

**Project South Texas
Academic Program Working Groups
Final Report**

January 31, 2014

Working Group Name	Community and Public Service
Working Group Co-Chairs	Diamond Freeberg, Shawn Saladin
Working Group Members	John Cook, Louis Falk, Diamond Freeberg, Santos Hernandez, Michelle Keck, Jeffrey McQuillen, Shawn Saladin, S. George Vincentnathan, Steve Wilson, Aziza Zemrani

Executive Summary

The Community and Public Service Group suggests the traditional academic structure of Colleges, with Deans, and Departments with Chairs be followed, with a few deviations. However, they should have a new community engagement support system. In an attempt to promote community engagement, a center with a focus of coordinating this effort should be supported. This should be interdisciplinary in nature and cut across the institution utilizing the expertise from the various disciplines. The various disciplines which are not familiar with community engagement will receive help from the center staff or director to assist with identifying needs of the community which match the expertise of the discipline. Each discipline should have a course in which this type of activity will receive some type of course credit thus providing motivation for students who may not be inclined to participate. Where feasible a modular approach to teaching all courses should be considered.

In addition, University Advancement, the media, and/or the alumni association, to name a few, should be solicited to identify partnerships within the community in order to identify the needs of the community. It is this committee's opinion that all disciplines should and will be able to locate community partners who need services which can be learning projects for our students. This type of system will not only help the community but will make the projects of the students valuable learning experiences and relevant to their field of study. It is further suggested this type of activity be captured on the official transcripts.

The bachelor's programs recommended by this committee include the area of Deaf and hard of hearing studies, and disaster management. There has been growing interest in serving people who are Deaf or hard of hearing and a bachelor's degree is proposed in this area. The Deaf Studies program at UTPA currently has a service learning component as described above. The other bachelor degree proposed by the committee is in the area of disaster management. This is recommended because of the propensity for hurricanes and other natural disasters and the potential for pandemics within the region. A well-educated populous on this topic is beneficial to all.

The master's degrees recommended include health communication and gerontology. As the population ages this area of study becomes increasingly relevant. The doctoral programs this committee has recommended are in the areas of communication, criminal justice, public administration and social work. As with the masters degrees these disciplines are expected to grow in the near future.

Project South Texas

Academic Program Working Groups

Final Report

Elements that emphasize the various societies and cultures present in this environment should be incorporated within all the degree program, thus embracing the bicultural mission of the new university. Additionally, these new programs will increase the opportunity for students to engage with the public as many courses in this classification are suited to community based projects.

Working Group Meetings

Date	Location/Format
October 25, 2013	UTB-face to face meeting
November 8, 2013	Weslaco-face to face meeting
November 15, 2013	Videoconference meeting-UTB/UTPA
November 22, 2013	Videoconference meeting-UTB/UTPA
January 29, 2014	Report Finalization Meeting - Email

Current Academic Programs

UTB	UTPA
Communication	Communication
Public Service	Mass Communication
Criminal Justice	Theatre/TV/Film
Public Policy and Management	Criminal Justice
	Global Security Studies
	Rehabilitation
	Social Work
	Public Administration

Current Academic Programs to be Offered Fall 2015

Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
Communication	Communication	Rehabilitation Counseling
Mass Communication	Public Administration	
Theatre/TV/Film	Public Policy and Management	
Public Service	Global Security Studies	
Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice	
Law and Justice Studies	Rehabilitation Counseling	
Rehabilitative Services	Social Work	
Social Work		

Project South Texas Academic Program Working Groups Final Report

New Academic Programs for Fall 2015 (Please indicate with an asterisk (*) your top 3 priorities.)

Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
**Deaf Rehabilitation		

New Academic Programs for Fall 2017 (Please indicate with an asterisk (*) your top 3 priorities.)

Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
**Disaster Management	**Health Communication	

New Academic Programs for Fall 2020 (Please indicate with an asterisk (*) your top 3 priorities.)

Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
	**Gerontology	Communication
		Criminal Justice
		**Public Administration
		**Social Work

New Academic Programs for Fall 2025 (Please indicate with an asterisk (*) your top 3 priorities.)

Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees

Rationale for programs relating to Community and Public Service

According to the U.S. Census, Latinos have accounted for most of the nation's population growth over the last decade and currently represent over 16% of the U.S. population. However, Latino students have the lowest percentage of college enrollment compared to White and Black Students. Additionally, the number of Latino faculty with doctorates in higher education is quite low – four percent nationwide (National Education Association). This disparity limits the diversity of experience and ethnicity that contribute to a rich teaching and research environment. The academic fields within the Community and Public Service are rapidly growing professions. Salaries are excellent and these fields of study prepare students for a range of careers from Communication to Criminal Justice, to Public Administration. Some common interdisciplinary elements that are needed and taught across these degrees include Leadership, Security, and Communication.

Examples of innovative programs

Identify institutions and/or programs that are organized in an innovative way. In what ways are the programs innovative? How does this organization promote student success and/or scholarly activity?

Project South Texas

Academic Program Working Groups

Final Report

One suggestion is the University of California, Berkeley model of disciplinary and interdisciplinary education and research. In addition to disciplinary education offered within departments there are Academic/research “centers,” “institutes,” “groups” and “programs.” In the **centers** professors and students from different disciplines participate in the pursuit of a specific subject that can be studied by many disciplines. For instance, the Center for the Study of Law and Society, a research unit, involved professors and students from Criminology, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Anthropology, and Law. **Institutes** consist of centers under a general umbrella, such as The Institute of International Studies, which include the Center for Japanese Studies, the Center for South Asian Studies, and others. **Groups** include interdisciplinary programs, such as Demography, in which students constitute majors by taking courses in related fields under the direction of academic advisors. A **program** may have disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus, but is confined to an academic department or closely aligned field or departments. For instance the Professional Schools Program, a cooperative endeavor of Political Science, Economics, and Business, focuses on identifying contributions of American scholars toward the development of professions in developing countries. This includes development of such professions as Engineering, Public Health, Demography, Architecture, Criminology, and Social Work in developing countries. Such centers, institutes, groups, and programs enrich disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and contribute toward innovations.

Another innovation involves the creation of certification programs to reach professionals who need additional credentials and training. Possible examples include a Certification in Health Communications as well as interdisciplinary certifications including Social Work/Substance Abuse/Criminal Justice, and Disaster/Social Work/Healthcare/NonProfit Management.

Possible consultations

Identify campuses that faculty and administrators who are engaged in further planning may wish to study or visit and/or leaders/scholars that planners may wish to consult.

The University of California - Berkeley, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and similar institutions. These institutions are perceived to consistently impart a very high quality education that we would do well to follow. This is in line with our philosophy that a quality education should precede the quantity of students.

Trans-disciplinary Opportunities

Describe the trans-disciplinary opportunities that extend beyond your group of disciplines.

We propose the creation of a center with research opportunities to reach across colleges and schools. One idea would be to create a College of Research Centers that would house various centers/institutes. The centers/institutes would promote research, advancement, innovation, community outreach, and trans-disciplinary opportunities. The center would have grant writers, and focus on advancement in the community as well as expand upon the trans-disciplinary approach.

This proposed center design involves a modular approach to teaching across all the college disciplines. This modular approach will allow specific programs with precise areas of expertise to teach detailed sections within courses from other departments/disciplines. One example maybe that across the college (if not the university) when the emphasis of a course shifts toward a certain area of expertise - such as Communication, a person from the Communication program will teach that section of the course.

Project South Texas Academic Program Working Groups Final Report

We also propose joint degree programs between disciplines such as a Master's of Social Work/Master's of Criminal Justice, a Master's of Social Work/Master's of Public Administration and Disaster Management.

Bicultural/ Biliterate/Bilingual

Describe how the proposed academic programs reflect the bicultural/bilingual/biliterate mission of the new university and culture of our region.

Criminal Justice already has courses connected with transnational crime and criminal justice studies. These courses can be broadened to insure the mission is reflected.

Further, within these areas, courses can be developed emphasizing societies and cultures that can also be part of a trans-disciplinary requirement. Apart from this, area studies and comparative studies of societies and cultures, with the appropriate language courses, can facilitate international and global knowledge for our students.

Develop a minor in International Studies with the aim of creating a major at the undergraduate and graduate level, so as to promote international and global learning, understanding, and creativity.

Community Engagement

Describe how the proposed academic programs reflect the community engagement mission of the new university.

These programs will incorporate Community Engagement by utilizing projects designed to not only increase student knowledge and skills but also further the goal of making the community a better place to live and enjoy. Examples may include from the Communication Program – the public relations class (event planning) organize a make-a-difference day. From the forth coming Disaster Management program – students develop “how to prepare for a disaster material” to distribute to the community. From the rehabilitation area students develop a clinic or visit retirement homes to counsel and or exercise programs.

Academic Structure

Describe the academic structure you are recommending for your group of disciplines.

Mostly traditional with Colleges, Deans, Chairs and institutes that cut across disciplines.

Note:

The Criminal Justice faculty believes that the Community and Public Service Working Group is not the appropriate group for their field. While some elements overlap, Criminal Justice thinks they should have been placed in the Social Science Working Group.