



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley[™]
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Strategic Plan

September 2024



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Meet the Team **Developing a Strategic Plan for Success**

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CEP STRATEGIC PLAN

1) Introduction/Note from the Dean

- Our work centers on student success. We strive to provide quality educator preparation and experiences aimed at student success in our programs and in the profession.
- We strive for quality in everything we do. Quality is a connecting thread in our strategic priorities (i.e. academic excellence, student access and success, campus life and community building, research and scholarship, health and client care, people, and community engagement and integration.
- A culture of continuous improvement facilitates the quest for quality through systematic data collection and analysis that allows faculty to make data-informed and evidence-based decisions to promote student success.
- Through structures of shared governance, we value the diverse contributions of all our faculty and staff. It is the work and dedication of every member of the College of Education and P-16 Integration that makes student success possible.

2) Mission

Through systems of shared governance, faculty and staff of the College of Education and P-16 Integration (CEP) is committed to academic excellence in a caring, student-centered culture that serves the broader community. We prioritize research that meets the interests and challenges of our borderlands region.

3) Vision

The College of Education and P-16 Integration is set to serve the Rio Grande Valley and beyond as a model of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to lead the inclusive preparation of diverse educators, education leaders, education researchers, as well as the conduction of community-oriented research that in due course reaches a national impact.

4) Core Values

After collaborating with faculty, students, staff, and stakeholders using surveys and focus group meetings, the following values emerged as core to the CEP's mission and embodiment in day-to-day activities we value: (1) educational excellence; (2) student-centered preparation; (3) shared governance; (4) exploration, discover, and collaboration; (5) community engagement and partnerships; and (6) bilingualism, and (7) social justice. Each of these core values is unpacked, below.

- **Educational Excellence.** We strive to develop and sustain authentic and quality learning experiences for all CEP students. We also commit to engaging in shared decision-making and continuous program improvement that informs educational excellence. We foster excellence through English, Spanish, translanguaging, and all languages of our students and faculty.

- **Student-Centered Preparation.** We recognize that students are central to our college's mission and vision. We commit to developing curriculum and quality learning experiences that place students at the center of our work.
- **Shared Governance.** We commit to collaborating with CEP faculty and staff, UTRGV administrators, and community stakeholders in shared decision-making to develop, maintain, and improve positive work experiences and transparent policies and processes, including evaluation processes for faculty and staff. We commit to making informed decisions based on data to develop knowledge for community and academic disciplines. We also commit to continuous improvement, including continuously analyzing and revising our departmental review criteria to align with our department's core priorities and CEP's and UTRGV's vision and mission statements. We believe that transparency is essential to shared governance.
- **Exploration, Discovery, and Collaboration.** We strive to collaborate with external partners to engage in quality research that informs effective educator practices and client care. We commit to disseminating research findings that inform effective practices to our partners.
- **Community Engagement and Partnerships.** We strive to develop mutually beneficial community partnerships to shape quality educator practices and client care in the Rio Grande Valley and Latine communities throughout the nation. We also aim to conduct research that both responds to and impacts our communities.
- **Bilingualism.** We embrace the bilingualism and biculturalism of our transnational community, and we prepare bilingual education professionals with expertise in the Spanish and English of the Rio Grande Valley.
- **Social Justice.** We commit to designing learning experiences to help CEP students develop knowledge and skills to analyze educational or social problems that directly impact their communities.

5) Strategic Priorities, Signature Initiatives, and Success Measures

Aligned with and reflecting our core values, the following strategic priorities were constituted, revised, and finalized with input from surveys, focus groups, and deliberation. Our strategic priorities are (1) academic excellence, (2) student access and success, (3) campus life and community building, (4) research and scholarship, (5) health and client care, (6) people, and (7) community engagement and integration.

Each strategic priority is briefly discussed below, in turn. Under each strategic priority, current signature initiatives are recognized, aspirational signature initiatives are suggested, and specific success measures are articulated. The layout of each strategic priority is designed to outline

where the CEP is, where the CEP wants to go, and specifically how the CEP will measure success for each strategic priority. Each strategic priority is discussed in this way because to suggest continuity with existing signature initiatives, further development of existing initiatives, and specific accountability in continual improvement. In this way, we honor those who came before, challenge ourselves to further growth, and hold ourselves accountable for making things happen.

Strategic Priority 1: Academic Excellence

The College of Education and P-16 Integration is committed to creating and sustaining academic excellence by fostering a community spirit that encourages the cultivation of an intellectual mindset, catalyzing progress in economic, social, and personal spheres of life. Faculty is seen as the major student support system that nurtures self-directed learning among undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Given the demographics of the community we serve, our college has become a national leader in preparing Latine teachers. We are the second largest producer of teachers in the University of Texas system, and we have the highest number of total certifications issued and teachers employed among UT System institutions. Undergraduate and graduate students are well-prepared with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to analyze educational or social problems that directly impact their communities. We will continue to sustain academic excellence by:

- Empowering future teachers, educators, and school-based mental health professionals to use cultural competency and design meaningful and culturally sustaining learning experiences.
- Nurturing self-directed learning and preparing future teachers and educators to become leaders and advocates for all learners, especially bilingual students.
- Preparing future teachers and educators to make a positive impact/create change on the educational system and their communities.
- Supporting future educators to develop a scholarly mindset to evaluate data and sources to solve problems.
- Continue fostering, through our Professional Counselors and Licensed Specialists in School Psychology, the physical and psychological well-being among P-12 students.

Strategic Priority 1 is pursued in keeping with the tenets of shared governance and continued improvement.

Current Signature Initiatives in Support of Academic Excellence

The College of Education and P-16 Integration has numerous current initiatives to support academic excellence. These initiatives include STEP UP; Teacher Residency Program; L-STEAM Camp; TAFE Area 1 Conference; and Empowered Educator (E2) Activities and Initiatives. The UTRGV Educator Preparation (EPP) Program, consisting of the Teacher Preparation Program, the Superintendent Certification Program, and the School Psychology Program, was accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), meeting rigorous standards and processes for educator preparation through quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Additionally, the College of Education and P-16 Integration doctoral programs are part of the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort that may involve faculty effort and college and/or department resources. To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility to implement practices and procedures to sustain academic excellence. Under the Dean's direction, the Associate Dean for Assessment and Accreditation will continue to provide leadership to ensure that ongoing data collection, analysis, and data-informed program improvements that result in successful accreditation site visits by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) as well as successful program reviews. The Associate Dean for Assessment and Accreditation works closely with department chairs and program coordinators who are responsible for preparing their respective reaccreditation processes and program review to ensure that timelines are met, and appropriate documentation is submitted. All program faculty share a responsibility to sustain academic program excellence through ongoing efforts to support continuous improvement. Our aspirational initiatives are below.

- Maintain accredited programs through Texas Education Agency (TEA), Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and Council for Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- Strengthen current programs through continuous improvement efforts (e.g., program review) to meet the needs of undergraduate or graduate students.
- Explore the possibility of developing new undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs aligned with local, state, and national needs and standards.
- Explore the possibility of creating a bilingual laboratory school (p-5th grade).
- Continue to offer teacher residency experiences.
- Continue to offer and improve the Empowered Educator program.

Success Measures

- Seek reaccreditation through TEA, CAEP, and CACREP.
- Have successful program reviews.
- Increase the number of academic programs with high quality key assessment ratings through the Office of Curriculum and Institutional Assessment.
- Develop a new undergraduate program in Bilingual 4-8. Develop a new Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree (4-8 grade level) with bilingual concentration.
- Develop a new Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies.
- Redesign Bachelor of Science in Special Education and Bachelor of Science in Bilingual Education (EC6) Degrees.
- Develop a Master of Arts in Teaching graduate degree.

- Collaborate with the College of Liberal Arts to develop a PhD program proposal in Borderlands and Transnational Studies aligned with local, state, and national needs, and market demand.

Strategic Priority 2: Student Access and Success

The College of Education and P-16 Integration is committed to promoting student access and success by fostering a student-centered culture that supports student engagement in achieving professional aspirations through academic and experiential learning experiences that launch students into future careers and advanced studies. Through collaborative efforts and focus on student academic readiness, educational attainment, access, and affordability in the delivery of educational and co-curricular experiences, the College of Education and P-16 Integration embraces student success and access as a high priority. By leveraging the unique populations served, including first-generation and a high number Hispanic/Latine students, the college embraces bilingual and bicultural strengths and cultural wealth to advance student success.

The student-centered culture includes mechanisms for continuously gauging student feedback and input throughout the student academic trajectory to strengthen the student experience in the college. Additionally, the student-centered culture promotes capitalizing on technological and pedagogical innovations to meet student needs through accessible and flexible courses across UTRGV campuses and platforms to ensure timely degree progression to graduation. The college, in collaboration with university units, provides academic advisement using technological tools and communication platforms for empowering students in tracking their academic progress. CEP's commitment toward student success and access includes shared decision-making and continuous program improvement initiatives surrounding student retention, timely graduation and minimizing student debt with focus on strengthening academic and financial support for students in form of scholarships, work study, direct wage opportunities, assistantships, and off campus employment. Strategies for supporting student access and success include strengthening P-16 educational pipelines through collegiate high schools (UTRGV-Harlingen Early College HS), dual-enrollment programs, community college articulation agreements, and partnerships with local Independent School Districts (ISDs).

Current Signature Initiatives in Support of Student Access and Success

The College of Education and P-16 Integration has current initiatives to support student access and success. The largest program in the college, the undergraduate Teacher Preparation Program, offers courses across three campuses with flexible scheduling such as day and evening and various formats such as hybrid, online, and face-to-face to meet student needs. The program prepares future educators through clinically rich, evidence-based practices with support from the Learning to Teach Lab by offering resources and activities to innovate teaching practices using mixed reality simulation. Also, the Certification Exam Support Hub provides resources and tutors for test preparation. The award-winning Empowered Educator Program is an online curriculum aligned with the ISTE Standards for Educators offered to students to develop digital pedagogies

essential for the 21st century teaching. The Office of Educator Preparation and Accountability has devoted program specialists to provide advisement and monitoring of student progress to ensure their successful completion of the program.

The following represent some additional examples of quality initiatives that support student success. The STEP-Up Program supports field-based preparation of students in partnership with school districts. Students receive mentorship from both the school district and university in a year-long placement as they learn in K-12 classrooms. Another program is the Yearlong Clinical Teaching Residency which offers students employment in the school district as they complete the last year of their teacher preparation program. Scholarships offered to students include the Van Burkleo Scholarships, Johnny & Nena Cavazos Endowment, and Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers to name a few.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort that may involve faculty effort and college and/or department resources. To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility to implement practices and procedures to sustain academic excellence. Under the Dean's direction, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies provides oversight for student success initiatives, retention of first- and second-year students, and transfer students initiatives at the undergraduate level. Additionally, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies provides oversight for graduate student success initiatives and degree progression, and the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Success provides oversight for doctoral student success initiatives and degree progression. The Director of Field Experiences supports faculty, field supervisors, site supervisors, cooperating/mentor teachers, and other school district personnel who collaborate in educator preparation with training in coaching and mentoring candidates. The Director of Educator Preparation provides leadership for educator preparation and certification in curriculum alignment, admissions, testing, certification, and accountability reporting. All Associate Deans, Director of Field Experiences, and Director of Educator Preparation work closely with department chairs and program coordinators to engaged in continuous program improvement and shared decision-making to ensure student success, retention, degree progression, and graduation. All program faculty have a shared responsibility to implement effective teaching practices, mentoring, and advisement to ensure student success. Our aspirational initiatives are below.

- Establish Freshman to Finisher Initiatives for early affiliation and mentoring of entering freshman into the teacher preparation program. Teacher Preparation Program faculty will collaborate with academic advisors for streamlining communication and advisement of pre-admitted students (i.e., monthly meetings between teams, use EAB Navigate).
- Analyze data on candidate performance to ensure the Educator Preparation Program remains accredited by the Texas Education Agency with one measure being initial and professional certification examination performance. The program will continue to target

test readiness through coursework alignments, field experiences/internships, and test preparation supports.

- Create an ad-hoc taskforce or propose a standing committee for recruitment and outreach for graduate and doctoral programs.
- Engage in curriculum revision and continuous program improvement including selecting program milestones, to support doctoral students' timely graduation and dissertation completion.
- Support all graduate programs to develop program milestones to support students' progress toward graduation.
- Collaborate with Graduate Recruitment and Outreach to facilitate bi-semester face-to-face and virtual recruitment events.
- Continue to maintain an EdD taskforce to engage in continuous program improvement and shared decision-making to monitor and support doctoral students toward degree completion.
- Continue our bi-annual teacher preparation and graduate faculty meetings to analyze enrollment trends, identify opportunities to increase enrollment, and engage in continuous program improvement and shared decision-making.
- Increase the number of schools and districts we support through the Yearlong Clinical Teaching Residency.

Success Measures

○ Enrollment

- Increase **undergraduate student** enrollment to 1861 by AY29-30.
- Increase **graduate student** enrollment to 785 by AY29-30.
- Increase **doctoral student** enrollment to 323 by AY29-30 (*UTRGV Office of Strategic Analysis and Institutional Reporting (SAIR)*).

○ Retention and graduation rates.

- Undergraduate:
 - 80% of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will be enrolled after one academic year.
 - 50% of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will receive a bachelor's degree within 4 years.
 - 70% of first-time, full-time degree seeking undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will receive a bachelor's degree within 6 years.
- Masters:
 - 90% of first-time, full-time degree seeking graduate students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will be enrolled after one academic year.

- 80% of first-time, full-time degree seeking graduate students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will receive a master's degree within 4 years.
- Doctoral
 - 90% of first-time, full-time degree seeking doctoral students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will be enrolled after one academic year.
 - 80% of first-time, full-time degree seeking doctoral students enrolled in the College of Education and P-16 Integration will receive a doctoral degree within 5 years.
- **Certification Exam Passing Rates**
 - Maintain pass rates on all TExES content pedagogy examinations (meet standard) for the next 5 years AY29-30.
 - Maintain pass rates on all TExES pedagogy examinations (meet standard) for the next 5 years AY29-30.
 - Maintain pass rates on all professional certification examinations (meet standard) for the next 5 years AY29-30.
- **Degrees Awarded**
 - Increase number of undergraduate degrees awarded to 297 by AY29-30.
 - Increase number of master's degrees to 557 by AY29-30.
 - Increase number of doctoral degrees awarded to 42 by AY29-30.
- **EPP Preparation**
 - By AY29-30, 90% of teacher candidates will state that they were well prepared or sufficiently prepared by our EPP program for the first year of teaching. This will be measured by the TEA Exit Survey.
 - BY AY29-30, 90% of principals will state that their first-year teacher was well-prepared or sufficiently prepared for the first year of teaching. This will be measured by the TEA Principal Survey.
 - By AY29-30, 90% of new teachers will state that they were well prepared or sufficiently prepared by the EPP to become a teacher. This will be measured by the TEA New Teacher Satisfaction survey.
- **EPP Preparation Commendations**
 - The EPP strives to continue to receive commendations in educator preparation recognized by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

Strategic Priority 3: Campus Life and Community Building

The College of Education and P-16 Integration values the importance of campus life and community building to strengthen student well-being, learning, and connection to the University community. We support UTRGV's vision to invest in residential experiences, cultivate communities across campuses, expand athletics and spirit programs, and become a cultural hub

in the Rio Grande Valley. Building friendships and community adds meaningful experiences for students outside the classroom. To further our values in this area, the College of Education and P-16 Integration encourages student, faculty, and staff participation in student organizations, community organizations, and campus life events. We are committed to continue current signature initiatives and develop new signature initiatives to enhance campus life and community building among students, staff, and faculty members. In our processes to develop campus life and community building, we follow tenets of faculty governance and data-driven continuous improvement.

Current Signature Initiatives in Support of Campus Life and Community Building

As members of the University Recruitment Council, led by the Division of Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs, Associate Deans coordinate participation in university-sponsored recruitment, and outreach events for the academic year. At the undergraduate level, the Undergraduate Recruitment and Outreach Committee (UROC) was established in 2015 to promote academic programs and events to have a strong presence in the Rio Grande Valley community. Among the annual events hosted by the University Recruitment Council that draw participation include Vaquero Roundup, Discover UTRGV, Transfer One Stop Shop, Daily Campus Tours, and ISD Counselor Night.

To spotlight events at the college, the Human Development and School Services Department promotes early literacy with their Mobile Literacy Unit (MLU), a community outreach vehicle that travels across the Rio Grande Valley to provide low-income children with equitable literacy opportunities. The MLU supports diverse projects in service learning, research, and community engagement. Another popular event has been Team Mario Fun Day Friday Summer Camp designed to help young students with autism develop social skills needed to participate in everyday life. The UTRGV Preschool Teacher Conference sponsored by the C.B. Slemp Endowment features notable keynote speakers and breakout sessions relating to early literacy, early childhood, and bilingualism, for example.

The college regularly hosts prospective high school students for visits. For example, in 2022-2023, CEP hosted over 150 high school students exploring the teaching profession from Brownsville, Point Isabel, and Los Fresnos Independent School Districts for professional development sessions and campus tours. The purpose was to highlight innovative pedagogical practices in the Teacher Preparation Program focusing on building emotional intelligence, use of mixed-reality simulation for practice-based teaching and use of digital and technological tools for the 21st century teaching and learning.

CEP Graduates and Undergraduate students cultivate leadership and personal capacities of service through student organizations sponsored by UTRGV Center for Student Involvement. At the doctoral level, the Doctoral Educational Leadership Student Association (DELSA) has been established for doctoral students. As for other active graduate student organizations, the

Counseling Student Association recruits clinical mental health and school counseling students for participation in local social events, community projects, and special training seminars. Another active organization has been the Chess Club which hosts chess nights and has advanced to the Texas Grade Championships. Two other highly active student organizations at this level include the Graduate Association for Bilingual Education (GABE) which promotes advocacy for bilingual students and Kappa Delta Pi (Omicron Eta Chapter).

At both the graduate and undergraduate level, the Bilingual Education Student Association (BESO) remains one the most active student organizations consistently representing the college at university and community-sponsored events. The focus of the organization is promoting bilingualism along with serving the community and building professional development opportunities for future educators through strong networking. Currently, three other student organizations at the undergraduate level that have been active for future teachers include the United Together Caring Adults Reaching Early Childhood Students (UTCARES), Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) and the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE).

Aspirational Signature Initiatives

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort that may involve faculty effort and college and/or department resources. To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility to implement practices and procedures to improve campus life and community building at the college-level. Our aspirational signature initiatives are below.

- Create a "Your College, Your Community-It Starts Here" campaign to encourage student, faculty, and staff engagement. The plan will include:
 - Propose to create an ad-hoc taskforce or propose a standing committee related to campus life and community building.
 - Implement a digital and print based branding and marketing campaign.
 - Establish a student shared area in the Education areas on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.
 - Create college open houses and family events including bringing your child to work days.
 - Increase faculty presence on campus and in digital spaces (e.g., LinkedIn).
 - Encourage the dean, leadership team, department chairs, associate deans, and faculty to create more opportunities for face-to-face interactions in committee work, continuous program improvement efforts, social gatherings, and/or research activities.
 - Create faculty and staff bonding experiences.
 - Create incentives (e.g., contests, awards, etc.) for students, faculty, and staff to participate in community and athletic events.
 - Align College and Departmental workload/faculty and staff performance review documents to credit and recognize participation in university sponsored community engagement events, athletics competitions, or spirit events.

- **Success Measures**

- By AY 29-30, 50% of CEP students, staff, and faculty members will attend at least one College or University sponsored community service event, athletics competition, or spirit event per year.
- By AY 29-30, our college will host three (3) community building/education and student/community-focused events annually.
- By AY 29-30, 50% of CEP students who have selected a program of study in the College will participate in two College/Department sponsored events annually.
- By AY 29-30, the college and/or department will host and fund a minimum of two (2) annual social gatherings attended by 50% of the faculty and 50% of the staff in the College.

Strategic Priority 4: Research and Scholarship

The research and scholarship we pursue in the College of Education and P-16 Integration connects with student success, community engagement, health education, and client care. Our external grants have allowed CEP faculty members to train School Psychology and Counseling interns to provide evidence-based practices to support P-12 students' well-being as well as train teacher candidates and teachers in local school districts to become aware of students' mental health challenges. Our early childhood education grants also provide direct comprehensive services to low-income infants and toddlers in center-based learning environments. Our grants also have supported teacher residents to engage in year-long residency experiences to improve their preparation as future educators. Drawing on our strengths in professional preparation, health education and client care, and community engagement, we aim to expand our research capabilities through more collaborative partnerships across UTRGV and other Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to pursue scholarship and research in English, Spanish, translingual, and other languages. We support UTRGV's goal to become an Emerging Research University (ERU) and a R1 University by aiming to generate more restricted research expenditures and support doctoral students to complete their dissertation. Our efforts in supporting research and scholarship via the UTRGV research hub represents the CEP's commitment to shared governance and continual improvement through faculty involvement and data-driven constitution of the UTRGV research hub.

Current Signature Initiatives in Support of Research and Scholarship

The College of Education and P-16 Integration has numerous research initiatives that align with student success, community engagement, health education, and client care. These initiatives include Small Grants Program; Dean's travel for research presentations; Dean's Graduate Research Assistant Program; Dean's call for participation to attend professional development to support research agenda; CEP Faculty Spotlight Series in External Grants; CEP Faculty Spotlight Series in Research; CEP Faculty Research Award; and CEP Faculty Research Hub. Our Faculty Research Hub provides faculty development and support in applied, pure/basic, and theoretical

research in education; provides faculty development and support in grant writing; promotes and supports student scholarly opportunities; and provides oversight of all graduate research assistants in the college, including building capacity among them and supporting faculty who are awarded a GRA. Additionally, in partnership with the Division of Research to improve operational excellence, we hired a Senior Research Services Coordinator to assist CEP faculty members with pre- and post-award external grant support. We will continue our current initiatives to support research and scholarship in the College of Education and P-16 Integration.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives in Support of Scholarship and Research

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort that may involve faculty effort and college and/or department resources. To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility to implement practices and procedures to sustain a strong research infrastructure and culture. Under the Dean's direction, the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Success will continue to provide leadership for the development and maintenance of the research infrastructure, doctoral education, and faculty success and development in the College of Education and P-16 Integration. The Faculty Research Hub and Faculty Champion for Research will have a significant role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of research initiatives. Our aspirational initiatives are below.

- Continue to maintain a research culture that fosters excellence, impact, and quality. We will revise department review criteria to focus on quality of scholarly products and external grants and recognize faculty members' research efforts for chairing doctoral student dissertations.
- Collaborate with faculty from other UTRGV colleges and other institutions of higher education to pursue external grant funding aligned with student success, community engagement, health education, and client care. We will continue to be an active participant in the RP3 Network and collaborate on external grant submissions and research projects that have implications for our communities, post-secondary education practices, and policies.
- Continue to offer professional development in research and external grants through the Faculty the Faculty Research Hub.
- Collaborate with the Office of the Engaged Scholarship and Learning and the Division of Research to improve undergraduate or graduate research opportunities.

Success Measures

- Increase the amount of annual restricted research expenditures to 1 million dollars by AY29-30.
- Increase the average annual amount of requested external proposal amounts to \$25,000,000 by AY29-30.
- Increase the average annual amount of external grants awarded to \$15,000,000 by AY29-30.
- Increase the number of CEP faculty members with a 40 to 50% research workload who produce quality scholarly products (peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters).

- By AY29-30, we aim to have 90% of CEP tenured or tenure-track faculty members with at least one (1) quality (*i.e., each department defines quality based on discipline specific expectations and criteria*) scholarly product per academic year.
- By AY29-30, we aim to have 50% of CEP tenured or tenure-track faculty members with at least two (2) quality (*i.e., each department defines quality based on discipline specific expectations and criteria*) scholarly products per academic year.

Strategic Priority 5: Health Education and Client Care

The College of Education and P-16 Integration is committed to using a culturally sustaining approach to health education and client care to meet regional and national mental health care needs. CEP faculty collaborate with faculty in the School of Medicine, Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, Psychology, and Social Work as well as P-12 community partners to provide health education and culturally tailored mental health services for our community. Our college supports and trains future school-based mental health professionals to collaborate with other mental health professionals as part of interprofessional teams in English, Spanish, and other languages to cultivate P-12 students' positive mental health. Our college also is poised to continue to support and train local P-12 school personnel in health education and to recognize signs and symptoms of mental illness and/or emotional disturbances in P-12 youth. Our college will continue to promote positive mental health and well-being among pre-service teachers. In pursuing strategic priority 5, we are committed to shared governance and data-driven continuous improvement processes.

Current Signature Initiatives in Support of Health Education and Client Care

The College of Education and P-16 Integration has numerous current initiatives to support health education and client care. These initiatives include Community Counseling Clinic; Primary Care Behavior Health Certificate (PCBH); Counseling without Borders; Dream Star Free Online Counseling services; Project Bridging the Way; MHS Access 1 and 2: Accessing Mental Health Services; and Project MHS DGP. Our Counseling and Training Clinic offers growth-enhancing experiences and preventative and initial treatment for developmental, emotional, and interpersonal difficulties.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives in Support of Health Education and Client Care

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort that may involve faculty effort and college and/or department resources. To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility to implement practices and procedures to support health education and client care. Program faculty in the Departments of Counseling and Human Development and School Services have an important responsibility to implement practices to support health education and client care. Our signature initiatives are below.

- Expand services in the Counseling and Training Clinic to include additional telehealth services, play therapy, grief counseling, and family and group counseling as well as include other mental health professionals in-training such as Licensed Specialists in School Psychology.

- Create formal collaborative partnerships with other border universities to address mental health and health education needs such as develop a consortium with other University of Texas System schools for bilingual counseling.
- Continue mental health awareness training for CEP undergraduate/pre-service teachers and integrate mental health awareness and support into EDUC 1301.

Success Measures

- Serve 4,700 clients on an annual basis in the Counseling and Training Clinic. This success measure is contingent on the number of counseling interns providing these services in the Counseling and Training Clinic.
- By AY29-30, increase the number of groups (e.g., positive emotions, trauma-focused, grief) in the Counseling and Training Clinic to 6. This success measure is also contingent on the number of counseling interns providing these services in the Counseling and Training Clinic.
- 60% of clients who participate in counseling at the Counseling and Training Clinic will demonstrate improved mental health outcomes served annually at the Counseling and Training Clinic. This will be measured by comparing clients' pre- and post-counseling scores on the Outcome Questionnaire (OQ).
- By AY29-30, increase the number of external grant awards to support health education and client care to 6.
- By AY29-30, 75% of CEP undergraduate/pre-service teachers will be trained in mental health awareness.

Strategic Priority 6: People

People are at the core of the College of Education and P-16 Integration. Without the dedication of faculty and staff and their continued commitment to our college, the rest of our strategic initiatives would be impossible to see through. Our development and commitment to people in the CEP is central and cuts across previous initiatives. Strategic Priority 6 is also carried out with attention to tenets of shared governance and data-informed continued improvement.

Current Signature Initiatives

Current signature initiatives in the College of Education and P-16 Integration focus on professional development and the recruitment and retention of faculty members with diverse backgrounds. The College has also engaged in important shared decision-making efforts: (1) creating the **College of Education and P-16 Integration Guidelines for Full-Time Faculty Workload Categories and for Establishing Departmental Tenure and Promotion Criteria**; (2) developing department-level faculty evaluation policies; (3) developing a new CEP strategic plan; (3) creating the CEP Faculty Merit Distribution Guidelines; (4) creating the CEP bylaws; and (5) revising the College Council's role, among other efforts led by the dean, leadership team, and department chairs. Information from a faculty focus group, a survey of stakeholders, and the results from our

college's 2021 climate survey demonstrate areas for improvement through the college's Strategic Plan. For example, shared and faculty governance, community, and collaboration were identified as areas of improvement.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives

All initiatives below represent a shared and collaborative effort toward shared governance. Department Chairs have an important responsibility to maintain an environment of collegiality and shared governance. Our efforts with people support the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2015) statements on Policy and Governance that center faculty voice, authentic faculty governance, and academic freedom. Considering outside efforts outside efforts to limit academic freedom, this is of pressing importance for CEP faculty, and CEP faculty value and expect support from the Dean, Associate Deans, and Chairs in the defense of academic freedom. The discrepancy between our current state, as indicated in the data we collected, and the AAUP policy statements, form the basis for continuous improvement around People/Community.

- *Continue to engage in shared decision-making.* We will further faculty participation and shared decision-making in college and department faculty review policies and processes, course scheduling, and faculty leave policies, among others. These processes should continue to be directed by a consensus of faculty members at the department level aligned with UTRGV's mission and vision, with upper administration collaborating and listening to departmental needs and values. Understanding that faculty review policies need to be reviewed and approved by the Dean and Provost (ADM 06-503 and ADM-06-504), faculty review policies should continue to be shaped at the department level with the dean and provost providing feedback aligned with departmental needs and values as well as UTRGV's vision and mission. Administrative offices should only require implementation of faculty review and other policies that have undergone the full review and approval process, such as faculty senate and department review committees. This shared decision-making represents one major component of improving a sense of shared governance.
- *Build a sustainable community.* The college should increase efforts to recruit and retain more high-quality faculty members and their families with supportive policies and practices through the tenure, promotion, and comprehensive periodic evaluation process. We strive to ensure a workload balance commensurate with an Emerging Research University by increasing the number of available full-time teaching faculty. As part of this effort to recruit and attain research faculty, we continue to emphasize differentiated workloads and corresponding evaluation criteria for tenure-track and tenured professors and professors of practice. Additionally, access to paid Graduate Research Assistants should be increased for the research workload of faculty members to be more balanced.

Although beyond the control of the college, we urge the dean to advance, with upper administration that tuition-paid graduate assistantships with benefits is important for cultivating a ERU and R1 research culture.

- *Continue to prioritize academic freedom.* The college must continue to champion academic freedom to the extent required by the law for faculty members to have “the freedom to express their views (1) on academic matters in the classroom and in the conduct of research, (2) on matters having to do with their institution and its policies, and (3) on issues of public interest generally, and to do so even if their views are in conflict with one or another received wisdom,” (AAUP, 2015, p. 124).
- *Maintain professionalism.* The college should maintain an environment where all faculty are respected as professionals and use their professional judgment to maintain objectivity in their review of their colleagues (AAUP’s Statement on Professional Ethics).

Success Measures

- Results of a college and department survey will be 75% positive on each of the departmental and college indicators related to shared decision-making, a sustainable community, academic freedom, and professionalism by AY29-30.
- For the cohort of tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty beginning employment in AY24-25, 80% of those faculty members will be employed at the university in AY29-30.

Strategic Priority 7: Community Engagement and Integration.

The College of Education and P-16 Integration is committed to preparing future educators, school-based mental health professionals, and educational leaders along with pursuing external grants and research projects with and for the community. We engage and listen to our community needs, interests, and values to inform our educator preparation practices. We also engage in mutually beneficial relationships with external partners to implement effective practices and pursue community-based research. We are committed to using a model of community-engaged research and scholarship with community members that draws on a community’s funds of knowledge and informs effective community practices. This model prioritizes shared decision-making in development, evaluation, and dissemination of research findings with and for our communities. We support UTRGV’s mission and vision to continue to be a community-engaged institution as demonstrated through the Carnegie Foundation. Our work on Strategic Priority 7 proceeds through tenets of shared governance along and data-driven continued improvement.

Current Signature Programs in Support of Community Engagement and Integration

Community engagement activities represent faculty-organized efforts to engage both the CEP and RGV communities. These efforts include professional programs, professional development, and external grants emphasizing community engagement. Our current signature programs in

community engagement and integration include the following initiatives in our undergraduate educator preparation programs: STEP Up program, teacher residency, college partnerships, clinical teaching sites and supports, TAFE conference, and L-STEAM. All the above are ongoing. We also engage in faculty and graduate program community building through the CEP research hub, including grant seminars, revision process seminars, and professional development methodologies. Other faculty and graduate student community engagement development includes early learning center and mobile literacy outreach; Empower Educator Forum; Faculty champion for research, digital pedagogies, practice-based teacher education; and teacher education development. Finally, the CEP also engages in multiple grant efforts that provide teaching, community engagement, and service components. Those externally funded grant efforts are represented by the department below.

Bilingual and Literacy Studies

Faculty members have collaborated on external grants with or for community and school district partners that focus on Latinx immigrant parents, teacher resident pathways in local P-12 school districts, and accelerated learning among underrepresented youth. Faculty members have used a model of community-engaged research and scholarship to inform external grant proposals that can effective community practices. Project sponsors include the Spencer Foundation, Gates Foundation, Meadows Foundation, Schusterman Family Philanthropies, and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

Counseling

Faculty members have collaborated on external grants with or for community and school district partners that focus on spiritual competency training, educational training for Hispanic professionals, mental health awareness training, preparing school-based mental health professionals, and supporting parents who have children with autism. Faculty members have engaged and listened to community needs, interests, and values to inform external grant proposals to address high priority needs. Project sponsors include the Department of Education, John Templeton Foundation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Human Development and School Services

Faculty members have collaborated on external grants with or for community and school district partners that focus on preparing school-based mental health professionals, supporting parents who have children with autism, mobilizing storybook sharing, and providing direct comprehensive services to low-income infants and toddlers in center-based learning environments. Faculty members have engaged and listened to community needs, interests, and values to inform external grant proposals to address high priority needs. Project sponsors include

the Department of Education, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and PNC Foundation.

Organization and School Leadership

Faculty members have collaborated on external grants with or for community and school district partners that focus on graduate online learning and preparing special education leaders. Faculty members have engaged and listened to community needs, interests, and values to inform external grant proposals to address high priority needs. Project sponsors include the Department of Education and Instructional Connections.

Teaching and Learning

Faculty members have collaborated on external grants with or for community and school district partners that focus on STEM education, equity in Engineering, summer camps for K-12 students, training Hispanic professionals, and empowering pre-service Science Teachers and Science Educators. Faculty members have engaged and listened to community needs, interests, and values to inform external grant proposals to address high priority needs. Project sponsors include the National Science Foundation and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Aspirational Signature Initiatives in Support of Community Engagement and Integration

To enact the following aspirational signature initiatives, we share the responsibility and work with external partners to implement practices and procedures to support community. We will collaborate with the Office of Engaged Scholarship and Learning and the B3 Institute to develop and sustain community engagement activities. Our aspirational initiatives are below.

- Continue and expand our signature initiatives with emphasis on school partnerships, the undergraduate teacher residency program, CEP community development, and external grant activities with community engagement components.
- Increase the number of service-learning and B3 (Spanish, Bilingual, or culturally sustaining pedagogy) supporting courses in the College of Education and P-16 Integration
- Continue to expand mental health services at the community counseling clinic.

Success Measures

- Document and increase the number of quality community partnerships on external grants and research projects to 15 by AY29-30.
- Document and increase the number of quality mental and health service projects offered to the community to 6 by AY29-30.
- Increase the number of B3 (Spanish, Bilingual) supporting *and* culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) courses offered at graduate and undergraduate levels respectively from 33 in AY23-24 to 40 B3 by AY29-30 *and* from 14 CSP in AY23-24 to 20 by AY29-30
- Increase the number of service-learning courses from 13 to 18 by AY29-30.

Appendix

Taskforce Members

- Dr. Melissa Adams Coral, Department of Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Javier Cavazos, Dean's Office and Department of Counseling
- Dr. Criselda Garcia, Dean's Office and Department of Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Kip Austin Hinton, Department of Bilingual and Literacy Studies
- Dr. Jim Jupp, Department of Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Ignacio Rodriguez, Department of Teaching and Learning
- Dr. Paul Sale, Department of Human Development and School Services
- Dr. Hilda Silva, Department of Organization and School Leadership
- Dr. Eva Torres, Edinburg CISD

Stakeholder Engagement

We engaged a range of stakeholders through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Over 150 stakeholders participated in the strategic planning process.

Timeline

The strategic planning process took approximately 12 months beginning in May 2023 and concluding in May 2024. Below is a description of the phases.

May 2023

- Dean Alma Rodriguez sent an invitation to the CEP faculty list-serve inviting faculty members to join the CEP strategic plan taskforce.

June 2023

- Dean Alma Rodriguez organized a CEP strategic plan taskforce and brought the group together to explain expectations for the strategic planning process. Dean Rodriguez established clear roles and responsibilities for the CEP strategic plan taskforce including gathering stakeholder feedback in the process.

September-December 2023

- The taskforce engaged CEP's diverse stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, community, and school district partners. The taskforce disseminated a stakeholder survey and data at the Graduate Faculty Meeting (September 22nd) and CEP Advisory Committee Meeting (October 20th).

January 2024

- The taskforce created provisional core values and requested feedback via a survey.
- The taskforce sent an update about the strategic planning progress and process to the CEP faculty list-serve.

February 2024

- The task force gathered additional feedback at a CEP faculty meeting.

March 2024

- The taskforce presented the draft of a new strategic plan to the CEP Dean.

April 2024

- The taskforce sends the draft of the strategic plan to the provost for review and feedback.
- The taskforce presents the draft of the strategic plan to the CEP Advisory Committee meeting.

August 2024

- Send draft of strategic plan to entire CEP faculty and announce that we will seek feedback at the CEP Faculty Fall Meeting (August 19).
- Seek feedback from CEP faculty at faculty fall meeting (August 21).
- Respond and revise strategic plan based on feedback and recommendations at the CEP fall faculty meeting (August 22 to August 28).
- Send strategic plan to CEP faculty for a vote (August 29).
- Announce results to CEP faculty.

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