the Texas Panhandle. Without these values, West Texas A&M University falls short. The application of these basic values creates our distinctiveness and differentiates WT from the 400 similar universities in the United States.

None of this means that we relax in our pursuit of new ideas, thoughtful deliberation regarding the human condition, entrepreneurial aspects of community development and the value of economic development combined with the changing nature of a university that serves the Texas Panhandle. This adherence to fundamental values and an open-minded, futuristic look are mutually supportive—neither can exist without the other. Values of the Panhandle people are proven durable by resilience in a changing social, environmental and political context. The worth of new ideas and progress can only be measured from a datum that determines what change can contribute to or detract from our value system. Evolvement must be our calling at West Texas A&M University.

The work of WT 125, carried out by over 300 people, is about making suggestions for forward progress of WT. The efforts of WT 125 reinforces a commitment to growth and an appreciation of Texas Panhandle history and its people. I have visited, studied and worked at diverse universities. What may seem commonplace to us at WT is not commonplace. We should never take for granted the future essence of a good university—West Texas A&M University—as we approach the midpoint of the 21st century. Our goal is to be an effective and purposeful educational institution for the people of the Panhandle and beyond, as we approach our 125th anniversary and simultaneously respond to the changing environment of public higher education in Texas, the United States and the world. This is a high calling, and one that we take very seriously.

Our attention to these lofty aspirations for WT, and many goals under development, is what makes our appropriate intentions plausible.

It is our commitment. It will be the future of WT.

## SOME INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Through an appreciation for our market and the three peer groups, conclusions about forward movement, guided by the 10 theme groups, are beginning to evolve. Below are a limited number of examples, demonstrating concepts that the theme groups are developing.

### **The Panhandle and Its Heart – The I-27 Corridor**

In order to be an effective force for education in the Texas Panhandle, WT will endeavor to reach students in public and private schools in the top 26 counties of Texas. One measure of our success with this outreach will be the attraction of a greater number of valedictorians and salutatorians from the high schools in the top 26 counties. We desire to enroll 60% of all valedictorians and salutatorians in our region. In addition, 50% of all our scholarship dollars will be distributed to students who have been raised in the Texas Panhandle. Such measures, among numerous others, will determine the effectiveness of our outreach from the I-27 Corridor.

### **Our Relationship to Community Colleges**

Analysis and national trends indicate that an ever-increasing portion of our student population will be transfer students from community colleges. This trend applies across all demographic groups: recent high school graduates, working adults, veterans and all culturally and socially underrepresented groups. The WT response: Hold steady our freshman class, at approximately 1,500 students, while simultaneously increasing the academic capabilities of that class by attracting a stronger student body. University growth will occur through a dramatic increase in the number of students who hold an associate degree as a mile marker in their pursuit of a baccalaureate degree. By 2035, 50% of each graduating class could hold an associate's degree when they attain their bachelor's degree.

### **Undergraduate Academics**

The quality and effectiveness of our undergraduates will be measured by two criteria. First, every bachelor's degree graduate from WT will have grounding and an appreciation for the human condition and its development through history. Graduates will understand the basics of mathematics and physical science. World literature and an appreciation for Western culture as our foundation in an ever-changing contemporary society will be essential. This will require unprecedented attention to what a core curriculum needs to be as we near the midpoint of the 21st century. In addition, every graduate of WT will have had an internship experience in a professional setting. The combination of general knowledge that allows a person to be an educated human being and vocational pragmatism of being able to perform valuable tasks in the workplace is essential as WT gains the status that we desire it to have.

### **Graduate Academics**

Every college and school at West Texas A&M University will have access to a doctoral degree by the year 2035. These doctoral degrees will focus on applied research and contributions to solving problems that exist in the Texas Panhandle. This will be the realization of WT as a regional research university. These programs will be declared distinctive by our experience and as they gain approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Degree duplication and overproduction is a significant problem in Texas, and in almost every state of the nation. WT cannot solve that problem. However, we can create a doctoral institution that solves real problems through applied research and a deep appreciation for the context in which problems exist. By 2035, every college and school at West Texas A&M University

will have a doctoral degree program. In no case will these programs be like any other program at any other university in the state or nation. Graduate program distinctiveness and applied research will cause this end.

### **Residential Education Experience**

The power of the campus life experience is real. Students will be encouraged to live on campus through financial incentives, campus work opportunities to reduce the cost of education and integrated living and study experiences that encourage students to dwell with those who study in the same subject areas. In addition, distinctive living opportunities over the next few decades will mark a departure from “dorm life” as it has been known for the last century. We will engage students in laboratories, classrooms, studios and other places of study, and carry that engagement in to where students sleep and eat. Our goal is to increase by 50% the number of students who live on campus for the total time of their undergraduate experience.

### **Financial Resources**

The state's contribution to the funding of higher education has generally declined over the past 40 years. It is naïve to expect a change in that trend, although if the decrease does not level-off by the time WT reaches its 125th birthday, WT will be a private University. There will be no state contribution to our budget. Therefore, in the next 15 years, we are determined to engage in two major fundraising campaigns. The financial resources theme group will identify the nature of the first campaign, so that by the conclusion of the WT 125 generational planning process, the summer of 2018, we will actively begin our next major campaign. It will be focused on the people of WT—the faculty, staff and students. Its efforts will be directed to increase the quality and effectiveness of the people who make WT successful.

### **Intellectual Resources**

The intellectual resources and libraries of universities are changing. Libraries will never be unimportant, as the “living room” of the University. However, as information technology changes and provides omnipresent access to insights and ideas, the nature of Cornette Library at WT will evolve dramatically. The Internet of Things (IoT) will continue to develop, providing a completely different view of how people work and how they gain information about the work they do. Of all of the regional universities in our nation and state, our goal is to read in the development of model, modern campus libraries and ubiquitous access to information digitally.

### **Human Capital**

Universities are about people. As our enrollment grows and graduate programs begin to develop, shifts in the number of faculty, students and staff will occur. It is essential that our attention to the human capital that produces excellence is continuously increasing. Our student-faculty ratios should be better than the averages for any of our three peer groups, and must lead in a number of dimensions. Likewise, our faculty with terminal degrees will continue to grow as a percentage of the whole. Our students on scholarship for academic excellence should have access to twice the current levels of scholarship funding. This corresponds very directly to the structure of our next capital campaign. In addition, we must find ways to increase our means to reward excellence in all categories of our university population. Lastly, in selected areas, we will boldly recruit faculty who are leaders in their respective disciplines. This practice will change the matrix of faculty salaries and reward structures for the whole campus.

## Research and Infrastructure

Research, scholarship and infrastructure will evolve to assist the University in gaining regional research university status. Each component of the triangle—research, scholarship and creative activity—must be attended to in sciences and applied disciplines. New avenues for funding research that supports professional doctorates with application driven potential will evolve. In disciplines that rely on traditional forms of scholarship, access to intellectual insights to the developing library, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum (PPHM) and investigative study will grow. Our faculty, staff and students will continue to contribute effectively to the cultural life of the Texas Panhandle in the areas of performance and artistic expression. This three-pronged approach to excellence in research and infrastructure will make possible our designation as a regional research university. We will look different from land-grant universities and traditional doctoral universities.

## Leadership, Governance and Organization

To gain every advantage as we serve the Texas Panhandle, we will be a regional university more integrated with our flagship, Texas A&M University, than we are currently. There will be a two-way flow of people and ideas. Many of our best undergraduate students will go to advanced study at Texas A&M University. Likewise, the programs that we offer on this campus and the attributes that are strong for us, such as our programs in music, performance and the arts, may be attractive to students from Texas A&M University. Our strengths in music and the study of the American West, fueled by the PPHM, are unique and should help us more fully integrate with Texas A&M University. This requires a confident and comfortable view, through the eyes of leadership at every level, regarding the interdependence of our institutions. Distributed education allows each organization to provide opportunity through their strength. This will be our goal.

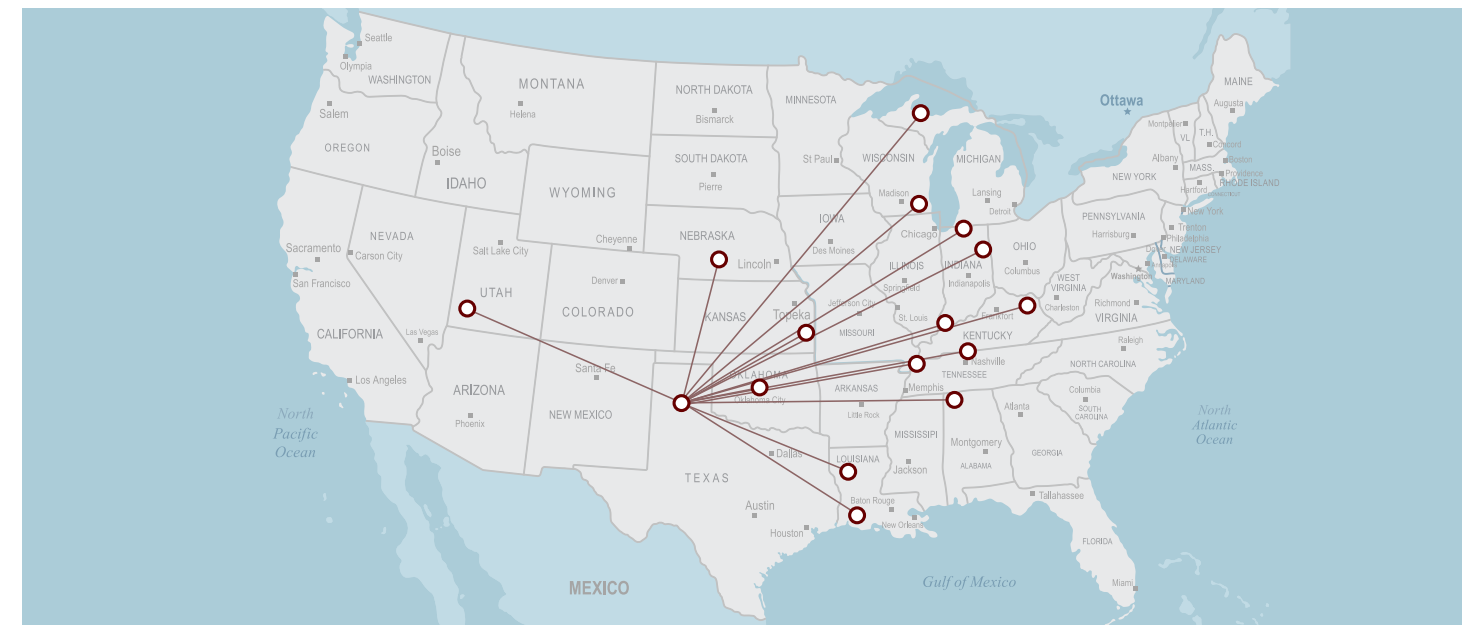
## CLOSING THOUGHTS

These working conclusions, and a multitude of other ideas that will propel West Texas A&M University into a leadership position among regional universities, are under development. We believe that commitment to these aspirations will form the basis for an enlivened and persistently growing West Texas A&M University. As WT 125 moves forward, the plan will become the measuring stick of all that we do for the next few decades.

## COMPARISON PEERS

INSTITUTION	STATE	SACSCOC	FTE	RET RATE	4YR GRAD RATE	6YR GRAD RATE	DEGREES /FTE	DISTANCE FROM WTAMU
Austin Peay State University	TN	1	8227	71	15	36	0.22	825
Indiana University-Purdue University-Fort Wayne	IN	0	9168	64	6	25	0.17	1007
Indiana University-South Bend	IN	0	5396	66	6	26	0.17	967
McNeese State University	LA	1	6934	67	13	37	0.19	606
Morehead State University	KY	1	8184	66	22	45	0.20	1050
Northern Michigan University	MI	0	7416	74	21	48	0.18	1100
Northwestern State University of Louisiana	LA	1	6801	72	19	38	0.18	556
Pittsburg State University	KS	0	6365	74	24	49	0.24	436
Southern Utah University	UT	0	7042	64	22	41	0.18	649
The University of Tennessee-Martin	TN	1	5999	75	21	46	0.20	740
<i>University of Central Oklahoma</i>	<i>OK</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>13548</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>0.23</i>	<i>255</i>
University of Nebraska at Kearney	NE	0	5453	80	21	53	0.22	423
University of North Alabama	AL	1	5992	76	13	35	0.23	808
University of Southern Indiana	IN	0	8494	71	15	37	0.21	818
<i>University of Wisconsin-Whitewater</i>	<i>WI</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>11157</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>0.23</i>	<i>891</i>
West Texas A&M University	TX	1	7565	64	25	40	0.25	0

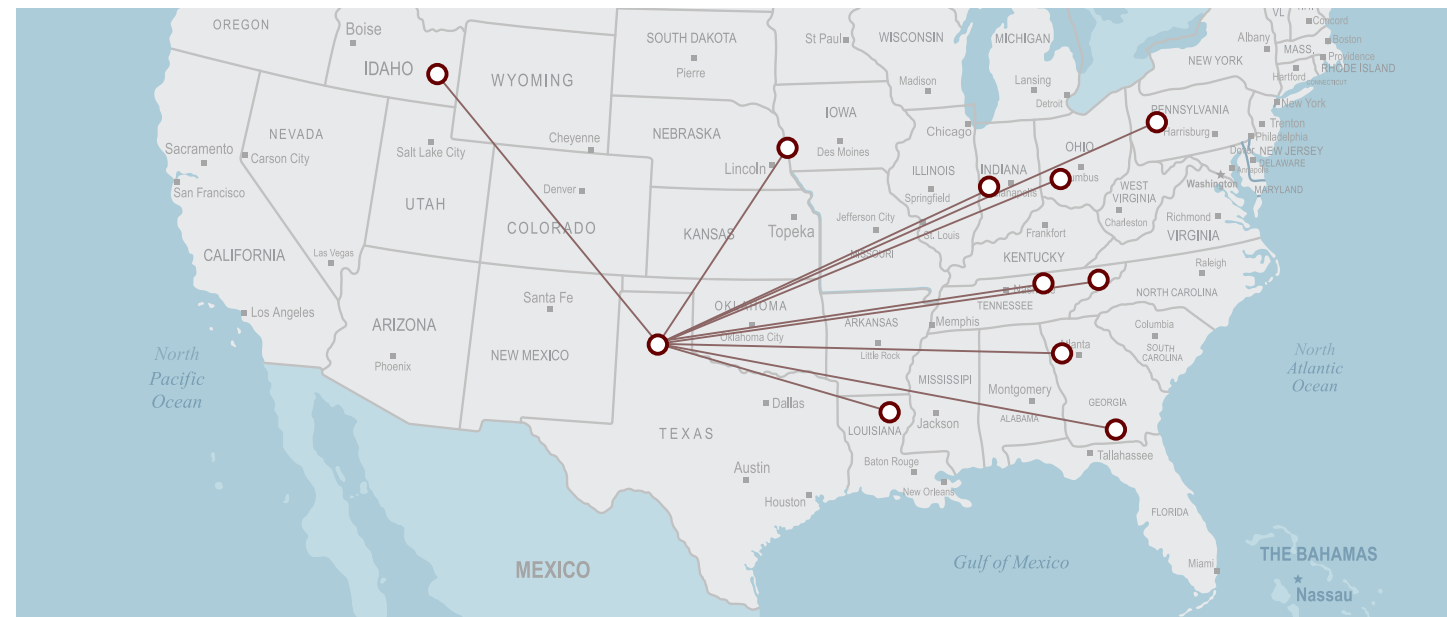
\* Italicized rows indicate deans' request



## ASPIRANT PEERS

INSTITUTION	STATE	SACSCOC	FTE	RETENTION RATE	6YR GRAD RATE	DOCTORAL DEGREES	DEGREES /FTE
<i>East Tennessee State University</i>	TN	1	12486	71	41	267	0.24
Idaho State University	ID	0	10108	72	31	160	0.16
Indiana State University	IN	0	11777	64	42	94	0.19
Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Main Campus	PA	0	12605	76	51	124	0.24
<b>Tennessee Technological University</b>	<b>TN</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9772</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0.22</b>
<b>University of Louisiana at Monroe</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7022</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0.20</b>
<b>University of Nebraska at Omaha</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12481</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0.25</b>
<b>University of West Georgia</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10749</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0.20</b>
<b>Valdosta State University</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9303</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0.22</b>
West Texas A&M University	TX	1	7565	64	40	2	0.25
<i>Wright State University-Main Campus</i>	OH	0	13704	67	41	158	0.25

\* BOLD rows indicate 'Reclassified to Doctoral Status'  
 † Italicized rows indicate deans' request



## GEOGRAPHIC PEERS

INSTITUTION	STATE	CARNEGIE	SACSCOC	FTE	RET RATE	6YR GRAD RATE	DOCTOAL DEGREES	DEGREES /FTE
Angelo State University	TX	Master's: Larger	1	6609	63	30	18	0.24
Colorado State University-Pueblo	CO	Master's: Medium	0	5213	64	33	0	0.15
Fort Hays State University	KS	Master's: Larger	0	9412	70	44	0	0.34
Lamar University	TX	Doctoral: Moderate	1	10256	58	34	92	0.26
Midwestern State University	TX	Master's: Medium	1	4949	70	44	0	0.24
Southwestern Oklahoma State University	OK	Master's: Larger	0	4396	66	30	76	0.19
Stephen F Austin State University	TX	Master's: Larger	1	11022	71	43	23	0.25
Tarleton State University	TX	Master's: Larger	1	10056	66	43	9	0.19
Texas A&M International University	TX	Master's: Larger	1	5745	76	43	1	0.23
Texas A&M University-Commerce	TX	Doctoral: Higher	1	9430	73	45	45	0.32
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	TX	Doctoral: Moderate	1	9398	59	40	31	0.21
Texas A&M University-Kingsville	TX	Doctoral: Moderate	1	7752	69	34	15	0.25
The University of Texas at Tyler	TX	Master's: Larger	1	6620	62	44	17	0.28
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin	TX	Master's: Medium	1	3823	71	27	0	0.23
University of Colorado Springs	CO	Master's: Larger	0	9480	68	46	26	0.21
West Texas A&M University	TX	Master's: Larger	1	7565	64	40	2	0.25





[wtamu.edu/WT125](http://wtamu.edu/WT125)