



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
**AMERICA'S LEADING
HISPANIC-SERVING
UNIVERSITY**

2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

FALL 2026 UPDATE

[UTEP.EDU/STRATEGIC-PLAN](https://utep.edu/strategic-plan)



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

More than five years ago, UTEP drafted an ambitious, 10-year strategic plan to focus our energy and embrace who we are – America's Leading Hispanic-Serving University.

Now past the plan's midway point, we remain a university that transforms lives. We are in the top 5% of colleges and universities in the U.S. when it comes to research. We serve a student body that is 85% Hispanic, and predominantly from families of modest means. Fully half of our students are the first in their families to go to college.

In recent years, we have broken records in student enrollment, fundraising, and research expenditures. We have launched new degree programs, and several ongoing construction projects will cement UTEP as a campus ready for the 21st century.

Our strategic plan helped focus our attention and resources to drive results. The midpoint of any journey is an opportunity to reflect and adjust where needed. The University must adapt to new opportunities that are consistent with our goals – but that we did not envision at the outset.

In January, we began a process to update the Strategic Plan after reviewing data and discussing progress toward our four goals:

- Teaching, learning, and the student experience
- Advance discovery
- Community impact and public service
- Shape the future of higher education

The point was not to develop a new plan, but to evaluate initiatives and refine them. The result is an updated plan that includes revamped measures of success. The plan includes new initiatives we didn't envision five years ago, but that align with our mission, including launching the Mining Engineering program, UTEP Engage, working toward a future law school at UTEP, and laying the foundation for a regional innovation ecosystem.

Our mission, strategic advantages, and goals remain the same. The changes build on five years of progress and are grounded in the insights of the Cabinet, Deans and key stakeholders.

UTEP will leverage our strengths, continue to adapt and grow, and push forward for our students and the community we serve.

We are still becoming a better version of ourselves – America's Leading Hispanic-Serving University. I look forward to continuing the work alongside all of you.

Heather Wilson
President



UTEP is a comprehensive public research university that is increasing **access** to **excellent** higher education. We advance discovery of public value and positively **impact** the health, culture, education, and economy of the community we serve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HISTORY IS A WOVEN FIGURE 4

STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES 6

 LEVERAGE OUR PLACE 8

 BUILD UPON THE UNIQUE DIVERSITY OF OUR PEOPLE 11

 REINFORCE OUR CULTURE OF CARE 12

 STRENGTHEN OUR ENGAGEMENT AND BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS . . 15

STRATEGIC GOALS

 GOAL 1 - TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE 19

 GOAL 2 - ADVANCE DISCOVERY 27

 GOAL 3 - COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE 35

 GOAL 4 - SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 43

PLANNING PROCESS 52

LEADERSHIP. 53

STRATEGIC GOALS AT A GLANCE 55

HISTORY IS A WOVEN FIGURE

Toward the end of the 19th century, El Paso's location on the Rio Grande, at the terminus of four major transcontinental railroads and a Mexican national railroad, placed it at the center of the region's mining industry. El Pasoans worked to create a "university of the first class," and, in 1914, established the State School of Mines and Metallurgy. In more than a century since its founding, the School of Mines has transformed into a top-tier doctoral research university and America's leading Hispanic-serving institution.

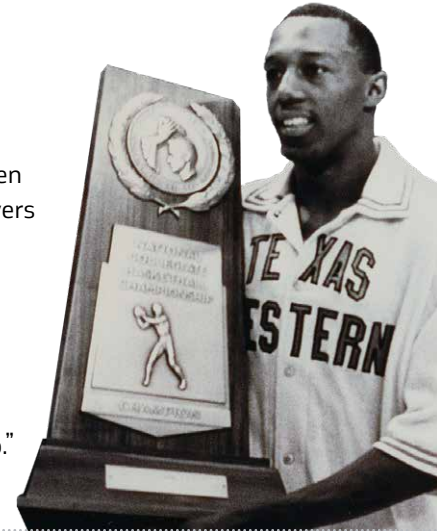


1966

- ▶ The Texas Western College men's basketball team makes history when it starts five African-American players and wins the NCAA championship.

1967

- ▶ The name changes to "The University of Texas at El Paso."



1914

- ▶ **September 28, 1914:** First day of the first class at the State School of Mines and Metallurgy (now UTEP). All students are required to study Spanish.

1917

- ▶ Raul R. Barberena, the school's first Mexican student and the first Hispanic instructor within The University of Texas System, graduates from the School of Mines.

1955

- ▶ Twelve African-American students are admitted to Texas Western College. The college is the first undergraduate institution in Texas to de-segregate.



1989

- ▶ UTEP becomes the largest university in the United States with a majority Hispanic student body.

1992

- ▶ The federal government recognizes UTEP as a Hispanic-serving institution.
- ▶ In LULAC v. Richards, a state district court rules that the Texas higher education system discriminates against UTEP and other border institutions. This opens the path for the University to add more doctoral programs.
- ▶ The University creates a first-in-the-nation bilingual MFA program in creative writing.



2010

- › UTEP earns the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

2011

- › UTEP awards its 100,000th degree.

2020

- › UTEP becomes one of only three Texas institutions to hold **both** top research and community engagement distinctions from the Carnegie Foundation.

2026

- › UTEP names the Miguel A. Loya College of Engineering following a \$30 million gift from alumnus Miguel Loya.
- › UTEP joins the more geographically aligned Mountain West Conference for athletics.

2002

- › Hispanic Outlook Magazine ranks UTEP the No. 2 university in the nation for Hispanic students.

2017

- › UTEP is ranked No. 1 in the nation for its success in achieving both competitive research and student social mobility, according to a Brookings Institution study.

2022

- › UTEP names the Woody L. Hunt College of Business following a \$25 million gift from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation.

2019

- › UTEP achieves Carnegie R1 status (very high research activity), an accomplishment rendered especially significant by the University's unwavering commitment to access.

2024

- › UTEP announces it will reestablish a mining engineering program in Fall 2027.



STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES





UTEP's long-term success will require the effective use of strategic advantages that are difficult for others to replicate. These strategies – which build on our inherent assets – will be woven into many of the initiatives we will undertake to accomplish our goals.



LEVERAGE OUR PLACE

The University of Texas at El Paso is at the heart of a vibrant city located at the westernmost tip of Texas, where three states and two countries converge along a 54-mile section of the Rio Grande in the mountainous Chihuahuan Desert.

Our region, the Paso del Norte – or pass of the north – has been a gateway to opportunity and a route of trade for over 400 years. We are on the border – *la frontera* – between the United States and Mexico. We look north into the United States, with its natural resources and burgeoning knowledge-based economy, and south into Latin America with its rich culture and robust manufacturing industry.

El Paso/Juárez is the fifth largest manufacturing region in North America, with a total population equivalent to Indianapolis, Cleveland or Las Vegas. Fort Bliss to the east and White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base to the north combine to form extensive test ranges and the largest military installation in the United States.

Our place gives us perspective and opportunities for research, teaching, and service that are distinctive. ■





STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES





BUILD UPON THE UNIQUE DIVERSITY OF OUR PEOPLE

Deeply woven into the University's character are the distinctive strengths of the people whom we serve.

The Paso del Norte region is one of the largest bilingual, binational, multicultural communities in the Western Hemisphere. Overwhelmingly Mexican-American, our history as a gateway has enriched our region with a unique population of Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans and Americans, mixed with immigrants from nations around the globe. We are at ease with at least two languages, and we thrive in the fluid and blended traditions of a border and trading community.

Recognizing the potential each generation brings, the region has created a college-going culture that values education as the pathway to opportunity and encourages the development of talent as a means to a better life. Indeed, a higher percentage of El Paso eighth graders go on to enroll in Texas colleges and universities than any other region of Texas. ■

REINFORCE OUR CULTURE OF CARE

With a focus on developing the talent of those who have grown up in our region, UTEP has emerged as America's most successful Hispanic-serving university. We have created a culture of care and belonging for students who have historically been underserved by higher education. We are the only open-access top tier research university in America, yet our retention rates exceed those of selective institutions.

As America's leading Hispanic-serving university, UTEP chooses to be judged not by whom we exclude, but by whom we include and their success. We meet our students where they are and help them develop into better versions of themselves. Recognizing their resilience, we are anchored in our belief in their potential.

Our culture of care is drawn from the community in which we live. We are a generous, family-oriented, closely knit community that is shaped by traditions and customs that have defined us for more than four centuries. ■





STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES





STRENGTHEN OUR ENGAGEMENT AND BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are remarkably strong in the region. The alignment in West Texas among public school districts, El Paso Community College and the University is exceptional. UTEP will strengthen our existing regional partnerships and establish new ones to positively impact the security, health, culture, education, and economy of the community we serve.

Already recognized as one of the best research universities in the country at connecting our students with the community around them, UTEP has the potential to further enhance hands-on learning through partnerships that increase internships, co-ops, community-based service learning, undergraduate research, and other community-engaged scholarship.

Preparing our students for the complex problems of the 21st century will require more active and direct engagement with partners to help develop the higher-level thinking skills students need to thrive.

At a national level, and particularly with respect to research, UTEP will build partnerships with other educational institutions and research sponsors to advance knowledge where we are stronger together. Particularly important will be national networks and partnerships among the nation's preeminent Hispanic-serving institutions, so that we promulgate best practices not just on our own, but in concert with others, to positively impact American higher education. ■



“

When we reflect on this decade of UTEP's history, it is my hope that this strategic plan will have been an important tool that helped us to focus our work and guide the way.”

- Heather Wilson
President



STRATEGIC GOALS





GOAL 1

TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Provide students an excellent and engaged education in an inclusive university that builds on student strengths and demonstrates a culture of care.



TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

1.1 INITIATIVE 1

Implement a comprehensive enrollment strategy that broadens access.

In 2020, UTEP began the development of a comprehensive undergraduate and graduate enrollment plan, implementing strategies and activities that will enable the University to enroll more students and confer more degrees over the next 10 years.

UTEP has a deep commitment to, and an outstanding record in, local and regional outreach. We will continue to **strengthen recruitment in our primary Region 19 market**, maintaining our commitment to educate the community in which we are located. Strengthening our partnerships in the region, we will encourage dual credit and early college high schools, and smooth the pathway to a bachelor's degree for transfer students. We will seek to expand enrollment from populations within our region that we are currently underserving.

As we move to the next decade, the number of high school graduates in our region will plateau, while the population of Texas as a whole will increase. To continue to serve the needs of the state and region, **we will expand our primary recruitment market beyond Region 19**. In doing so, we will emphasize

themes that resonate based on market research, including access to excellent education; our unique binational, bicultural region; our good value; community-engaged education; and the strength of particular academic programs.

We will develop specific messages for both the current Region 19 market and the expanded primary market through market research and a comprehensive marketing plan. Our location, culture, academic programs, and emerging partnerships give us an advantage to attract students from areas of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

As we solidify our expanded primary market, we will **prioritize target secondary markets** including Arizona and Southern California, as well as other Texas cities, with particular focus on our high-demand undergraduate and graduate programs. We will emphasize our differentiating characteristics, including our success in supporting low-income and first-generation students, high academic quality, affordable tuition, and community-engaged education.



Lack of student housing is a barrier to attracting new students from secondary markets. Because only a small percentage of UTEP students have historically lived on campus, we have a unique opportunity to enhance and expand the high-quality on-campus living, dining and learning environment to attract students from outside Region 19.

UTEP will develop and implement a plan to enhance the on-campus living experience as we expand our primary market outside of El Paso.

One of the most prominent opportunities to broaden access and grow enrollment is to continue to impact student persistence. UTEP's holistic advising model for undergraduate students is designed to support their unique personal circumstances by offering various academic and non-academic supports. Along with advising and academic support services, UTEP will also continue to promote affordability and simplify the

process of paying for college. We will keep college affordable by controlling costs while enhancing access to financial aid. We will **prioritize development of scholarships of all kinds** for incoming and persisting students and make systemic improvements to the scholarship awarding process.

We will recruit and enroll the first class of mining engineering students in Fall 2027, growing to a first-year enrollment of 167 to graduate about 100 mining engineers by 2034 in the largest and best mining engineering program in the country.

We will develop more professional degree programs in areas of strong demand, identified through market analysis, to bring in more self-funded master's degree students. This will include the development of new program modalities, such as online or hybrid options, for new and existing programs to serve a broader range of students. ■

GOAL 1 TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

1.2 INITIATIVE 2

Redesign key core curriculum courses to provide high-impact, engaged-learning experiences.

A 21st century education must prepare our graduates to thrive in a dynamic, complex, knowledge-based society. They must master material in the classroom and laboratory and be able to apply that knowledge in the real world with teams of different backgrounds, skills, and cultures. Clear connections between what is taught in the classroom and real-life and professional problems are particularly important to engage first-generation college students.

UTEP will **leverage our place and strengthen our ties to our community** to provide exceptional engaged learning opportunities for all students.

We will **redesign our core curriculum and major gateway courses**, starting with the highest-enrollment courses, to offer a unique approach to engaged learning and highlight advantages not available at other Texas institutions. We will prioritize the redesign of core and gateway

courses most commonly taken by UTEP and Texas students. These courses will incorporate immersion opportunities specific to our region and provide early opportunities for engaged learning. The University will collect data and review it regularly to monitor the impact of redesigned courses on students and faculty. We will seek to embed this active-learning approach throughout the foundational academic experience. We will also emphasize the development of strong written and verbal communication skills, computational skills, language abilities, and the capacity for critical thinking and reflection – qualities that can distinguish our graduates in an increasingly automated and complex world.

We will experiment with ways that key courses can be distance-enabled to provide easy access and flexible pathways for local students, including early college students. ■



UTEP will leverage our place and strengthen our ties to our community.”

GOAL 1 TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

1.3 INITIATIVE 3

Transform the student experience through increased engagement that fosters success from the first day on campus through graduation and job placement.

Unique to UTEP is our **culture-of-care approach** to ensure student success (the UTEP Edge), and we have developed innovative programs to support students from their first day on campus through graduation and job placement. We will scale engaged learning opportunities that enrich the student experience and have been shown to increase student persistence.

We will expand **innovative transition programming for first-time and transfer students**. We will leverage our successful programs – including Student Orientation, Developmental Education and UNIV 1301 – to meet our

students where they are, identify their individual strengths and assets, and position them in the best way possible to succeed at UTEP. We will reduce barriers to transfer student success by systematically aligning curricula and supporting the applicability of transfer credits to ensure successful completion of a UTEP degree.

We will **build on our integrated and holistic advising model** that extends beyond traditional academic advising and addresses other factors that impact student success. UTEP's metrics-based proactive and individualized advising framework has been proven



STRATEGIC GOALS



to increase success outcomes including retention and persistence.

Through the UTEP Engage initiative, we will work with employers and community partners to **increase internships, co-ops, and employer-sponsored professional development programs** so that students graduate with significant meaningful work experience and industry-specific skills training that enhance their job readiness. We will build upon UTEP's existing foundation of community-engaged learning, helping students connect their academic experience to real-world challenges while serving our region.

The Woody L. Hunt College of Business will continue to strengthen its emphasis on becoming the premier business school in the country for the study of international business with Mexico, including expanded curricular and engaged learning experiences.

We will further **embed professional development education** in the curriculum and expand co-curricular

professional development programs, such as corporate academies. We will develop high-value microcredentials, continuing education and certification programs in areas of high demand or those for which we are uniquely qualified, such as Spanish-language certifications for professionals.

We will refine transition points into master's degree programs to facilitate professional growth, and we will expand programs that bridge undergraduate and graduate curricula to facilitate access to graduate enrollment, graduate research, and efficient degree completion, enhancing our already successful professional preparation programs.

We will **leverage technology to meet students where they are**. We will build out our infrastructure to assist with online advising, blended learning experiences, flexible coursework delivery, and virtual support systems to help students stay on track to timely degree completion. We will acquire new technology platforms to better track student engagement activity. ■

KEY MEASURES OF PROGRESS

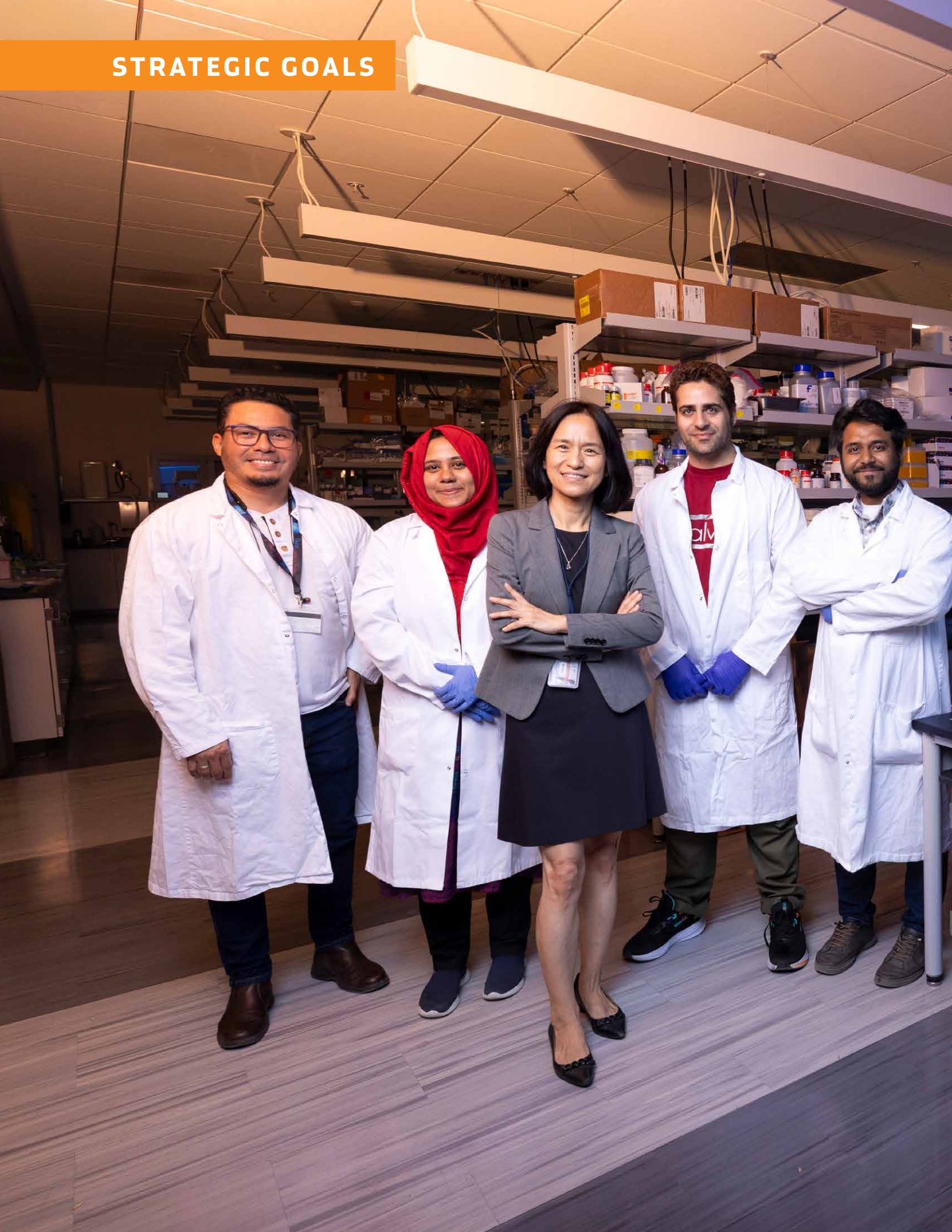
TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Provide students an excellent and engaged education in an inclusive university that builds on student strengths and demonstrates a culture of care.

1. DEGREES AWARDED
2. TOTAL ENROLLMENT
3. PERSISTENCE
4. STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES



STRATEGIC GOALS





GOAL 2

ADVANCE DISCOVERY

Advance research, scholarship,
artistic expression, and innovation
with emphasis on areas of current
and emerging strength.



GOAL 2 ADVANCE DISCOVERY

2.1 INITIATIVE 1

Recruit, retain, and develop research faculty and doctoral students to support research priorities.

Each of the University's colleges and schools will actively support growth in research and scholarship in areas of current and emerging strength in ways that increase impact, dissemination, national recognition, and financial support.

UTEP will continue to support tenured and tenure-track faculty as they make contributions in their fields through the established system for faculty development. We seek to build on this strong foundation to focus on research faculty development across UTEP colleges, institutes, and centers.

UTEP will prioritize the hiring and retention of faculty who will enhance research capacity in areas of current and emerging strength. We will strategically recruit faculty members nationally known in their fields and selectively pursue cluster hiring when it clearly strengthens external funding competitiveness, promotes shared infrastructure use, and expands doctoral training capacity in key research areas.

Through the UT System Regents' Research Excellence Program, UTEP will strategically hire faculty aligned with areas of institutional

priority to support established tenured faculty, research faculty, and postdoctoral fellows and accelerate scholarship, discovery, and external funding success. The University will also maintain broad disciplinary recruitment and provide competitive start-up packages, mentoring programs, and recognition opportunities to ensure faculty and student success.

Recognizing the centrality of discovery to our mission, UTEP will more broadly celebrate and promote academic publications, creative performances, exhibits, and research that have significant public value. We will identify and pursue opportunities for external recognition through awards, grants, fellowships, and national media coverage.

To sustain and advance research and scholarship and support our students, UTEP will promote a culture of grantsmanship by providing enhanced tools, training and support. The University will offer faculty training on securing competitive extramural research funding; enhance seed and pilot funding programs and incorporate criteria for recognition and excellence specific to each



“

UTEP has emerged as one of the leading institutions for Hispanic doctoral graduates. We will continue to focus on reducing time to graduation for our doctoral students.”

discipline; and work to increase the number of endowed chairs and professorships across disciplines.

Growing the number of doctoral programs and students has been a key factor in developing UTEP's research profile and activity. The focus on UTEP's research mission has also provided more opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in research. As a result, UTEP has emerged as one of the leading institutions for Hispanic doctoral graduates. We will continue to focus on reducing time to graduation

for our doctoral students. UTEP also prepares low-income and first-generation undergraduate students for admission to master's and doctoral programs. To continue this positive trajectory, we will provide more high-quality student research opportunities at all levels – undergraduate and graduate – that mirror the scholarly work of our faculty. We will continue to expand doctoral enrollment and add new high-quality doctoral programs where there is demonstrated faculty capacity, sustained funding and workforce or scholarly demand. ■

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 2 ADVANCE DISCOVERY

2.2 INITIATIVE 2

Identify and develop areas of strategic research strength and provide support for research infrastructure in these areas.

UTEP has established several highly successful research groups of national prominence and sustained productivity. UTEP researchers and research teams have had a dramatic impact not only on the scholarship of their fields, but also on our students and research enterprise. To advance our overall research enterprise and increase discovery of public value, we will continuously review UTEP research strengths and impact. Using data analytics and AI, we will

leverage our place and build on our current faculty expertise to identify areas for growth in health and health disparities, security and national defense, water-energy nexus, advanced manufacturing and supply chain, scientific computing and cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and machine learning, and bilingualism and bilingual education. We will periodically reassess the areas for growth using defined performance indicators.



We will **develop and implement institutional policies that incentivize the formation of major discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research institutes and centers**, and faculty research clusters aligned with funding opportunities. To ensure research sustainability, UTEP will diversify its funding sources by pursuing partnerships with federal agencies, national laboratories, private industry, and philanthropic organizations. We will provide administrative and technical support as well as direct assistance in identifying and obtaining new funding sources for these centers and clusters. We will also leverage new and existing research facilities to support growth in identified areas of current and emerging strength.

UTEP will assess research-related infrastructure and resource needs for solving complex problems, including specialized personnel, shared facilities, cyberinfrastructure and administrative support. We will seek opportunities to share equipment and infrastructure among multiple groups and support effective cost-recovery models to ensure the sustainability of facilities while maintaining affordability for researchers. We will also **invest in professional development for research advancement specialists across campus** through training and certification opportunities. We will provide campuswide education and training on research compliance policies to ensure security and integrity, and we will streamline processes for proposal development and grant management. ■



UTEP researchers and research teams have had a dramatic impact not only on the scholarship of their fields, but also on our students and research enterprise.”

GOAL 2 ADVANCE DISCOVERY

2.3 INITIATIVE 3

Establish foundational elements of a regional innovation ecosystem.

To help translate UTEP research into real-world solutions that positively impact the health, culture, education and economy of the community we serve, the University will gradually develop partnerships and infrastructure to support a scalable and sustainable innovation ecosystem that connects research with entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, and economic development in the Paso del Norte region.

We will assess UTEP's need for new collaborations related to research, workforce development and translation of discovery across disciplines and **initiate timely and transformative partnerships with national laboratories, government agencies, industry partners and other institutions of higher education.** To elevate the impact of our research, UTEP will strengthen its technology transfer infrastructure to foster an innovation-driven culture while aligning policies and resources to support

entrepreneurship. UTEP will facilitate translation of discoveries for faculty and doctoral students by strengthening core technology transfer processes, providing targeted commercialization training and mentorship, engaging sources of seed funding and venture capital, and expanding partnerships with national laboratories and industry. We will also support faculty joint appointments and student placement and partnering with institutions of higher education to help faculty and students gain skills and experience needed to engage in entrepreneurship.

We will market UTEP's intellectual property with the support of AI tools to translate research into tangible goods and marketplace solutions. While we support faculty efforts as inventors, technical advisors, and research partners, we will invest in faculty professional development in external entrepreneurship and technology commercialization that results in high-impact, real-world applications. ■



KEY MEASURES OF PROGRESS

ADVANCE DISCOVERY

Advance research, scholarship, artistic expression, and innovation with emphasis on areas of current and emerging strength.

1. RESEARCH EXPENDITURES
2. RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED AND AWARDED
3. REFEREED PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH CITATIONS
4. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, EXHIBITIONS, AND PERFORMANCES
5. DOCTORAL DEGREES AWARDED
6. NATIONAL FACULTY AWARDS
7. LICENSED PATENTS AND LAUNCHED START-UPS

STRATEGIC GOALS





GOAL 3

COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Foster well-being in our community
so that we all live healthier, more
prosperous, and culturally enriched lives.



GOAL 3

COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

3.1 INITIATIVE 1

Increase cultural and educational activities that enrich community life.

Throughout our history, the University has served **the people of our region**. Our students, faculty and staff contribute their talents, expertise, time and energy to make significant contributions to community quality of life. This **engagement** crosses multiple disciplines and happens in both formal and informal ways. We are both a hub of educational and cultural enrichment and a part of the fabric of our community as educated citizens engaged in the life of the region. UTEP will build on our history to foster intellectual, cultural and economic well-being through meaningful outreach and engagement.

In response to the needs and interests of our community, we will **produce meaningful artistic, cultural, scientific and educational events involving our students and faculty**.

We will produce **high-quality intercollegiate athletic events** that engage our alumni, promote positive community spirit, and create a positive impression of UTEP in West Texas and beyond. The shift to the Mountain West Conference in fall 2026 will provide new opportunities to re-engage the community and re-ignite historic rivalries with schools more geographically aligned with UTEP in the west.

We will **systematically expand educational impact** by hosting activities, courses, and events on a wide variety of subjects to engage K-12 students and their families to continue to strengthen the college-going culture in the region.



We will continue health outreach activities that serve the community and give our health professions students opportunities for real-world practice in their fields of study.

We will continue to engage regional and state leaders and conduct needed planning and development associated with the establishment of a law school at UTEP to address the region's need for legal services.

UTEP will **host a variety of externally sponsored major special events** – including concerts, stage productions, conferences, speakers, and competitions – which strengthen El Paso and the University as a vibrant and rich community while generating revenue to support and maintain the campus. ■

“

We are both a hub of educational and cultural **enrichment** and a part of the fabric of our **community** as educated citizens engaged in the life of the region.”



STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 3 COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

3.2 INITIATIVE 2

Establish the UTEP Office of Business, Community and Government Engagement to enhance and improve community partnerships and better connect our students to more internships and job opportunities in industry, business, nonprofits, and government.

Through UTEP Engage, a comprehensive initiative to connect students to employers and nonprofits and prepare them for lifelong success, our students will have access to the best career-launching opportunities in the nation. We will better connect employers and nonprofits in the region to talented students and graduates so that we serve the community better.

The new Office of Business, Community and Government Engagement will stand up a team of engagement officers, each managing a portfolio of employers in business, government, and community organizations with a focus on our region. Engagement officers **will help employers establish internships and recruit graduates from UTEP.** They will also





facilitate even more local volunteerism and community engagement by our more than 360 student organizations.

This institution-wide effort will include implementation of a new partner relationship management software and dedicated staff for career advising and community-engaged learning, and positions in the Advising Center to increase career understanding and readiness.

The University's colleges and schools, including UTEP Online, **will seek to meet the needs of regional employers and employees for continuous education** through customized training programs, certifications, and sponsored degree programs to meet specific or

emerging needs. UTEP's location in a binational region positions the University to leverage our partnerships with Fortune 500 companies on the U.S.-Mexico border. The University will work with large companies to offer continuing education in subjects where we have unique expertise, capitalizing on our ability to offer programs in both English and Spanish.

The UTEP Office of Institutional Advancement's corporate and foundation relations team will work closely with the Business, Community and Government Engagement Center on opportunities for corporations to make philanthropic impact in areas of mutual benefit. ■

GOAL 3 COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

3.3 INITIATIVE 3

Deepen our partnerships with health care providers to elevate the standard of healthcare in the Paso del Norte region and advance collaborative research.

Health and human services is the fastest-growing employment sector in Texas. UTEP graduates needed health care professionals through degree programs offered by our College of Health Sciences, College of Nursing and School of Pharmacy. A closer relationship with health care providers will have a positive impact on the health and wellness of our community.

UTEP will **use its strong relationships with the health care systems in the region** to engage regional educators, industry leaders, local nonprofit organizations, and community representatives to improve health outcomes in our community. We will **pursue joint research opportunities**, including community-engaged research, that increase our knowledge and ability to address the health concerns of our region.

UTEP will establish and build upon the UTEP Health initiative, which represents all health professions programs and research at UTEP. Led by the Provost and the deans of the College of Health Sciences, College of Nursing and School of Pharmacy, UTEP Health is a comprehensive

initiative that aims to elevate the standard of health care in the Paso del Norte region by increasing the number of healthcare professionals with a high-quality education. Through UTEP Health, the University will **strengthen relationships with regional health care partners to expand experiential opportunities** for our students. Growth in practicums, clinical placements, service learning, study away, and engaged-learning opportunities will deepen student connections to the community and provide unique cultural experiences that make them more valuable in their professions.

UTEP will **also strengthen our connection to the health care industry** through professional advisory councils and leverage our alumni and partners to increase our reach and impact on health outcomes.

Working closely with health care employers, we will seek to meet needs for **continuing education**, upskilling and reskilling for the health care workforce in ways that accommodate the constraints of working professionals. ■



KEY MEASURES OF PROGRESS

COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Foster well-being in our community so that we all live healthier, more prosperous, and culturally enriched lives.

1. EDUCATION LEVEL IN THE EL PASO REGION
2. WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE EL PASO REGION
3. HEALTH OF RESIDENTS IN THE EL PASO REGION
4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN UTEP EVENTS

STRATEGIC GOALS





GOAL 4

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Positively impact American higher education as the exemplary Hispanic-serving research university.



GOAL 4

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1 INITIATIVE 1

Advance the development and application of knowledge to improve higher education for underrepresented students and under-resourced regions.

UTEP's path to becoming a major research university is unique. It is one of the only universities in America that has become a highly productive research university while maintaining its commitment to educate students who historically have been underserved by higher education. **UTEP chooses to be judged not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and their success.** As a result, it has become a nationally recognized model. A key factor in this transformation is UTEP's commitment to be a learning organization that has created internal systems for self-

study. UTEP will take a national leadership role and facilitate learning to improve higher education for underrepresented students and under-resourced regions nationwide.

Through the Diana Natalicio Institute for Hispanic Student Success, launched in 2022, UTEP will **lead knowledge creation, partnerships, and application of effective student success practices.**

UTEP will continue to **share our work** on ensuring access and success for Hispanic, first-generation, and low-income students, and those from



other backgrounds who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. We will **continue to host national and international researchers and practitioners** who are interested in specific aspects of our approach to student success and regional impact. We will also share information about UTEP's approach through conferences and forums. UTEP will use its resources and connections with other professional organizations to **convene special conferences related to administration of minority-serving institutions, and success of low-income and first-generation students.**

UTEP's efforts to **develop new approaches to student success can be replicated and adapted at other institutions.** UTEP will continue to secure resources from foundations and other sources to undertake joint studies with institutions that successfully serve underrepresented

students, yielding more robust insights for all higher education institutions across the nation.

A founding member of the Alliance for Hispanic Serving Research Universities (HSRU), UTEP serves as a living laboratory for faculty and staff to learn from, apply, and advance evidence-based practices focused on Hispanic-serving institutions, student success, and higher education policy. The Natalicio Institute has organized leaders from UTEP to design and launch a Latino Student Success Institute to disseminate best practices. UTEP will continue to serve as a resource for administrators from other institutions on practices that serve Hispanic, first-generation, low-income, and other students who have been underrepresented in higher education. ■

“

UTEP will take a national leadership role and facilitate learning to improve higher education for underrepresented students and under-resourced regions nationwide.”

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 4 SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4.2 INITIATIVE 2

Expand leadership roles in state, regional, and national efforts to improve education for underrepresented and minority students.

Our success as a Hispanic-serving institution brings with it the responsibility of leadership. That responsibility includes, but is not limited to, the upper tiers of the University administration. Indeed, participation in state, regional, and national discussions on achieving excellence in higher education for Hispanics and underserved students is a development opportunity for exceptional UTEP faculty and staff and an obligation of service.

We will be **active participants and provide state, regional and national leadership in higher education** and professional organizations including

the Alliance for Hispanic Serving Research Universities, *Excelencia* in Education, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the American Council on Education, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, the National Science Foundation, the National Academies and others.

We will **broaden pathways for Hispanic administrators, Hispanic faculty, and administrators who aspire to work in Hispanic-serving institutions**. UTEP is recognized as one of the leading producers



of Hispanic graduates, and a top institution of origin for Hispanic doctoral graduates. We will also develop senior administrators who will lead Hispanic-serving institutions. We will **leverage our place and build on the unique diversity of our people** to immerse future leaders in the culture, academic programs, and support services associated with mature Hispanic-serving institutions.

Through our leadership in the field of Hispanic higher education, we will **actively participate in shaping criteria for evaluating excellence for Hispanic-serving institutions**. We will support the evaluation of ourselves for excellence and share knowledge with others. In particular, UTEP will continue to advocate for universities to measure excellence not by whom they exclude, but by whom they include and their success.

We will **engage in policy discussions at state and national levels to advance the role of public universities as engines of social mobility**. Financial aid and state

support for public higher education are two major policy levers that influence access and outcomes for economically disadvantaged students. UTEP will collaborate with stakeholders to shape policies that provide broad access, control the cost paid and debt assumed by families for education, and promote success for all students.

We will **lead collaboration with other institutions to expand opportunities for attainment of graduate and doctoral degrees**.

UTEP has created pathways that facilitate the attainment of graduate and professional degrees for Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students, but there is much more to do. Independently and in partnership with like-minded institutions, UTEP will improve and expand these pathways across the nation with the intent to inspire more underrepresented students to pursue advanced degrees, aspire to the professoriate and jobs that require advanced degrees, and seek necessary support for their success. ■



GOAL 4 SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4.3 INITIATIVE 3

Become the national leader in teaching and research in bilingualism, bilingual education, and second language learning.

UTEP is situated in one of the largest bi-national metropolitan areas in the Western Hemisphere and less than one mile from the U.S.-Mexico border. Our population is primarily bilingual, with English and Spanish being the primary languages. We are home to a number of internationally recognized bilingual programs and faculty whose research focuses on bilingual education and learning. Research in bilingual language and cognition is an area of strength at UTEP in the psychology department and across disciplines such as linguistics, rehabilitation science, speech-language pathology, and education. We will **leverage our faculty expertise and collaborations with institutions in Mexico to expand our existing programs and become a national center for teaching and research in bilingualism**, bilingual education, second language learning, and heritage language learning.

UTEP will be a national leader in offering academic degree programs and certificates with bilingual emphasis. UTEP's Creative Writing program is the only bilingual MFA in the world, and the Undergraduate Certificate in Bilingual Professional Writing prepares students to

communicate in print and digital environments in both English and Spanish. We will **add more programs across all colleges, and collaborate with other institutions in the United States and Mexico** to expand the content, profile and accessibility of our bilingual programs, including making them distance-enabled where appropriate. A new annual bilingual symposium exposes UTEP students to nationally recognized bilingual scholars while giving them the opportunity to present and extend their own research in the field.

UTEP also provides a wide variety of professional programs with Spanish concentrations that prepare professionals for bilingual settings and practice. The School of Pharmacy's doctoral degree includes advanced training in Spanish for pharmacists that ensures professionals excel in multicultural and bilingual environments. The program attracts students from across the country interested in preparation to serve bilingual and Spanish-speaking communities. UTEP will leverage our bilingual and binational location to become the leading institution for preparing professionals in health care, business,



engineering, public administration, and education to work in multicultural organizations and Spanish-speaking communities. UTEP will place special emphasis on further development of programs to certify bilingual K-12 teachers in our region and beyond.

UTEP will **build on its current research strength in bilingualism and language acquisition by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by our location.** UTEP is uniquely positioned to become the top institution in the nation and among the top institutions in the world in this area. The Consortium

for Scientific Research on Bilingualism brings together experts from three colleges and multiple disciplines. The related research laboratories will continue to provide training to many undergraduate students who are new to research, allowing them to leverage their bilingual skills. We will build on the current individual visibility of our scholars to gain recognition as an interdisciplinary entity, build cross-institutional networking and collaborative experiences for our students and faculty, and develop pipelines for our students to access graduate and postdoctoral training opportunities. ■

GOAL 4 SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4.4 INITIATIVE 4

Establish UTEP Press as a modern publishing outlet for academic and popular books to promote the creation and dissemination of knowledge and enhance UTEP's position as an intellectual and cultural leader of the geographic and academic communities we serve.

An important core of the UTEP mission is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. To facilitate knowledge dissemination, the University's press, relaunched in 2025 as UTEP Press, uses modern print-on-demand, e-book and audiobook technology to make high-quality books available to people around the world with almost none of the legacy overhead costs of traditional university presses.

UTEP Press will **publish books that advance knowledge and disseminate positive discovery and research** that impacts UTEP's community and the world in a way that is

accessible to a general audience.

The specialty imprint Texas Western Press will focus on Southwest and Borderlands topics. It will also republish other books from the Texas Western Press historic catalog and make them available for print-on-demand or digital acquisition.

UTEP Press will use book stipends and awards to recruit authors of high-quality, relevant works, prioritizing works based on research with impact by UTEP faculty, staff and students. The press will actively seek to publish books that share our success as an exemplary Hispanic-serving university. ■

KEY MEASURES OF PROGRESS

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Positively impact American higher education as the exemplary Hispanic-serving research university.

1. REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL BOARDS, AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES
2. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS
3. NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS FOR UTEP
4. INSTITUTE OF ORIGIN FOR HISPANIC DOCTORATES RANKING



UTEP STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In January 2020, UTEP started a strategic planning process that began with envisioning alternative futures, each rooted in elements of UTEP's history and proven successes.

With these futures as a foundation for creative exploration, a 22-member advisory committee comprised of faculty and staff representatives from across the University worked to identify current and possible initiatives that could be scaled to help the University more fully achieve its mission.

The team analyzed over 73 initiatives for impact and ability to scale – and then categorized them within four key mission areas: teaching and learning, research, community impact and leadership.

Through discussion and analysis of initiatives, the committee then identified unique strengths that not only define who we are as an institution, but that also give us clear advantages for where we want to be in 10 years: our place, our people, our culture of care and our engagement with partners.

With these strengths and advantages guiding the process, a core team from the advisory committee worked to bridge recommendations from the larger group with input from campus leadership and from faculty and staff colleagues throughout the campus community.

Draft after draft of strategic advantages, goals and initiatives, pathways and possibilities began to emerge, each more fully reaffirming the importance of our mission and our clear purpose in higher education. Metrics quickly followed, providing us with a compass and a means for assessing how well we are accomplishing our goals. Drafts were shared formally and informally and, as ideas were refined with college, school, and research leaders, department heads and Cabinet members, the value of the plan was deepened by the process of collective planning.

“

Our strategic plan must look to the future; it must also build upon the strong foundation of who we are.”

– UTEP President Heather Wilson's charge to the committee, January 2020

MIDPOINT REVIEW

In 2026 we reviewed our strategic plan with a view to updating initiatives to drive us toward our goals.

The Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning facilitated four targeted workshops, engaging Cabinet, initiative leads, and key stakeholders to review performance, assess progress across strategic goals, and identify areas for revision. In parallel, follow-up groups were convened to address specific metric revisions, and faculty focus groups provided

additional insight on progress, challenges, and alternative measures of productivity. Feedback from workshops and focus groups was continuously incorporated into draft revisions of the Strategic Plan, which were circulated to initiative leads and refined through multiple rounds of review. The process culminated in a final update to Cabinet in May 2026, where major revisions were presented and approved.



CABINET

Heather Wilson
President

Andrea Cortinas, J.D.
*Executive Vice President
and Chief of Staff*

Margaret Erickson
*Vice President and Chief
Human Resources Officer*

Brendan Gallagher, Ph.D.
*Vice President for
Business Affairs*

Luis Hernandez
*Vice President for
Information Resources*

Ahmad Itani, Ph.D.
*Vice President for Research
and Innovation*

Catie McCorry-Andalis, Ed.D.
*Vice President for
Student Affairs*

Jesse Pisors, Ed.D.
*Vice President for
Institutional Advancement*

Lucas Roebuck
*Vice President for Marketing
and Communications*

Jim Senter
*Vice President and
Director of Athletics*

Amanda Vasquez-Vicario, Ph.D.
*Vice President for
Enrollment Management*

John Wiebe, Ph.D.
*Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs*

DEANS

Anadeli Bencomo, Ph.D.
Dean – College of Liberal Arts

Beth L. Brunk, Ph.D.
Dean – Extended University

Stephen Crites, Ph.D.
Dean – Graduate School

John Hadjimarcou, Ph.D.
*Dean – Woody L. Hunt
College of Business*

Marc Knecht, Ph.D.
Dean – College of Science

Scott Kruse, Ph.D.
*Dean – College of
Health Sciences*

Kenith E. Meissner II, Ph.D.
*Dean – Miguel A. Loya
College of Engineering*

José O. Rivera, Pharm.D.
*Founding Dean –
School of Pharmacy*

Leslie K. Robbins, Ph.D.
Dean – School of Nursing

Clifton Tanabe, Ph.D.
Dean – College of Education



STRATEGIC GOALS AT A GLANCE

MISSION

UTEP is a comprehensive public research university that is increasing **access** to **excellent** higher education. We advance discovery of public value and positively **impact** the health, culture, education, and economy of the community we serve.

GOALS

TEACHING, LEARNING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

1. Provide students an excellent and engaged education in an inclusive university that builds on student strengths and demonstrates a culture of care.

ADVANCE DISCOVERY

2. Advance research, scholarship, artistic expression, and innovation with emphasis on areas of current and emerging strength.

COMMUNITY IMPACT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

3. Foster well-being in our community so that we all live healthier, more prosperous, and culturally enriched lives.

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4. Positively impact American higher education as the exemplary Hispanic-serving research university.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- 1.1 Implement a comprehensive enrollment strategy that broadens access.
- 1.2 Redesign key core curriculum courses to provide high-impact, engaged-learning experiences.
- 1.3 Transform the student experience through increased engagement that fosters success from the first day on campus through graduation and job placement.

- 2.1 Recruit, retain, and develop research faculty and doctoral students to support research priorities.
- 2.2 Identify and develop areas of strategic research strength and provide support for research infrastructure in these areas.
- 2.3 Establish foundational elements of a regional innovation ecosystem.

- 3.1 Increase cultural and educational activities that enrich community life.
- 3.2 Establish the UTEP Office of Business, Community and Government Engagement to enhance and improve community partnerships and better connect our students to more internships and job opportunities in industry, business, nonprofits and government.
- 3.3 Deepen our partnerships with health care providers to elevate the standard of healthcare in the Paso del Norte region and advance collaborative research.

- 4.1 Advance the development and application of knowledge to improve higher education for underrepresented students and under-resourced regions.
- 4.2 Expand leadership roles in state, regional, and national efforts to improve education for underrepresented and minority students.
- 4.3 Become the national leader in teaching and research in bilingualism, bilingual education, and second language learning.
- 4.4 Establish UTEP Press as a modern publishing outlet for academic and popular books to promote the creation and dissemination of knowledge and enhance UTEP's position as an intellectual and cultural leader of the geographic and academic communities we serve.

KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Degrees awarded
Total enrollment
Persistence
Student participation in high-impact programs

Research expenditures
Research grant proposals submitted and awarded
Refereed publications and research citations
Creative activities, exhibitions, and performances
Doctoral degrees awarded
National faculty awards
Licensed patents and launched start-ups

Education level in the El Paso region
Workforce productivity in the El Paso region
Health of residents in the El Paso region
Community participation in UTEP events

Representation on national boards, agencies, commissions, and committees
Scholarly activities related to Hispanic-serving institutions
National recognitions for UTEP
Institute of origin for Hispanic doctorates ranking

UTEP WILL BE KNOWN NOT BY
WHOM WE EXCLUDE, BUT BY WHOM
WE **INCLUDE** AND THEIR **SUCCESS**.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

500 West University Avenue

El Paso, TX 79968

915-747-5000

utep.edu/strategic-plan

Midpoint Review Update, July 2026