

**Sul Ross State University Plan**  
*Strategies for the Second Century*  
2016-2020

To Sul Ross State University Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends

Mindful of the extraordinary milestone of recently celebrating 100 years serving the higher education needs of the Big Bend and US-Mexico border regions of Texas, Sul Ross State University has high aspirations for its future. Those aspirations are reflected in this new strategic plan titled “Sul Ross State University Plan: Strategies for the Second Century.” This new and dynamic plan was recently approved by the Texas State University System Board of Regents. Implementation of the multi-year plan is underway, even as some details are being finalized.

The strategic plan is organized around five goals: Promoting growth in academic, research and artistic excellence; targeting recruiting, maximizing retention and increasing graduation rates; strengthening a sustainable and diversified financial base while ensuring affordable access; recruiting, retaining and developing faculty, staff and student employees; and unifying and enhancing the Image and visibility of Sul Ross. There are 19 objectives and more than 80 strategies that will help guide and measure progress toward the achievement of our goals.

The Sul Ross State University Plan was developed over the past year under the leadership of Dr. Bonnie Warnock. Planning committees consisting of a Steering Committee and multiple sub-committees representing all aspects of the university developed the strategic plan and the associated assessment plan. All members of the university community had multiple opportunities for review and input.

The next page in the plan sets out our vision, mission, and values. Sul Ross does not have to change who we are. As we enter our second century of serving our students and this unique and distinctive region, we strive to heighten our aspirations and our expectations. Those aspirations and expectations will translate into continued and sustained success for our university and our graduates.

This Sul Ross State University Plan is intended as a guide for our future. The assessment plan will allow us to monitor our progress and to remain flexible going forward. The strategic plan will be used to guide our decision-making and our work. We remain poised to respond to new opportunities as they come.

Sul Ross State University is at an exciting time in our history, entering a new century of service and poised for a brighter future. Plans themselves do not move us from exciting ideas to bold new realities, but a common understanding of our shared goals allows us to succeed. I am sincerely grateful to the many individuals who have shaped this ambitious plan and I look forward to our exciting future.

Bill Kibler  
President

# Sul Ross State University Plan

## *Strategies for the Second Century*

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### Vision

Sul Ross State University seeks to be a national and international leader in achieving excellence among universities in the areas of Education, Research, Social Mobility, Service, Affordability, and Shared Governance.

### Who We Are

Sul Ross State University is a public, comprehensive, Master's degree granting, multi-campus university serving the Big Bend and the US-Mexico border regions of Texas.

### Mission

Rooted in the distinctive surroundings and history of the Big Bend and the US-Mexico border regions of Texas, Sul Ross State University provides accessible, comprehensive, and life changing education through high quality teaching, research, cultural awareness, creativity, and service.

### Values

- Excellence
- Ethics and Integrity
- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Growth and Exploration
- Leadership and Service
- Student Focused

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Our Values, Mission and Vision, combined with the challenges outlined in the next section, have guided this strategic plan.

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## Who We Are

In 2017 Sul Ross State University (Sul Ross) will begin its Second Century providing a quality post-secondary education in what the US Department of Education classifies a “frontier institution.” Our unique history, which still echoes loudly in our halls, classrooms and athletic fields, makes reaching this milestone that much more notable.

Our past has a much larger influence on us than at a typical state university and is reflected in the strategic plan that follows. Appreciating Sul Ross’s place in the Texas State University System, in our local area, and in the lives of our students is essential to understanding this jewel in the desert.

### Our Place in the Texas State University System

Sul Ross’s relationship to its governing system, the Texas State University System (TSUS), its sister institutions, and the state has profound implications for this strategic plan.

Sul Ross, established in 1917 in Alpine, Texas, was one of the first institutions incorporated into what is now the seven institution Texas State University System. TSUS was established just a few years earlier (1911) for the fundamental purpose of the training of public school teachers. The System still provides a central administrative structure for the equally represented component institutions.

Today, the Sul Ross student body makes up about 3,000 (4%) of the 84,000 students in the TSUS. This includes approximately 2,000 students at the main Alpine, Texas, campus and 1,000 at Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College’s four campuses that extend across vast stretches of the Middle Rio Grande region.

Two institutions in the System, Sam Houston State University and Texas State University, account for nearly 70% of total student enrollment.

The budgeting challenges of a low-enrollment university like Sul Ross is also aggravated by how the State of Texas funds higher education. Unlike states that rely on a Master Plan to organize its university systems, Texas organized its state universities by legislation on behalf of individual institutions. That approach to legislative budget line-item oversight and appropriation continues today.

These circumstances imply serious and perpetual questions about our viability to someone unfamiliar with our passion for our mission. How is it that Sul Ross has thrived for 100 years in such an aggressive environment?

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Our Place in the Geography and Local Community

Many may wonder how it is that a beautiful, vibrant university in such a remote region of Texas exists, where the largest city of any consequence is a 2½ hour backroad, off-interstate drive away?

If not for the town and citizens of Alpine, Sul Ross would not exist. Conversely, if not for Sul Ross, the town of Alpine and surrounding area would not be the vibrant tourist destination that it is today.

That mutual reliance grows out of the nature of the relationship between Texas state universities and the state legislature discussed in the previous section. In the early 1900s the need for a teacher's college between the 550-mile stretch of arid land between San Antonio and El Paso was based on two facts. First, the area was having trouble attracting teaching candidates from outside. The local school districts had to find a way to transform local talent into teachers. Second, the cost for in-area teachers to travel and stay in San Antonio for re-certification was burdensome on a teacher's salary.

Because Texas colleges rely on specific legislation, local Alpine-area citizens had to make their case directly to the legislature to fund the establishment of a teaching college in the area. The legislature made the location and funding of Sul Ross conditional. Besides donating the land, supplying utilities, and funding student housing, the town of Alpine had to incorporate as a city. So, 1917 marked not only the beginning of a university in southwest Texas but also the establishment of the municipality of Alpine.

In 1923 a local capital campaign of the Chamber of Commerce and area residents continued to build on this relationship by funding 41 two-bedroom cottages to address the shortage of suitable student housing.

The creation of the upper-level Sul Ross State University Study Center in Uvalde in 1973 (the predecessor to Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College) shows a similar reliance on local community leadership. During the 1960s multiple state universities were competing to extend their offerings into remote areas of Texas via off-campus "extension centers." At its peak Sul Ross had 12 centers, one each in El Paso, Sierra Blanca, Van Horn, Monahans, Midland / Odessa, Big Spring, Snyder, Brownwood, Kerrville, Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Uvalde.

In 1965, the legislature responded to the growing, overlapping offerings by establishing the predecessor to today's Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and charging it with rationalizing these independent efforts. Seizing the opportunity, a contingent of local Middle Rio Grande leaders, including a personal associate of the Governor of Texas Dolph Briscoe, approached Sul Ross with a proposal to convert its extension centers in the area into a permanent relationship with Southwest Texas Junior College.

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The fact that Governor Briscoe hailed from Uvalde and had extensive ranching interests in the area put the proposal on firm ground. The appointment two years later of Mr. Harry Hornby, publisher of the Uvalde Leader, to the TSUS Board of Regents, cemented the relationship between SRSU's Rio Grande College and its surrounding communities.

Next, in 1986 Sul Ross was on the legislature's "Closure / Merger List." Hundreds of residents, friends and alumni of Sul Ross appeared at the Austin hearing of the legislature to show support, at which time the college was removed from the list.

In 1987 Sul Ross was part of a consortium of borderland universities represented in the LULAC v. Richards lawsuit<sup>1</sup> that claimed a history of inadequate and inequitable funding, program creation and support.

At the time, the border area had 20% of the state's population but only 10% of the state's resources dedicated to higher education. Furthermore, the average mileage to a comprehensive university was 225 miles for border-area citizens versus 45 miles for the rest of Texas.

The LULAC case led to 1993 legislation that substantially increased state funding for under-served border-area universities, including Sul Ross. The leadership of the then Alpine-resident state representative Pete P. Gallego led to appropriations for a new University Center, Early Childhood Development Center, a special events center, a new student housing development, and major renovations of existing structures.

LULAC's lead attorneys insisted that if Sul Ross was to be part of the settlement, local community groups needed to show unequivocal support for the university, including participating in the design of a remedy and petitioning the legislature even before the case was decided.<sup>2</sup> Without that visible and unwavering support Sul Ross would not have the infrastructure it has today. Very possibly it would have not survived the next encounter with the "Closure / Merger List."

The LULAC case emphasizes the last historical and geographical element that has lasting impact on our strategic plan – the student body.

### Our Place in the Lives of Our Students

Our heritage just recounted – as a (US Department of Education defined) "frontier institution" tightly bound to its people, its place and its culture – reinforces our mission to serve the under-served of our border area. That mission is reflected in the profile of our 4-year undergraduate cohort at the Alpine campus (see next page).

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<sup>1</sup> Styled "RICHARDS v. LULAC | 868 S.W.2d 306 (1993)" on appeal

<sup>2</sup> Kauffman, Albert. "Effective Litigation Strategies to Improve State Education and Social Science Systems," Journal of Law & Education, Vol 45, No.4

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Attribute <sup>3</sup>	%	
Minority	67	
First Generation	62	
Pell Eligible	56	
English Not Spoken at Home	17	
	SRSU	Texas
2-year Persistence	34	65
6-year Graduation Rate <sup>4</sup>	26	58

Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College (RGC), which represents approximately 1/3 of the university’s 3,000 student enrollment, has a different student profile. Co-located with Southwest Texas Junior College in Uvalde, Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Castroville, it offers upper-level and graduate courses only, many delivered using online and web-based instruction. A ‘typical’ RGC student will have more work experience and family obligations than the typical Alpine campus student, presenting different graduation and retention challenges. Recognizing that difference, this strategic plan incorporates elements especially important to the success of RGC.

Regardless of campus, Sul Ross students have modest backgrounds. Many are first-generation students. Because of this, Sul Ross has historically emphasized affordability. As recently as 2014 it led the state in this category and strives to remain in the lower 1/3 of affordability in terms of in-state tuition and fees of comparable universities.

But affordability by itself is of little value absent “mobility,” defined as the portion of a university’s students who come from a family in the bottom fifth of the income distribution and end up in the top fifth. In the most recent and exhaustive mobility study, Sul Ross ranked in the top 10% in mobility of the 123 universities studied in Texas.<sup>5,6</sup>

Upward mobility at Sul Ross comes not only from a quality education but also from strong, targeted student support services. Studies show that “non-instructional expenditure categories influence graduation and first-year persistence rates” and that

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<sup>3</sup> Alpine campus student body

<sup>4</sup> RGC transfer graduation rates 36%

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/data/index.html#college>

<sup>6</sup> Of the 12 universities that share the top of the list with us, ALL come from the previously defined border area

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those services matter more for students with lower entrance scores and schools that have large number of Pell Grant dollars per student ratios, like Sul Ross.<sup>7</sup>

Examples of these services include cultural events, newspapers, athletics, intramural sports, and student organizations whose “primary purpose is to contribute to student’s emotional and physical well-being ... outside of the context of formal instructional programs.”

This strategic plan recognizes the role that student services play in success by ensuring continued development of these programs.

## **Major Challenges and Our Strategic Response**

### Revenue

A stable and predictable revenue stream upon which to plan and deliver a quality education is a must. Unfortunately, for the past [x]<sup>8</sup> years the university has operated at a net deficit in its annual budgets, using reserve funds to balance those budgets. Budgets for the last three years have significantly reduced reliance on reserve funds, with the goal of returning to a balanced budget in the near future. This journey back to a balanced budget has brought numerous financial challenges to the university.

As an earlier strategic plan stated, “[t]uition revenues, combined with state support, may continue to fall short of actual *per student* cost at Sul Ross, despite projected increases in enrollment. The University has limited authority to raise tuition, and over three-fourths of Sul Ross students receive financial aid.”

Goal 3 of this plan, *Strengthen a Sustainable & Diversified Financial Base while Ensuring Affordable Access*, with its supporting objectives and strategies, is the major area of effort in addressing this challenge.

### Enrollment, Retention & Graduation

As the profile of our students illustrates, Sul Ross has unique challenges and opportunities regarding enrollment growth and student success.

While our students have alternatives other than Sul Ross, our main competition comes from cultural biases and the pull of low-skill yet lucrative jobs in the nearby West Texas oilfields.

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<sup>7</sup> Webber, Douglas A, et al. “Do expenditures other than instructional expenditures affect graduation and persistence rates in American higher education?” *Economics of Education Review*, 29 (2010) 947-958

<sup>8</sup> Pending confirmation of number of years

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The cultural bias challenge refers to the role family obligations plays in many borderland families. Those norms form strong incentives for next-generation children to forgo or postpone post-secondary schooling in favor of making immediate contributions to the extended family.

Even with an intention of continuing on to college, the lure of extremely high-paying jobs in the surrounding oilfields for unskilled, trainable labor can be hard to resist. These countervailing forces don't retreat once a student starts college.

The extensive objectives and strategies of Goal #2, *Target Recruiting, Maximize Retention & Increase Graduation Rates*, represent our major undertakings to address this challenge.

There are also strategies in Goal #1, *Promote Growth in Academic, Research and Artistic Excellence*, whose secondary and tertiary impact will influence our student outcomes.

#### Remote Service Area

Sul Ross' remoteness is both a challenge and an opportunity. As Texas becomes more urban, maintaining in-place educational opportunities for our most remote, under-served citizens becomes more acute. Outside revenue opportunities are extremely limited as well. Pursuing those opportunities will take more creative appeals and a steady, uninterrupted effort, which is made all the more difficult with the state's unpredictable funding cycle.

Nevertheless, the Sul Ross philosophy is that we meet the challenge of our unique geographic landscape and remoteness by embracing it. This is reflected in this strategic plan. A typical effort shows in Goal #1 Objective #2, *Establish ourselves as a regional leader in providing curricular programs that leverage the educational potential of our rich and diverse campus community*. We also embrace it in our programming and associated research from our Center for Big Bend Studies, the Rio Grande Research Center, the Borderlands Research Institute, and our unique collections and workshops of the Museum of the Big Bend.

The details of our strategic plan follow.

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## GOALS

Goal 1: **Promote Growth in Academic, Research and Artistic Excellence**

Goal 2: **Target Recruiting, Maximize Retention & Increase Graduation Rates**

Goal 3: **Strengthen a Sustainable and Diversified Financial Base while Ensuring Affordable Access**

Goal 4: **Recruit, Retain and Develop Faculty, Staff and Student Employees**

Goal 5: **Unify and Enhance the Image and Visibility of Sul Ross**

## OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: **Promote Growth in Academic, Research and Artistic Excellence**

Objective 1: Develop new or build on existing learning programs (including distance education programs) to create expanded opportunities to “learn by doing” across the curriculum, emphasizing tangible skills for lifelong learning and preparation to contribute to 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

Objective 2: Establish ourselves as a regional leader in providing curricular programs that leverage the educational potential of our rich and diverse campus community.

Objective 3: Support, improve and recognize research and its impact on faculty development and student engagement and learning.

Objective 4: Support, improve and recognize excellence in artistic endeavors.

Objective 5: Encourage and support efforts to obtain external funding for all forms of activity, including: research, education, scholarly, creative, service and outreach.

Goal 2: **Target Recruiting, Maximize Retention & Increase Graduation Rates**

Objective 1: Increase new student enrollment over the next five years.

Objective 2: Increase student retention and persistence over the next five years.

Objective 3: Increase overall student graduation rates over the next five years.

Goal 3: **Strengthen a Sustainable & Diversified Financial Base while Ensuring Affordable Access**

Objective 1: Advance available operating resources.

Objective 2: Cultivate an appropriate infrastructure of personnel, resources, and facilities that can be maintained by available revenue.

Objective 3: Support and develop resources that enable the university to cultivate, expand and sustain philanthropic support.

Objective 4: Maintain the university's relative affordability in Texas, while providing a “Private education experience at a state education price.”

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**Goal 4: Recruit, Retain & Develop Faculty, Staff and Student Employees**

Objective 1: Provide competitive salaries, benefits, and professional advancement resources to support the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty and staff.

Objective 2: Create an environment that promotes development, training and job satisfaction for faculty, staff and student employees.

**Goal 5: Unify and Enhance the Image and Visibility of Sul Ross**

Objective 1: Increase awareness of and advocacy for the university by showcasing Sul Ross's teaching, learning, research, athletics and artistic endeavors.

Objective 2: Maintain a visually unified, aesthetically pleasing campus that showcases our status of quality and regional leadership in higher education.

Objective 3: Advance and provide support for sustainability initiatives throughout the university.

Objective 4: Broaden and deepen constituent engagement, developing more meaningful relationships with alumni, friends and students.

Objective 5: ***[Pending: An objective & associated strategies for positioning athletics & sports as a vehicle for enhancing the image and visibility of Sul Ross]***

**STRATEGIES**

**Goal 1: Promote Growth in Academic, Research and Artistic Excellence**

Objective 1: Develop new or build on existing learning programs (including distance education programs) to create expanded opportunities to “learn by doing” across the curriculum, emphasizing tangible skills for lifelong learning and preparation to contribute to 21<sup>st</sup> century society

Strategy 1: Expand Summer Bridge Programs.

Strategy 2: Promote high-quality teaching by establishing a faculty discussion series “Pedagogy and Practice.”

Strategy 3: Develop a comprehensive educational career program and a program of career-focused student internships.

Strategy 4: Engage and support student applications to national and international service organizations such as Fulbright U.S. Student Program, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, etc.

Strategy 5: Establish a Task Force within the Office of International Studies to develop programs that encourage participation in national and international field study and travel programs.

Strategy 6: Improve technical support in distance learning to include online/web based learning and teleconference instruction.

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Objective 2: Establish ourselves as a regional leader in providing curricular programs that leverage the educational potential of our rich and diverse campus community

Strategy 1: To promote high impact educational experiences each SRSU college will establish a *Task Force on the Sul Ross Educational Experience* that will develop specific actions to support this and the previous Objective #1.

Strategy 2: Create department-level programs that engage the student community around shared experiences.

Strategy 3: Provide both electronic and print access to current books, journals, databases, and other academic resources needed for effective teaching, learning, and research coupled, aided by support and guidance from qualified personnel.

Objective 3: Support, improve and recognize research and its impact on faculty development and student engagement and learning

Strategy 1: Enhance and embrace the current policies regarding indirect cost recovery and grant funding accounting and supported release time, including identifying and providing release time for faculty participating in research and providing criteria for productivity measures.

Strategy 2: Create opportunities for both funded and unfunded research at the graduate and undergraduate level with associated opportunities to present or publish, including growing the current undergraduate research symposiums and creating a graduate student symposium.

Strategy 3: Establish the Wildenthal Memorial Library as the official repository and promoter of all faculty scholarly publications.

Strategy 4: Ensure that graduate fellowships and assistantships are awarded to students engaged in significant research as deemed by their committees.

Strategy 5: Enlist senior research faculty to mentor, advise, and assist early career tenure track faculty.

Strategy 6: Encourage research collaboration opportunities that are multidisciplinary and reach across Sul Ross colleges.

Objective 4: Support, improve and recognize excellence in artistic endeavor

Strategy 1: Support and improve publication and presentation of student work, on campus and beyond.

Strategy 2: Implement a Cultural Life Program.

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Strategy 3: Recognize student and faculty artistic excellence through the Sullies (awards program) in areas of theater, music, visual arts, creative writing and communication.

Objective 5: Encourage and support efforts to obtain external funding for all forms of activity, including: research, education, scholarly, creative, service and outreach.

Strategy 1: Improve faculty, staff and student proposal writing skills to enhance capabilities in grant writing.

Strategy 2: Create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to learn about available grants and write grant proposals.

Strategy 3: Promote and publicize projects and programs supported by grants.

Strategy 4: Budget funds for post-grant staffing and other related institutional costs.

Strategy 5: Create policies and procedures for grant management.

**Goal 2: Target Recruiting, Maximize Retention & Increase Graduation Rates**

Objective 1: Increase new student enrollment over the next five years.

Strategy 1: Target applicants who meet the new-student designated scholarships criteria (e.g. Presidential Access Scholarship program).

Strategy 2: Promote internships and cultural encounters through the Office of International Studies to increase international student enrollment.

Strategy 3: Develop secondary and tertiary markets using Enrollment Planning Services to target the Texas Hill Country and greater Austin area.

Strategy 4: Increase the number of online graduate degree programs.

Strategy 5: Establish and implement minimum editorial and layout standards for undergraduate and graduate program webpages.

Strategy 6: Further develop data sources that permit enrollment trend analysis by campus, department or cohort.

Strategy 7: Provide smooth transition from junior/community colleges through articulation agreements to Sul Ross to increase enrollment of transfer students.

Objective 2: Increase student retention and persistence over the next five years.

Strategy 1: Engage nationally recognized retention experts and apply their best-practices to ensure 60% or better freshman cohort retention.

Strategy 2: Increase the impact and effectiveness of the First-Year Seminars by posting mid-terms grades, tracking attendance and employing academic interventions.

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- Strategy 3: Facilitate the shift from Lobo Den advising to faculty advising by ensuring all retention-related job classifications and work assignments are focused on first-time-in-college and 4<sup>th</sup> semester sophomore cohort retention.
- Strategy 4: Convert grant-funded staff to permanent funded positions and facilities to assist graduate thesis preparation, research and communication.
- Strategy 5: Increase number of high-impact retention practices, e.g. club participation, extra-curricular activities, participatory sports, athletics, and entertainment.

Objective 3: Increase overall student graduation rates over the next five years.

- Strategy 1: Require every department to have a set course rotation plan going out two years.
- Strategy 2: Course delivery plans will diversify their methods of instruction as much as practical.
- Strategy 3: Rollout a university-wide, universally applied degree planning tool such as DegreeWorks that guarantees all students and their advisors are working with a current and viable degree or certification plan.
- Strategy 4: Attrition mitigation programs will be designed based on department-level attrition data rather than college or university-level data trends.

**Goal 3: Strengthen a Sustainable & Diversified Financial Base while Ensuring Affordable Access**

Objective 1: Advance available operating resources.

- Strategy 1: Implement a multi-year forward-looking fee enhancement plan.
- Strategy 2: Establish, cultivate and maintain purchasing relationships with vendors to increase our competitive base for procurement.
- Strategy 3: Enhance maintenance of loan and collection processes to improve days-outstanding.

Objective 2: Cultivate an appropriate infrastructure of personnel, resources, and facilities that can be maintained by available revenue.

- Strategy 1: Periodically update and disseminate the Master Plan with input from faculty, staff and students.
- Strategy 2: Design & implement a university-wide framework and decision tool that could be used to assess the long-term strategic importance of

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programs and departments that would be triggered by a significant and abrupt decrease in revenue.

- Strategy 3: Identify and manage any excess space that adversely impacts state and Higher Education Fund (HEF) funding while providing appropriate and adequate space for learning and university operations.
- Strategy 4: Increase revenues from leasing facilities for outside-sponsored events.
- Strategy 5: Include Rio Grande College's expansion plans in all future major revisions of the university's Master Plan.

Objective 3: Support and develop resources that enable the university to cultivate, expand and sustain philanthropic support.

- Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive fund raising plan anchored to the core institutional policies.
- Strategy 2: Consolidate and expand the Development Office to reflect more closely industry standards and supports the Office's comprehensive plan.
- Strategy 3: Launch the Second Century Campaign at a time and scope supported by a comprehensive feasibility study.
- Strategy 4: Develop donor relations and stewardship programs that focus on and improve donor retention.

Objective 4: Maintain the university's relative affordability while providing a "Private education experience at a state education price."

- Strategy 1: Prioritize course offerings such that we balance the need to grow our financial base, meet the demands of our students and maximize the state's funding.
- Strategy 2: Target financial resources on improving programs and services that impact the perceived quality and affordability of the university.
- Strategy 3: Design and implement tools that help us make informed decisions regarding in which programs to invest or disinvest.
- Strategy 4: Methodically invest in faculty and staff such that we have the right resource in the right place to improve educational quality and positively impact enrollment and retention.

**Goal 4: Recruit, Retain & Develop Faculty, Staff and Student Employees**

Objective 1: Provide competitive salaries, benefits, and professional advancement resources to support the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty and staff.

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Strategy 1: Maintain competitive salaries for faculty compared to the THECB salary data for faculty and a reasonably comparable dataset for staff.

Strategy 2: Identify and provide options for professional training for faculty and staff, including increased allocations for faculty and staff training.

Strategy 3: Implement merit- and performance-based salary treatment procedures for faculty and staff.

Objective 2: Create an environment that promotes development, training and job satisfaction for faculty, staff and student employees.

Strategy 1: Implement in-depth orientation for new faculty, staff and student employees.

Strategy 2: Design and implement professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including SRSU course work applicable to employees' current work assignments.

Strategy 3: Institute a leadership program that recognizes academic and administrative excellence in current and developing campus leaders.

Strategy 4: Provide additional professional development in online pedagogy for faculty who teach online courses.

Strategy 5: Promote and articulate job and organizational expectations and local environmental characteristics to prospective employees.

**Goal 5: Unify and Enhance the Image and Visibility of Sul Ross**

Objective 1: Increase awareness of and advocacy for the university by showcasing Sul Ross's teaching, learning, research, athletics and artistic endeavors.

Strategy 1: Establish a baseline on current messaging, outreach and event attendance.

Strategy 2: Install a process for ensuring news from alumni, friends and students are communicated along all messaging platforms established in Strategy 1.

Strategy 3: Implement a published schedule of regular communications from SRSU to the communities established in Strategy 1.

Strategy 4: Install a conformance testing process to monitor print authorization and branding guidelines adherence.

Strategy 5: Develop a policy to standardize department-level website design to encourage consistent messaging across the university.

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Objective 2: Maintain a visually unified, aesthetically pleasing campus that showcases our status of quality and regional leadership in higher education.

- Strategy 1: Budget maintenance costs per the actual monthly maintenance experience.
- Strategy 2: Maintain an inventory of deferred maintenance for budgeting and work prioritization.
- Strategy 3: Generate and maintain a “Best Use” inventory of hands-on, non-dedicated learning environments across the Alpine campus.
- Strategy 4: Ensure Physical Plant and Maintenance Department is a full participant in the Campus Planning & Campus Master Plan committees and the proposed Office of Sustainability.

Objective 3: Advance and provide support for environment sustainability initiatives throughout the university.

- Strategy 1: Develop an Office of Sustainability.
- Strategy 2: Expand the current SRSU recycling program.
- Strategy 3: Implement a sustainability performance measurement framework, e.g. STARS that emphasizes the environmental, social, and economic benefits of sustainable practices.
- Strategy 4: Become a member of National, State, and local organizations supporting sustainability efforts in higher education (e.g., Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, National Council for Science and the Environment).
- Strategy 5: Develop a multidisciplinary sustainability minor.
- Strategy 6: Become a signatory to the Talloires Declaration which commits to sustainability education in higher education.

Objective 4: Broaden and deepen constituent engagement, developing more meaningful relationships with alumni, friends and students.

- Strategy 1: Implement effective regional programs to engage alumni and friends across Texas.
- Strategy 2: Grow the alumni / student mentor program.
- Strategy 3: Increase the number of yearly events and special recognitions for donors and alumni with special focus on persistent or programmatic donors.
- Strategy 4: Ensure that all university units receiving any and all types of outside funding distribute financial reports to those donors no later than February.

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Objective 5: The Athletics Department will promote itself with pride and strive for excellence in all areas.

Strategy 1: Present a consistent message centered on the successes of the entire department.

Strategy 2: Coordinate efforts to increase visibility and standing within the local community.

Strategy 3: Maximize conference championships, titles, and student-athletes awards.

Strategy 4: Develop a plan for increased revenue streams to assist with operational aspects for all programs.

Strategy 5: Establish a national reputation for graduating student-athletes at a rate above the NCAA average.

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Next Steps

Each Sul Ross college – Agricultural & Natural Resource Sciences, Arts & Sciences, Graduate Studies, Professional Studies, and Rio Grande College – as well as major operational and administrative units have or will develop their own plan to implement this plan as it applies to their operation.

The unit plans will have additional considerations outside of the university's plan that address issues specific to their unit's strategic direction.

The Executive Council will establish a review timetable, at which time key metrics associated with implementation of the plan will be reviewed and adjustments or corrective action will be taken to keep the university moving forward.

Additional Material

While developing this plan the committee constructed a metrics framework that will track implementation and judge the impact of this strategic plan.

The framework is not considered part of this plan but essential to its success. For more information, contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

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Membership of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Dr. Bonnie Warnock, Professor of Natural Resource Management, CHAIR\*  
Ms. April Aultman Becker, Dean of Libraries and Research Technologies  
Ms. Gail Collier, Director of Human Resources\*  
Dr. James (Jay) Downing, Dean of Arts and Sciences  
Mr. Dave Gibson, Chief Information Officer, Office of Information Technology  
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Dr. Mary Elizabeth Thompson, Assistant Professor of Music  
Dr. Joseph (Joey) Velasco, Asst. Professor of Communication and President, Faculty Assembly

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