

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES UPDATE

Tuesday, March 19, 2019



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE SYMPOSIUMS

Giant puppets! Sea turtles! Disaster preparedness! On February 12 and 13, the university was treated to presentations from the ten projects funded in 2017-18 with the launch of the UTRGV strategic plan. The presentations demonstrated the depth and breadth of the work being done by UTRGV faculty, students, and community partners. They showed how the university is already undertaking work to advance UTRGV's strategic goals, with projects that reflect the university's mission, vision, and values. For more information about these projects, including project reports, visit [www.utrgv.edu/strategic-plan/resources/symposium/](http://www.utrgv.edu/strategic-plan/resources/symposium/).



## FACULTY WORKLOAD

The Faculty Workload Committee worked to develop Faculty Workload Procedures to be used in tandem with the College/Department Faculty Workload Policy. The document provides recommendations to chairs on how to facilitate the creation of the workload effort plan. A Faculty Workload Rubric was also developed to support deans in evaluating department level policies. This document addresses purpose, definitions, and structure; transparency and shared governance; fairness and equity; and faculty assignment and resource allocation. Finally, the committee approved a revised Memorandum of Appointment (MOA) for Tenured/Tenure Track faculty. A similar document will be developed for lecturers.



## CAMPUS CONNECT

The Campus Connect Committee (C3) shared a summary report detailing three areas of focus: Communication, Academics, and Leadership Visibility

and Presence. Included in the report were suggestions on how to address each of these areas:

- Communication - the Campus Connect co-chairs, in coordination with the President's Office, are working to design a webpage to serve as a one-stop shop for faculty and staff resources.
- Academics - Academic Affairs has completed a technical review of all undergraduate academic programs to identify curricular roadblocks that may be impeding student retention and time-to-graduation. The primary focus of this work was to identify course and program inefficiencies as evidenced through an analysis of course scheduling, course enrollment patterns, program road maps, and similar sources of information. The colleges are now in the process of addressing findings in order to ensure transparency for UTRGV students. Furthermore, a database of course offerings over the past two years has been created to identify any gaps or issues. The database has been compiled and was shared at a retreat on March 6 with deans, associate deans, and chairs. The committee is conducting an analysis to determine action items. Included in this analysis will be recommendations for "Signature Programs" that are campus based. These efforts will provide the needed transparency in course and program offerings so students can make sound educational decisions. The committee will continue to share updates as they become available.
- Leadership Visibility and Presence - ensuring leadership at all levels is visible and available across all campus locations continues to be a priority. Specific recommendations will be forthcoming.



## CAMPUS CLIMATE

Since January 2019, division/department-wide meetings have been taking place to review the results of the survey at the institutional, divisional and departmental levels. The Office of Human Resources and the Staff Senate have partnered to develop a group of survey facilitators who attend these meetings and facilitate the conversations regarding the findings of the survey. Each division/department is challenged to develop an action plan focusing on the top 2-3 areas identified as needing improvement. Everyone's participation is needed in order to ensure that everyone is heard! Action Plans are due in April 2019 and follow up status reporting will be needed in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020.



### B3

The B3 Institute has been working diligently to increase the number of courses offered bilingually or in Spanish. In addition, the Institute has created a course for faculty and staff designed to develop basic Spanish language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing within a cultural framework. Participants will acquire the vocabulary and grammatical structures necessary to communicate and comprehend at the beginner level. In addition, they will:

- develop communicative competence at the beginners' level through the enhancement of listening and speaking skills in Spanish, which will allow them to converse with ease and confidence in communicative interactions;
- develop the use of critical thinking skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking;
- enhance vocabulary, reading, writing and listening abilities;
- develop the ability to structure sentences and short compositions in Spanish that are clear, cohesive, and logical;
- demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of Spanish grammar at the beginners' level.



## STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT PLANNING

The first phase of the Strategic Enrollment Planning process that began in August is almost complete. The three cross-functional working groups (undergraduate, graduate, and health-related programs) have developed and are finalizing situation analysis documents. These documents consist of a thorough review of data and the identification of key performance indicators. The strategy and action plan development phase of the process will begin in April followed by a prioritization summit in May. Implementation of the plan is scheduled for Fall 2019. A great big thanks to all the faculty and staff who have worked and continue to work on this extremely important plan that will set the course for UTRGV's future enrollment goals and strategies.



## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is expanding at UTRGV and contributing to student success through several innovative programs and events. The first cohort of Sustainability Fellows was selected this year to conduct graduate level research regarding sustainability on campus and beyond, by engaging with the campus as a living lab as well as carrying out laboratory research that contributes to solving global sustainability challenges. One Sustainability Fellow's research involves collaboration with campus operations to carry out a campus-wide Green House Gas Emissions Inventory for the first time, while another will be researching student hunger. IC-SAC, the International Center for Sustainability Across the Curriculum, is a prestigious designation that UTRGV has earned by making a national impact through academics. Only 13 other universities in the nation host annual ICSAC conferences which successfully result in new undergraduate or graduate level classes focused on sustainability topics. These courses often yield faculty and student work that represents UTRGV at national and state conferences, such as the Texas Regional Alliance for Campus Sustainability. Pamela Herring, a lecturer in the UTRGV Department of Writing and Language Studies, presented at TRACS 2019 on her students' environmental awareness engagement efforts, and Marianella Franklin, Chief Sustainability Officer, presented on the transformational effects of education for sustainable development on a local alternative school. Beginning next fall, UTRGV will offer a 12-hour Certificate of International Sustainability Management.



## STRATEGIC PLAN

Subcommittees representing each of the core priorities and other areas of focus are hard at work developing goals to further refine their subject area, objectives that define how UTRGV will move toward those goals, and metrics that can be used to measure progress. These will be used as the basis for the development of action plans that will identify specific programs and initiatives to enable UTRGV to meet its objectives and advance its goals. Draft action plans will be due mid-May and will be presented to the campus community early in the Fall semester for discussion and feedback.