

**The University of Texas System Academic Institutions'**  
**Activities Related to Reforms Suggested at the**  
**Governor's Higher Education Summit**

Breakthrough Solution #1: Measure Teaching Efficiency and Effectiveness and Publicly Recognize Extraordinary Teachers

- Teaching efficiency, as measured by class size, varies widely from small classes to very large classes (25 to 600 students)
- Another measure of teaching efficiency is the student to faculty ratio, ranging at UT System (UTS) academic institutions from 19:1 to 27:1
- Teaching efficiency is also monitored by class size policies in some institutions
- Teaching effectiveness scores on student evaluations are published on the web at many UTS academic institutions; the UTS Student Advisory Council has endorsed the use of web-based publication of these evaluations for all UTS institutions
- All UTS academic institutions measure teaching effectiveness through faculty evaluations performed annually and on a six year post tenure review cycle (see Breakthrough Solution #4 for more detail)
- Evaluation of teaching effectiveness includes the patterns and trends of student evaluations over several years rather than a single course, curriculum materials reviewed by peers, classroom teaching reviewed by peers, and external reviews by faculty from other universities
- In some institutions teaching effectiveness evaluations are done by professional evaluators in preparation for remedial teacher training as necessary
- Some institutions assess employer satisfaction with student preparation which is a measure of both program and teaching effectiveness
- Teaching effectiveness is also assessed via the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), where all UTS academic institutions measure student engagement in classroom, active learning, collaboration with other students, and interaction with faculty, with results published in the UTS accountability report

Breakthrough Solution #2: Recognize and Reward Extraordinary Teachers

- All UTS academic institutions value and recognize extraordinary teachers via highly selective and rigorous financial bonus/award systems
- Bonus/award systems operate at department, college, institution, and UTS level
- Bonus/award levels range from \$500 to \$7000 each, either as one-time bonuses, continuing salary supplements, or some combination thereof
- Student evaluations are a critical component in the selection process for awards, as well as evaluations by peers, department chairs and alumni
- In addition to financial bonuses/awards, faculty may be recognized by special and distinguished titles; awards are often bestowed upon the faculty at college, institutional or UTS level ceremonies

- Excellent teachers are also rewarded through annual salary merit raises based on a consistent pattern of high performance in the classroom

#### Breakthrough Solution #3: Split Research and Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence

- The concept of excellence in all UTS academic institutions fundamentally involves the linking of inquiry, discovery and new knowledge as the basis of teaching and learning – this is called research education
- University missions can be highly complex involving various combinations of teaching, research and service
- Faculty have a combination of teaching, research and service activity as they practice research education
- Cost basis accounting is utilized where appropriate to separate budgets and expenses related to research from other institutional activities
- Some faculty salaries are fully supported by externally derived funds for scholarly/research activities; additionally, UTS academic institutions have centers and institutes where salaries are supported 100% externally and bring revenues to the university in the form of indirect cost recovery, typically in the range of 8%-50%
- Research faculty are rewarded by receiving a share of the externally generated indirect cost funds for reinvestment in the research enterprise
- At UTS academic institutions, some discipline based departments are entirely supported by the university; teaching is the predominant activity, but research education is also expected and practiced
- Between these two extremes, there are many combinations and variations of the three key activities of teaching, research and service
- Some faculty neither teach nor conduct research as they assume full-time administrative duties as required by the institution

#### Breakthrough Solution #4: Require Evidence of Teaching Skill for Tenure

- Evidence of excellence in teaching skills is a fundamental requirement for all tenure considerations and all academic promotions
- Teaching skills of all tenure track faculty are evaluated every year during the six year probationary period
- For assistant professors at the third year stage of the tenure track, an especially rigorous review is undertaken utilizing external reviewers, as well as student and peer input
- Negative reviews of teaching can result in termination of the tenure process at any stage
- Faculty can be denied tenure due solely to poor teaching performance
- Evidence of teaching awards and recognition are highly valued factors in the tenure process
- Evidence of poor teaching performance after tenure can trigger post tenure review at any time, where remediation and/or teacher training are required



- Evaluation of teaching skill includes curriculum design, pedagogical skill, knowledge of subject matter, classroom engagement, concern for student learning, assignments and grading
- Evidence of teaching skill involves student ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 for all courses taught by an individual faculty member over the course of several years; patterns and trends are more telling than a single class performance; and patterns and trends are carefully examined throughout the entire tenure track period
- It is not unusual that half of those entering tenure track are not awarded tenure, with teaching skill being a fundamental variable in faculty being unsuccessful in the tenure process
- A fundamental concept in the tenure process is that faculty are expected to bring to the classroom what they learn from their scholarly/research activity, regardless of discipline

#### Breakthrough Solution #5: Use "Results-Based" Contracts with Students to Measure Quality

- Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is a reporting mechanism designed to provide institutional and performance information of value to prospective students and families, policymakers and the public at large
- All UT System academic institutions participate in the VSA, as adopted by more than 300 universities nationwide, and for which the UT System has played a leadership role
- VSA includes measures of graduation rates, placement rates, average class size, customer satisfaction, and value added through institutional experience, including student learning assessment results
- All UTS academic institutions are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (SACS)
- SACS requires institutions to provide students with specific learning outcomes for each academic program, such as engineering or history
- SACS requires that the skills, tools and lessons that the curriculum is designed to transmit be stated clearly in each course's syllabus, including the method that students will use to evaluate the course and the teacher
- The UTS accountability document, one of the most highly regarded in the nation, on a broader scale serves the purpose of a results-based contract that informs legislators and the public at large, as well as other educational institutions, about the quality and performance of UTS institutions

#### Breakthrough Solution #6: Put State Funding Directly in the Hands of Students

To be addressed by the Governor's Office

#### Breakthrough Solution #7: Create Results-Based Accrediting Alternatives

To be addressed as a statewide initiative



## THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

### System Actions and Discussions related to the Governor's Higher Education Reform Solutions

#### Breakthrough Solutions

#### *1. Measure Teaching Efficiency and Effectiveness and Publicly Recognize Extraordinary Teachers*

##### *a. Gather the data and measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness*

- i. The data required to carry out these actions are available with the exception of the average student satisfaction rating. However, this item will be addressed with the implementation of the System-wide Faculty Evaluation tool initiated by Chancellor McKinney and the Board of Regents. Currently faculty evaluation tools are not uniform across departments within an institution, and vary widely between institutions. The new tool will allow for comparisons within and between departments, colleges, and institutions.
- ii. Implementation of this evaluation will require significant work at the individual institutions in order to distribute, collect and organize the results of the survey. Once this process is in place, it will be possible to make the evaluative analyses that are suggested under this solution.
- iii. Current faculty evaluations which are carried out using existing student evaluations, portfolio reviews, class observations, and departmental/college reviews for promotion and tenure provide multiple opportunities to evaluate teaching effectiveness.
- iv. The use of class size as a measure of teaching efficiency must be balanced with the recognition that faculty in various disciplines are limited to the number of students who may be enrolled in particular courses. Nursing for example is limited in the number of students that may participate in individual training courses. Although many programs have class limits based upon individual faculty preferences, others are limited based upon the classroom size or available teaching material such as lab space. Individual institutional leaders can evaluate the benefits and disadvantages inherent in particular class sizes to establish clear policies which will guide limitations or expansions of current class sizes.

##### *b. Publicly post the student satisfaction ratings and number of students taught for each teacher in several prominent locations at their respective colleges*



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- i. The results of the faculty evaluations could be distributed in a variety of media including the internet. By posting the results on individual faculty or departmental web pages, it will be possible for students and the public to review their scores and determine the faculty with the highest student evaluations.
- ii. Posting of the scores in a variety of places around the department is possible, but the use of the internet as the distributive mechanism will reduce costs significantly.

## 2. *Recognize and Reward Extraordinary Teachers*

- a. Chancellor McKinney has already begun the process of establishing Voluntary Faculty Excellence Awards based upon the Faculty Evaluation tool. Each semester, the top 3% of faculty will receive \$5,000 with an additional \$30 per student above 25 that is taught up to a maximum of \$10,000. The next 15% of the top faculty will receive \$2,500 with an additional \$15 per student above 25 to a maximum of \$5,000.
- b. In order to reduce the chance of grade inflation, each institution would be responsible for evaluating on a semester basis the correlation between Evaluation scores and average class GPA. If the correlation becomes too high, then steps may be taken to provide a sliding scale for the evaluations that would require higher scores from faculty whose course GPA was significantly higher than that of other faculty in the department or college.
- c. The Faculty Evaluation tool described in section 1 above will be created using a total of 20 questions with 5 questions developed from each of the following groups:
  - i. System Faculty Senates,
  - ii. Chancellor's Student Advisory Board,
  - iii. System Presidents/Provosts, and
  - iv. Chancellor
- d. The cost of the program at each individual campus is being evaluated in order to determine the cost to the institutions. Funding for these programs is being sought through a variety of sources.

## 3. *Split Research and Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence*

- a. *Separate budgets and reward systems will be created to pay teachers to teach and to pay researchers to conduct valuable research.*
  - i. This mechanism will require a long-term approach as the changes to internal budgeting procedures would have to be revised dramatically to accommodate this new process.

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- ii. Study will have to be undertaken to evaluate the potential implications regarding highly specialized degree programs which have few students and may not generate sufficient income to offset the teaching cost without supplementation from other areas.
    - iii. The A&M System is in the process of developing a renewable contract policy for faculty which would allow institutions to hire faculty who may or may not meet all qualifications for tenure, but who have exceptional skills in a particular area such as teaching or research and give them a longer term employment guarantee than semester to semester as is currently available for lecturers and adjuncts. These contracts would allow exceptional faculty to focus their efforts on a particular aspect of their craft with a measure of support from a longer term contract.
  - b. *Faculty with tenure would have the option of shifting to the new, more lucrative reward system but would not be required to do so.*
    - i. Giving the option to existing faculty will create two cultures within the institution which could generate a variety of problems in terms of equity of pay, especially within institutions that are currently working to improve their minority faculty recruiting efforts.
  - c. *Departmental and college budgets would be on the number of students taught and sponsored research dollars.*
    - i. This is very closely tied to the manner in which departmental budgets are built at present. Departments receive funding based upon the number and level (undergraduate/graduate) of semester credit hours that are generated and the amount of sponsored research that is developed by the faculty.
    - ii. Many departments may receive supplemental funding if they are not able to generate sufficient credit hours or sponsored research to cover the costs of the program. Institutions supplement these budgets in order to ensure that necessary or specialized programs continue as an important part of the institution.
  - d. *Encourage a culture shift to performance pay.*
    - i. Limiting the leadership of the institution to those who agree to participate in the new budgeting and reward structure will require that a significant investment in training of administrators at all levels be undertaken as many existing and experienced administrators choose not to change their reward structure. The A&M System is currently working to develop a formal training structure for new department heads in our efforts to promote highly qualified faculty to administrative positions.

#### 4. *Require Evidence of Teaching Skill for Tenure*

- a. *Require evidence of teaching skill for tenure*



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- i. All tenure and promotion committees are charged to ensure that faculty recommended for promotion and/or tenure be held to strict standards for teaching effectiveness and skill. These evaluations can include using both student evaluations, peer evaluations, department head and dean evaluations.
  - ii. Requiring that 75% of all faculty teach three classes with 30 students per class to be considered for tenure will definitely change the culture of research institutions. Clarification will be needed to determine if this 75% will be required to do any research, or merely teach 3 classes. If they only teach 3 classes and do no research, then they would not be achieving the level of teaching efficiency that most faculty achieve in the regional institutions.
  - iii. Creating a class of tenure dedicated strictly to research is an excellent opportunity to recognize that excellence in research and excellence in teaching do not always come in one person. It will however take away from students many opportunities to learn from the practicing experts in their fields. The goal of the A&M System in creating the long-term contracts for faculty is to meet this need for attracting high-quality faculty researchers who do not wish to teach or work with students.
- b. *Customer (student) satisfaction ratings would be used to determine teaching effectiveness.*
- i. The use of the new Faculty Evaluation tool will provide an excellent mechanism to be included in the overall effectiveness of teaching. It may be beneficial to tie the required score to a departmental, college or institutional midpoint, rather than setting an explicit minimum score such as the 4.5 out of 5.0 in the proposed solution.

### 5. *Use "Results-Based" Contracts with Students to Measure Quality*

- a. *Universities will provide each applicant with a "learning contract"...*
  - i. Creating a website with the necessary information would be the cleanest way to provide this information to applicants and the public at large. The National Voluntary System of Accountability will host much of this information, but to have everything in one location could require the creation of a new site.
  - ii. Collecting data on graduates and their starting salaries is a challenging task, especially if the relevant question is the starting salary "in their field." This is due to the fact that many students are unable to find placement in their chosen field and end up taking any position that is available. Students are also notoriously prone not to respond to employment surveys from their alma mater.

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- iii. Using the Texas Workforce Commission data on employment and salaries may enable institutions to track their graduates who remain in-state, but leaves out those who will work outside the state.
  - iv. Existing Class Syllabi provide the information to students regarding expectations for the course, the faculty member, and the students. Grading requirements, learning outcomes, and material assignments are included.
6. *Put State Funding Directly in the Hands of Students*
- a. To be addressed on a statewide basis.
7. *Results-Based Accrediting Alternatives*
- a. To be addressed on a statewide basis.





### "Breakthrough Solutions"

This document describes the status of the University of Houston with respect to 5 of 7 "breakthrough solutions", prior to any additional actions being taken as a result of the recent initiative presented to university regents at the Governor's Higher Education Summit held on May 21, 2008. As described below, there are many recurring processes and initiatives underway at UH consistent with these solutions. We are in the process of considering appropriate modifications.

In a conference call held on June 16, 2008, Texas regents collectively decided not to address solutions #6 and #7 given that these are expected to be addressed by the Legislature and/or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

### STATUS of UH

#### Solutions #1, #2 & #4 – Teaching Efficiency, Effectiveness, & Rewards

##### Scholars and Teaching

- University of Houston faculty members are more than teachers; they are scholars, innovators, and explorers. They teach their students how to be teachers, researchers, explorers, innovators and entrepreneurs. They teach them how to think beyond what has already been discovered.

##### Teaching Excellence

- The University of Houston expects and values high quality teaching by all instructional faculty members, be they tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure track.

##### Student Satisfaction

- Each student is encouraged to express his or her level of satisfaction upon completion of each course. End of course evaluations are administered to give students the opportunity to reveal and document their level of satisfaction with the course materials and the quality of instruction.
- Teaching effectiveness, as evidenced by student evaluations, contributes data for the annual merit review process for all faculty members. The merit review process is tied to a faculty member's annual salary.

- Student satisfaction findings contribute to faculty evaluations and the identification of opportunities for improving instruction.

#### Public Disclosure of Student Satisfaction Ratings

- Student satisfaction ratings of teaching performance are compiled for each instructor by course and posted for public review in the university library. Students have access to these ratings.

#### Monetary Awards for Excellent Teaching

- The University of Houston Teaching Excellence Awards for outstanding faculty and teaching assistants/fellows carry cash prizes of \$5,000 for faculty and \$1,000 for teaching assistants/fellows. Eight Teaching Excellence awards are granted to faculty: four awards are reserved for exceptional tenure or tenure-track professors, two awards are reserved for tenured or tenure-track faculty who teach University Undergraduate Core Curriculum courses, one award is reserved for faculty who have demonstrated excellence in innovative teaching using instructional technology, possibly including but not limited to hybrid courses, online courses, and instructional television, and one award is reserved for outstanding faculty who do not have tenured or tenure-track positions, including Instructors, Clinical Faculty, Research Faculty, Artist Affiliates, and Lecturers. There are two awards reserved for teaching assistants/fellows.

#### Teaching Excellence & Tenure

- Tenure is awarded to a faculty member either upon appointment or following a probationary period. Tenure is awarded only after a rigorous review at the department, the college, and the university level based on criteria including evidence of teaching excellence.
- The post tenure performance review process “intended to ensure that each tenured faculty member consistently performs at an acceptable professional level” is utilized. This process provides recurring reviews of teaching performance.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

- Learning outcomes are defined for each program. The extent to which students learn specified outcomes is regularly assessed. Assessment findings contribute information for improving teaching and learning.



### Solution #3 – Split Research & Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence in Research & Teaching

#### Teaching and Research mission

- As a metropolitan research university, UH is engaged in innovation, teaching, knowledge generation, instruction, service, and commercialization. Teaching excellence at UH involves linking inquiry to instruction, which is the unique mission of a research university.
- Separating research from teaching would deprive our students of learning from scholars.

#### Faculty Expectations

- Faculty members are expected to conduct research and scholarly activities; effectively teach new knowledge; and provide service to their communities. These integrated activities are tracked through faculty assignments and reviewed annually.
- Research faculty are encouraged to use external research funding to support their salaries during the summer, with the result of incrementing their annual salaries.

#### Budgets

- Departmental budgets are primarily derived from student enrollment and supplemented by research budgets.
- Separate budgets are assigned to grants, contracts, and sponsored research initiatives.
- The Office of Research is putting in place a formula for allocation and reallocation of indirect cost funding based on whether or not the college or department met specific sponsored research targets.

#### Recognition

- Annually UH publicly celebrates the research accomplishments of faculty with monetary awards.
- Tenure is awarded to faculty, either upon appointment or following a probationary period, only after review at department and/or college as well as university level based on criteria that include evidence of research excellence. Annual merit reviews and resulting salary adjustments place significant emphasis on evidence of scholarly activity. In disciplines where external funding opportunities exist, the amount of external funding weighs heavily on faculty evaluations.

## Solution #5 – Results based contracts with students

### Excellence

- The UH degree signifies that a person has not only acquired basic knowledge, but has learned how to innovate and explore in their field. It is the interaction with a faculty of scholars that makes this possible.

### Student success information

- Student success is dependent on a student's ability to access information, complete degree and course requirements. UH provides information to each student in university catalogs, on web sites, and through advisement services.
- Students are provided with information on specific degree requirements by their advisors, in admissions materials, catalogs, and the university web site.

### Student "contracts"

- Once enrolled students are provided academic advising to assist them in identifying a planned program of studies to guide their completion of required and elective courses. Program plans are signed by individual students. Program requirements are posted on college and department web sites for easy access by students.
- Each UH instructor provides a syllabus for each course. Syllabi specify learning outcomes, course activities, and expectations for success.

### Learning outcomes

- Consistent with the accreditation requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, learning outcomes are specified for each program, each course, and subject to recurring assessment.
- UH participates in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) and provides information to students and families on institutional performance related to student success and satisfaction.



## Seven "Breakthrough Solutions"

*The following provides a synopsis of some of the current UNT Initiatives in support of teaching excellence.*

### Regents Workgroup 1 – Solutions 1, 2, 4

#### 1) Measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness and publicly recognize extraordinary teachers

- All courses and faculty are currently evaluated by students, and these evaluations are used in determining tenure, promotion and merit awards. UNT supports further examination of measurements of teaching performance.
- Since March 2008, UNT has been engaged in an extensive review of student evaluations of teaching with the goal of creating a stronger assessment which provides greater comparability and controls for influencing factors such as student grades and class size. The results of these assessments can be posted for web access.
- UNT is committed to taking assessment of teaching beyond measuring satisfaction to the actual measurement of student learning. Each academic program has identified student learning outcomes and implemented assessment processes to track improvement. UNT's success rates in teacher certification and similar competency exams are consistently at the top of the scale of certification exams at 98-99%.
- UNT is nationally recognized for teaching excellence in large classes and has received more than \$2 million in federal and state funds to further develop and share this expertise.
- UNT promotes student choice by providing excellent on-campus and distance learning opportunities. Highly ranked nationally, UNT is first in the state in the provision of online courses, based on semester credit hours.
- UNT has leveraged technology to create an electronic storehouse of teaching resources, so that all who design and deliver instruction can use these resources in multiple course applications, increasing both efficiency and quality of presentation.

#### 2) Recognize and reward extraordinary teachers

- UNT has a workload policy that ties merit rewards directly to work assignments. Under the policy, faculty members who excel in teaching are rewarded for their excellence. UNT supports the study of methods to recognize and reward extraordinary teachers.
- Through the UNT Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, faculty members are provided a broad range of services to improve teaching effectiveness and assess learning.

- The student body annually selects a faculty member for the 'Fessor Graham Award, which recognizes outstanding and innovative teaching. The J.H. Shelton Excellence in Teaching and President's Council Teaching awards also are given annually and include a monetary award. New teacher-scholar awards for junior faculty and teacher-mentor awards for senior faculty are being developed by the Regents Professor Selection Committee.
  - The university already recognizes excellent Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows annually.
- 4) Require evidence of teaching skill for **tenure**
- All faculty members must demonstrate teaching ability to be considered for tenure. No faculty member may opt out of having their teaching reviewed as part of the tenure process.
  - UNT's promotion and tenure guidelines make it clear the university expects excellence in teaching as well as research and/or creative activity.

### Regents Workgroup 2 – Solution 3

#### 3) Split research and teaching budgets to encourage excellence in each

- UNT will explore national best practices in this regard and seek to reconcile this concept with the Governor's initiative linking commercialization to the tenure process.
- This concept currently exists in many health science centers, but UNT has not applied this division of research and teaching in its academic community.
- UNT has done a preliminary study of Responsibility Centered Budgeting, in which discretionary income is based on measured faculty productivity of both teaching and research.
- The best and most efficient universities have focused on blending these two parts of academic work life that functions as a synchronistic whole, particularly within a research university. (Please see Ernest Boyer, *Scholarship Revisited*.)

### Regents Workgroup 3 – Solution 5

#### 5) Use learning contracts with students to measure quality

- All UNT classes must have a syllabus, which defines the course expectations for students. The Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues define the expectations for each degree program.
- All majors have specific learning outcomes, as required by SACS. As part of re-accreditation last year, UNT revised and updated all such outcomes, identified the means of assessment and documented improvements made. These could readily be made public.
- The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), initiated by NASULGC and AACSB, provides online access to information on class size, graduation rates, student engagement, etc. UNT is an "early-adopter" of the VSA.



**Texas Woman's University**  
**Responses to Proposed "Breakthrough Solutions"**  
**7-18-07**

**Solution #1: Measure Teaching Efficiency and Effectiveness**

**Measuring Teaching Effectiveness**

In recognition of the complexity of teaching and learning, TWU employs multiple methods of measuring teaching effectiveness that include the following:

- Faculty courses of all types (face-to-face, online, and blended) are evaluated by students through end-of-course evaluations, with objectively scored items as well as open-ended responses from students.
- The teaching of each faculty member at TWU is evaluated annually by a peer review committee and/or the departmental administrator, and subsequently by the dean of the college.
- The teaching of faculty in the probationary period is routinely observed and evaluated by the departmental administrator.
- Course-embedded assessment is used to evaluate student learning outcomes, thus providing data about the quality of the instruction.
- Student performance in internships is evaluated by the on-site supervisor, thus providing data about the quality of the instruction.
- Student success in acceptance to graduate school and in job placement provides data about the quality of instruction, advising, and mentoring.

**Enhancing and Measuring Teaching Efficiency**

Teaching efficiency is enhanced by supporting student success, by maintaining efficiency in policies and practices, and by supporting curricular efficiency: course offerings that match student needs without excess duplication or discretionary courses. The following are methods in which TWU supports and/or measures efficiency in teaching:

- Supporting student success and reducing need to re-teach:
  - Monitoring year-to-year retention rates
  - Monitoring high-risk course pass rates
  - Providing academic support/ tutoring
  - Limiting repeats of courses and excess hours



- Efficiency in structure of curriculum:
  - Reduction of most undergraduate majors to 120 credit hours
  - Development of transfer articulation agreements for most undergraduate majors with major feeder community colleges; increasing effectiveness of transfer of credits with additional advising, staff, and online tools.
  - Federation cross-registration agreement with neighboring university graduate programs reducing duplication of courses/ teaching in this region of the state
  - Use of technology including video and e-learning to send courses to distant campuses and students
  - Internships and cooperative education courses which are “taught” by worksite professionals, supervised by faculty
  - Redesign of large enrollment courses in math and computer science
  - Development of fast-track BS to MS programs allowing students to begin graduate work early
- Institutional policies and practices that promote efficiency:
  - Providing preference for required courses in summer scheduling
  - Providing scheduling preference for large enrollment classes to maximize space utilization
  - Offering evening and weekend classes
  - Offering cross-listed classes when courses serve two or more disciplines
  - Avoiding duplication of courses through reviews of new course approvals
  - Limiting small classes with regular monitoring
  - Increasing faculty-to-student ratio in last 10 years to state average – with increased class sizes.
  - Considering faculty-to-student ratio in budget decisions
  - Employing instructional assistants so that professors can instruct more students in online courses

#### **Solution #2: Publicly Recognize and Reward Extraordinary Teachers**

- Graduating seniors nominate faculty as recipients of the “Favorite Faculty Award.” These faculty are honored once a semester at a Senior Breakfast.
- Four annual awards for outstanding teaching: Mary Mason Lyon Award for Distinguished Junior Faculty, Faculty Award for Distinction in Teaching, Faculty Award for Distinction in E-Learning, and Faculty Award for Innovation in Academia. Each of these awards is given with a cash prize.
- Nominating faculty for external awards: Two outstanding TWU faculty were named as 2007 and 2008 Piper Professors by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation. The award, which includes a \$5,000 stipend, is awarded to only 15 Texas faculty each year.

- Individual colleges at TWU honor extraordinary faculty members annually with awards such as: Outstanding Teacher, Outstanding Research Mentor, Outstanding Academic Mentor/ Advisor, and Outstanding Student Service Sponsor.
- Outstanding teachers are nominated to teach in study abroad programs (e.g., Harlaxton College) and to receive Fulbright Scholarships.

### **Solution #3: Split Research and Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence in Both**

At TWU, research is both practiced and taught by graduate and undergraduate faculty in order to enhance student learning and prepare future faculty as well as to produce new knowledge.

- Separate research budgets are used for grants, contracts, and research activities.
- Faculty members are encouraged to use external funding to conduct research projects.
- Cost-basis accounting is used to separate budgets and expenses related to research from other institutional activities.
- Although budgeting for research and teaching might be separated, the linking of activities of research and teaching provides many benefits to students, such as opportunities to participate in and learn about research through first hand experience.
- The TWU Annual Student Creative Arts and Research Symposium showcases the joint research of students and faculty; the Minority Biomedical Research Support program also introduces students to research and supports their pursuit of careers in biomedical research.

### **Solution #4: Require Evidence of Teaching Skill for Tenure**

TWU policies are based on requiring effective teaching. Teaching includes not only formal classroom, laboratory, clinical, and online instruction, but advising, and directing undergraduate and graduate independent study, internships, research, professional papers, artistic projects, theses and dissertations as well.

- For the awarding of tenure, TWU requires knowledge of the subject, an ability to present material clearly, and an ability to motivate students to learn.
- Evaluation of teaching for tenure includes the extent, quality and significance of the candidate's teaching.
- Evidence of teaching, advising and mentoring effectiveness is best judged by the peer review process. It may include, but is not limited to the sources listed below:



- Peer observations of teaching
- Peer examination of a teaching portfolio
- Student evaluations
- Honors or special recognitions for teaching
- Grants related to instruction
- Development of new programs, courses and/or teaching innovations
- Preparation of publications to be used in class
- Reports from alumni and their employers
- Recognition of the quantity and quality of advising responsibilities
- Evidence of student achievement
- Service learning and internships directed

#### **Solution #5: Use "Results-Based" Contracts with Students to Measure Quality**

TWU employs results-based contracts with students in two ways: to guide individual learning and to support retention. TWU uses several variations of learning contracts in many undergraduate and graduate programs. Learning contracts are individualized, but the level of student self-direction varies. For example:

- Some graduate programs make extensive use of learning contracts through the proposal process for independent studies, theses, and dissertations. Students generate goals for research and learning and present these for approval to faculty mentors prior to completion of the projects/ courses.
- Honors Capstone Projects and Honors Course Contracts comprise about 25% of honors credits. Honors Contracts allow students to do additional work to enhance a regular class for honors credit.
- Programs which require or highly encourage internships or independent performance generally use some form of learning contract. For example:
  - Social Work students use a learning contract for required internships.
  - Dance students develop syllabi and learning contracts for independent studies; performance and choreography course classes also use project proposals/contracts for undergraduate and MFA classes.
  - Undergraduate art and fashion majors use a form of learning contracts for required internships in photography or graphic design.
- Programs which offer student independent research opportunities, for example:
  - Health Studies students complete an independent capstone project which includes development of grant projects for self-selected topics; assessment is defined by the syllabus.
- Some graduate clinical students prepare their learning objectives and these are shared with clinical preceptors and professors; these contracts include the basis of their assessment.



- Some clinical programs, a significant focus at TWU, also employ contracts for support of retention.
  - Nursing and Physical Therapy programs provide students who are having difficulties in the program with learning contracts to improve course completion and retention.

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY (SFA)**  
**Seven Breakthrough Solutions**

**Solution 1: Measure Teaching Efficiency and Effectiveness and Publicly Recognize Extraordinary Teachers**

*Gather the data and measure teaching efficiency and effectiveness*

Teaching efficiency and effectiveness is measured at Stephen F. Austin State University using a variety of measures. The data collected includes data mentioned in the Seven Solutions document: annual faculty evaluations by department chairs and review of the faculty activity reports; course evaluations by students every semester; number of students taught by faculty; the salary and benefits for faculty; the student course evaluations; and the grade distribution statistics of faculty.

This information is used when evaluating faculty. However, it is used based on the discipline being taught. As an example, there are certain disciplines in which professors are unable to teach large numbers of students because of the nature of the material being taught and the availability of teaching facilities. Some disciplines such as Music, Dance and Theatre require faculty members to teach small classes because of the individual nature of the instruction. In addition, certain campus facilities limit the number of students allowed in a class. For example, the chemistry labs at SFA will only accommodate 20 to 25 students, the piano lab in Music accommodates 16 students, and the digital media lab in Art has availability for 22 students.

Faculty must meet a required workload as stated in university policy, which outlines the number classes a faculty member must teach each fall and spring semester. (Most faculty members must teach 4 three-hour classes every fall and spring semester.) These workloads are compiled and used to evaluate faculty members at the departmental level. In addition, faculty members are required to engage in research and scholarship and professional service activities.

Teaching loads and teaching effectiveness are large parts of how a faculty member is evaluated. However, faculty members are also evaluated on other duties including scholarship, research, service and student advising. Just as an attorney must work many hours before appearing in court for a few hours of litigation, faculty must prepare well in advance for each class they teach. This requires knowledge of current practices and research in the field as well as the creation of new knowledge to provide the most up-to-date information.

*Publicly post the student satisfaction ratings and number of students taught for each teacher in several prominent locations at their respective colleges.*

Student satisfaction ratings and the number of students taught by a faculty member are not posted publicly because these measures have not proven to be reliable measures of teaching effectiveness. Information about class size is provided informally through the academic advising process, which every student is required to utilize.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY (SFA)  
Seven Breakthrough Solutions

**Solution 2: Recognize and Reward Extraordinary Teachers**

*Student Course Evaluation*

Currently, SFA uses a standard student course evaluation campus-wide, which contains a common core of questions and which can be tailored by each department to address issues specific to the discipline taught. Results from these evaluations are used at the departmental, college, and university levels when determining promotion, tenure, and merit salary increases for faculty members. These are also used as part of the annual faculty member review by the department chair.

*Teaching Awards*

A variety of teaching awards are given to SFA faculty. The most significant of these are the Teaching Excellence Awards, which provide \$1,000 per faculty member and are presented in a public ceremony each year. The money for these awards is budgeted from education and general funds. Graduate assistants are not eligible for these awards; recipients must be full-time employees of the university.

Faculty members are monitored at the departmental level on their assigned grade distribution; this practice has assisted in curbing grade inflation.



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY (SFA)  
Seven Breakthrough Solutions

**Solution 3: Split Research and Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence**

*Separate budgets and rewards systems will be created to pay teachers to teach and to pay researchers to conduct valuable research.*

At SFA all faculty members are required to teach, to conduct research or creative work, and to provide professional service as part of their workload. Because of SFA's mission as a comprehensive university, faculty members are not awarded tenure based only on research. SFA prides itself on being primarily a "teaching institution."

Budgets for sponsored research and contracts are maintained separately at SFA. Few SFA faculty members are released from teaching responsibilities to conduct research. SFA has only one faculty member who is a full-time researcher and tenure is not available for this position. Other faculty members are released from teaching responsibilities for research for short periods of time, usually to fulfill grant responsibilities. Even though these faculty members are conducting research, they are also teaching the graduate assistants they hire to conduct research. Therefore, the line between teaching and research is blurred and difficult to separate.

*Departmental and college budgets would be based on the number of students taught and sponsored research dollars.*

College and departmental budgets are based generally on the number of students taught. There is no formula for this; however, larger numbers of students require more faculty and administrative support.

The administrative budget is tailored to the needs of the unit rather than a percentage of the budget. The number of grants, accounts, and personnel managed determine the level of administrative support required.

*Encourage a culture shift to performance pay.*

Only the faculty members who perform well are eligible for merit-based salary increases and summer teaching assignments. (Almost all faculty contracts are based on the 9 month academic year; therefore, courses taught in the summer term represent a significant pay bonus.) In addition, selected faculty members receive teaching awards in recognition of excellent performance.

In choosing faculty for certain administrative positions, institutional leaders examine each individual's skills to determine his or her potential for success in administrative roles.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY (SFA)  
Seven Breakthrough Solutions

**Solution 4: Require Evidence of Teaching Skill for Tenure**

*Require evidence of teaching skill for tenure*

All faculty members at SFA must demonstrate teaching effectiveness in order to receive tenure or promotion. Research only professors are not eligible for tenure. Since the requisite teaching skills vary widely due to differences in specific disciplines, evaluation of teaching skill is performed primarily at the departmental and college levels as part of the pre-tenure, tenure, and promotion reviews.

SFA provides considerable support for improvement of teaching skills. The Teaching Excellence Center is centrally located on campus and is directed by two faculty members. This center offers teaching seminars and workshops that address specific issues and topics and skills as well as teaching circles. These provide the faculty numerous opportunities to share best teaching practices among their peers and to learn new approaches and techniques from master teachers from on- and off-campus. In addition, the Office of Instructional Technology provides classes to improve the use of technology in teaching, particularly in teaching distance education courses. A portion of a \$500,000 faculty development fund is used to improve faculty teaching skills.

*Customer (student) satisfaction ratings would be used to determine teaching effectiveness*

SFA uses the "student course evaluation" survey at the end of the semester to determine the experience of a student with the course and the instructor. These evaluations are used as one element in determining the teaching effectiveness of faculty.

There is some concern about making direct comparisons of these evaluation results, particularly in light of the differences in maturity and experience of varying student populations. Some faculty only teach freshman level classes; therefore, those classes are composed of primarily 18-year old students just out of high school. Other faculty may teach only graduate students, who have an undergraduate degree and are between the ages of 25 and 30. These unique student populations potentially have a large impact on the quality of teaching evaluations since their judgments are based on widely varying experiences.

With this in mind, SFA uses other indicators to determine teaching effectiveness. These include peer review; self-evaluation; administrative, alumni and employer ratings; and learning outcome measures.



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY (SFA)  
Seven Breakthrough Solutions

**Solution 5: Use “Results-Based” Contracts with Students to Measure Quality**

*Universities will provide each applicant with a “learning contract” that discloses, at a minimum: the graduation rate, placement rate and average starting salaries for a student with the equivalent entering admissions test scores (SAT) and major.*

At SFA this information is collected and disseminated informally through the academic and career advising processes. It is challenging to compare all students based on the performance of their peers in previous years because the job market is constantly changing. Students also have varying interpersonal and organizational skills, which may or may not provide them a like experience in the job market to their peers. Without a homogeneous student body of like personalities, ambitions, career goals, etc., the value of such a comparison is questionable. Research has shown that a university degree prepares one not for a single job but for our changing economy in which many of today’s students will be employed within the next ten years in jobs that do not even exist today.

*Teachers will provide for each student enrolling in a course a classroom learning contract*

Every faculty member is required to produce a syllabus for each class. The syllabus details expectations of the students and delineates expected learning outcomes.

Students do not sign a contract in order to enroll at SFA. However, in each class, the syllabus explains what learning outcomes may be expected if a student fulfills class expectations.



**MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Seven Breakthrough Solutions**  
**Report on Current Activities**

**Breakthrough Solution #1: Measure Teaching Efficiency and Effectiveness and Publicly Recognize Extraordinary Teachers**

- By policy, the center of Midwestern State University's faculty merit program is effective teaching.
- Midwestern State University students currently evaluate every course and faculty member at the conclusion of each course in the fall and spring semesters.
- It is generally agreed that student evaluations of faculty teaching represent one effective tool in the evaluation of teaching performance. At the end of each academic year MSU chairs compile student evaluation data along with other faculty performance data, including grade distributions and faculty reports on their activities during the past academic year, to write an evaluation of each faculty member that is maintained as a part of a faculty member's permanent record.
- Student evaluations and other faculty performance criteria determine compensation, promotion, and the granting of tenure. Additionally the most outstanding faculty, identified based upon teaching performance and professional activities, are recognized and compensated in numerous ways above base raises.
- Examples include the naming of the Hardin Professor each year by the Hardin Foundation of Wichita County and the naming of Regents' Professors by the Midwestern State University Board of Regents upon recommendation of the university's administration. The Hardin Professor receives a \$3,500 cash award and the Regents' Professors receive a salary increase of \$10,000 and funds for faculty development and research. Additionally, nine faculty at MSU hold professorships that pay a yearly bonus of \$5,000-\$20,000, and one faculty member holds an endowed chair.
- Midwestern State University is now utilizing the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which will measure student engagement in university programs and activities. This information will assist as the university measures its effectiveness.
- Numerous student groups on campus, including the Midwestern State University Student Government Association, select and recognize an outstanding faculty member each year. This recognition is shared with the university community as well as the local Wichita Falls community through various media outlets and university publications.

### Breakthrough Solution #2: Recognize and Reward Extraordinary Teachers

- As indicated in the response to #1, teaching effectiveness is a key component in decisions related to faculty merit increases and student evaluations are utilized in determining the level of teaching effectiveness.
- In addition to merit salary increases, faculty may be rewarded by distinguished titles, which also include a salary perquisite.
- Information regarding faculty awards and rewards are shared with the local and campus community through media outlets and university publications.

### Breakthrough Solution #3: Split Research and Teaching Budgets to Encourage Excellence

- At Midwestern State University faculty members are encouraged and, in fact, engage in research, often together with students.
- Research and professional productivity are used in all disciplines to evaluate faculty for promotion or for the granting of tenure.
- Undergraduate research in a number of academic areas is an important element of a student's academic experience.
- Midwestern State is not at all well suited for separating its faculty or its budgets into research and teaching components since research is integrated into teaching.

### Breakthrough Solution #4: Require Evidence of Teaching Skill for Tenure

- The granting of tenure at Midwestern State University is based largely on the proven teaching effectiveness of a faculty member.
- Other criteria are used, such as scholarly productivity and public service, but proven teaching effectiveness is the heart of the Midwestern State University tenure policy.
- Individuals who achieve tenure have proven their teaching effectiveness and competency over time. Individuals who do not have such skills are dismissed prior to the tenure review process.
- Midwestern State University has established a Teaching and Learning Resource Center (TLRC). The TLRC seeks to promote a collaborative community supportive of teaching excellence.



#### Breakthrough Solution #5: Use "Results-Based" Contracts with Students to Measure Quality

- Midwestern State University uses several tools including teaching contracts with students. That is, each faculty member presents to all classes taught a syllabus that includes the specific objectives of the course and the method used for testing students' mastery of the content. Syllabi, which have the force of a contract, are required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in its accreditation process.
- MSU continues to refine and improve its documentation to be certain that course objectives are clear and that students understand how they are expected to demonstrate their mastery of course objectives.
- Midwestern State University, along with all other senior institutions of higher education in Texas, will participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). Developed through a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), the VSA is a reporting mechanism designed to help institutions be accountable to the public with regard to the quality of the institution and its stewardship of funds entrusted to it through online access to information on graduation rates, average class size, educational outcomes, future plans, and cost.

#### Breakthrough Solution #6: Put State Funding Directly in the Hands of Students

To be addressed by the Governor's Office

#### Breakthrough Solution #7: Create Results-Based Accrediting Alternatives

To be addressed as a statewide initiative