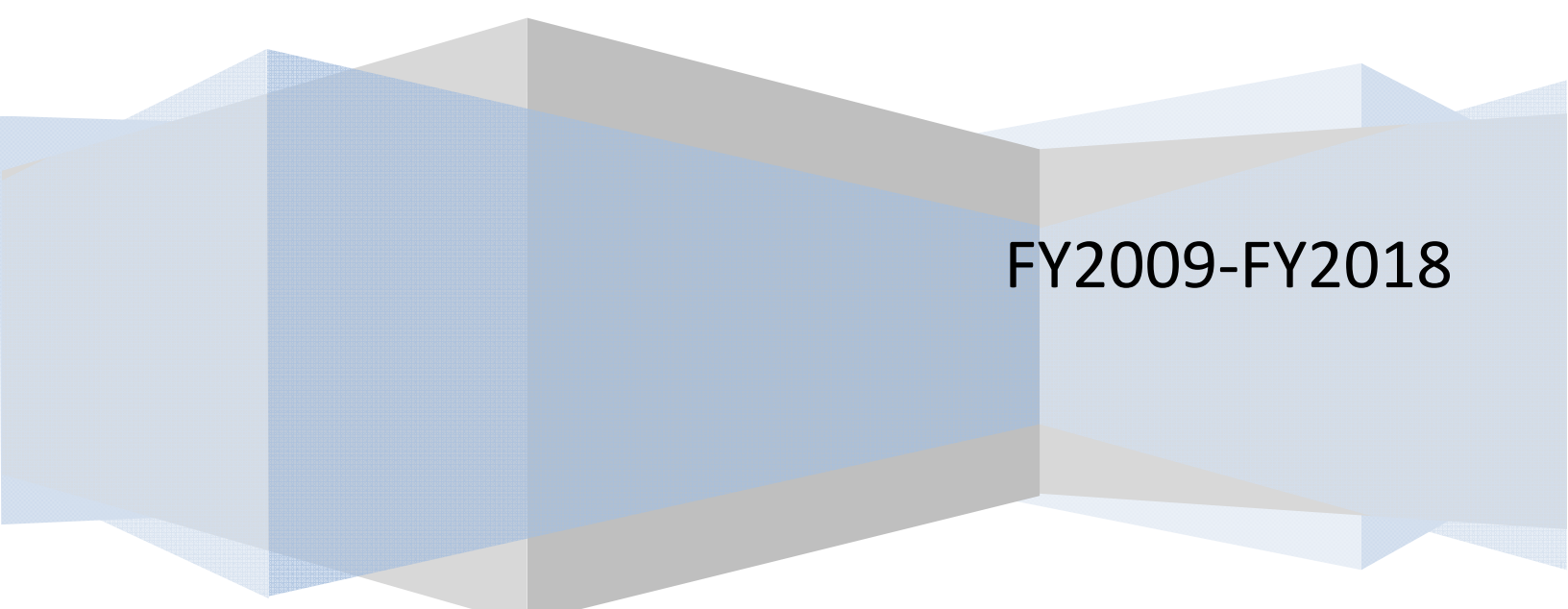


# **Strategic Opportunities**

## **Division of Student Affairs**

**The University of Texas at Dallas**



**FY2009-FY2018**

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**Strategic Opportunities  
Division of Student Affairs  
The University of Texas at Dallas  
FY2009-FY2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In response to The University of Texas at Dallas' (UT Dallas) strategic plan, *Creating the Future*, the Division of Student Affairs initiated a strategic planning process that involved conversations with all units in the Division. Each unit was asked to project a plan that reflected what the unit will look like in ten years and what steps will need to be taken to get there. Unit plans were then compiled into this comprehensive division-wide plan, which outlines the Division's strategic goals and initiatives for the next decade. Steps have been taken to ensure the alignment of this plan with the overall University strategic plan and institutional priorities.

Student Affairs serves a critical role in ensuring the education of the whole student and achieving the academic mission of the institution. The UT Dallas Division of Student Affairs is committed to achieving this critical, educational role and to providing a wide array of operationally efficient programs and services that support students' academic endeavors, their personal growth and development and their quality of life. The Division is comprised of the following services and programs:

- Activities Center
- Athletics
- Career Center
- Child Care
- Comet Center
- Counseling Center
- Dean of Students Office
- Disability Services
- Greek Life
- Health Services
- Health Education
- Housing Operations
- International Student Services
- Judicial Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Living Learning
- New Student Programs
- Recreational Sports
- Residential Life
- Service Learning
- Spirit Program
- Student Involvement
- Student Government
- Student Media
- Student Union

In addition, Student Affairs administrative services are provided through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). These services include budget forecasting and management, strategic planning, assessment, web and marketing services, new program development, grant writing, staff development and personnel planning and oversight.

Student Affairs departments are currently housed in the Student Union, Activities Center, McDermott Library, University Village, and the Administration Building. Plans are underway for the construction of a new student services building. Upon completion of that facility, a number of Student Affairs units will vacate their current spaces and will be relocated to the new building. In addition, a new residential facility and a new dining hall are currently under construction.

Primary funding for Student Affairs services, programs and buildings is currently generated by the Student Services, Student Union, Recreational Facility, Medical Services, International Student Special Services fees, and Housing Revenues. New funding sources will be available through the Student Services Building Fee and the Athletic Program Fee beginning fall, 2008. Other funding sources include a variety of grants, gifts, sponsorships and program-specific user fees. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and its administrative functions, the Career Center internship program, Judicial Affairs, and Disability Services are funded through state and designated tuition allocations.

## **VISION**

It is our desire to be one of the best student affairs programs in the nation. As a relatively young program, we are well-positioned to succeed in developing and implementing high-quality, innovative, student-focused programs and traditions that result in graduates who are satisfied and successful.

In order to serve a growing multifaceted and diverse student population, we must:

- Prepare students to maximize the value of their University experience as well-educated graduates and citizens.
- Meet the dynamic needs of students through extra- and co-curricular programs and services that specifically enable students to meet their academic and life goals;
- Proactively support and contribute to the University's efforts to improve retention and graduation rates by engaging students in the life of the University;
- Embrace the cultural pluralism of UT Dallas and view the diversity of the student body as an organizational strength and a mandate for the Division's programs and services and;
- Provide transitional support to all students through the various stages of their university experience and into life after graduation.

Student Affairs strives to live its mission through a commitment to the following guiding principles:

- Education and Advocacy
- Integrity
- Inclusion
- Quality Service
- Research and Innovation
- Excellence and Accountability
- Commitment to Community Involvement and Service

## MISSION

The role of Student Affairs is to enrich the educational and university experience for students by providing outstanding services and programs from enrollment to graduation. Student Affairs plays a key role in supporting the University's commitment to produce engaged graduates, prepared for life, work and leadership in a constantly changing world.

## RATIONALE

The out-of-class experiences provided through Student Affairs serve not only to increase students' knowledge and skills and enhance the educational mission of the University, but also as an avenue to apply their knowledge and skills, clarify their values, and become more self-aware. As UT Dallas continues to grow and evolve, it is becoming a more traditional university campus. A wider variety of service and program demands have accompanied this evolution. The Division of Student Affairs is trying to address these changing demands by designing and delivering a wide array of programs and services that intentionally augment the in-class experience of UT Dallas students and support the overall mission of the University, including the new living/learning environments being created as a part of the new residential facility currently under construction.

## PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

This strategic plan has been created within the context of the following planning assumptions taken from the UT Dallas *Creating the Future* document, previous assessment and strategic planning efforts, professional literature, professional experience and conversations with students.

1. Campus enrollment will increase by 5,000 FTE students over the next ten years, at an annual rate of 3-4% overall and 10-12% in new students, for a total FTE of 16,000 and a total enrollment of 21,000.
2. A ratio of 60% undergraduate and 40% graduate students will likely be maintained.
3. The percentage of more traditional-aged college students will continue to increase.
4. Pressure will increase to improve retention, graduation and "time-to-degree" rates.
5. Resources will likely not keep pace with the needs of a growing enrollment.
6. Limited resources will demand more intentional assessment and continuous process improvement efforts, leading to more data-driven decisions.
7. The financial environment will continue to place higher demands and pressures on students.
8. Parents will continue to be more actively engaged in their student's educational experience and will have higher expectations for service and outcomes.
9. The need for both internal and external collaborative partnerships will increase.
10. UT Dallas will experience greater cultural, ethnic, racial, geographic, economic and generational diversity.
11. Students will rely more heavily on financial, job and career-related services.
12. Student demand for more costly, personnel-intensive resources will increase (i.e. disability, counseling, health, career, and childcare services).

13. Students are likely to be more interested in community service, spirituality, campus activities and other opportunities for involvement.
14. As more knowledgeable consumers, students will likely be more demanding on campus student services organizations.
15. Students and their parents will put a much stronger emphasis on safety and security concerns.
16. Students will be much more technologically savvy and will likely demand more technology-based services.
17. Continued investment in staff development will be essential to serve students effectively and to meet the challenges brought about by a growing, diverse population.

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

Student Affairs will invest in the following strategic initiatives to support the learning and developmental needs of UT Dallas students:

1. Enhance student life programs and services, with a more intentional focus on student learning and development
2. Provide quality facilities to accommodate expanded services, programs and 4000 residential students
3. Tell the UT Dallas Student Affairs story better
4. Strengthen and expand internal and external collaborations and partnerships in order to leverage and grow resources and provide meaningful, integrated programs and services
5. Build a culture of accountability through assessment and continuous improvement

Through the achievement of these five initiatives, the Division of Student Affairs will make significant contributions to the retention and success of students and to the successful implementation of the UT Dallas mission and strategic plan over the next ten years.

### **Initiative One: Enhance student life programs and services, with a more intentional focus on student learning and development**

Programs and services offered by Student Affairs are not simply extracurricular; they are an integral part of the broader campus curriculum. The student learning experience should be a seamless one, with every contact point providing an educational opportunity. Through the following programs and services, Student Affairs will provide such seamless, educational opportunities for UT Dallas students as they prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

#### ***Action 1.1      Student Transitions***

Student success does not happen by accident; it is dependent not only on students' individual efforts but also on the level of support and learning opportunities provided by the institution. Recognizing that the needs of students are different at every stage of their college experience, Student Affairs has defined several student support programs to be further developed over the next ten years to assist students in achieving the milestones necessary to their ultimate success. The programs and services to be offered will include both new and enhanced offerings, packaged

in a way to provide a more intentional focus on the specific needs of students at various stages of the university experience, a stronger class identity, leadership development, getting students more engaged and building more school spirit and traditions. The effectiveness and success of these programs will be dependent upon active collaborations and partnerships among all Student Affairs units as well as other campus departments.

*Freshman Year Experience (FYE)* - The *FYE Program* will help students make the most of their first year in college. Programs and services will focus on the transition into higher education and independent living. Students will be given a variety of opportunities to help them understand the university environment, meet and bond with new friends, get involved in campus life and the community, manage their personal affairs and lay a solid foundation for academic success. These opportunities include Orientations, Comet Camp, Success Camp, Living Learning Communities, the Emerging Leaders Program, Service Learning, Experience Dallas, an annual end-of-year celebration ritual, a summer reading program, Road Warriors, the Comet Cup and, in partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Education, the Rhetoric 1101 course and Convocation.

*Sophomore Year Experience (SOYE)* - The sophomore year has often been termed the “lost year” or the “sophomore slump” because students receive so much intentional support in the freshman year that they tend to feel “lost” when that support is no longer available and the “thrill” of the first year is gone. As a result, attrition between the sophomore and junior years increases. The *SOYE Program* is being developed to provide the support sophomores need to be successful. The focus of the *SOYE* will be to help students more fully understand themselves, define their career and personal life goals, develop their skills as citizens and leaders, and manage their involvement in campus life without jeopardizing their academic performance. The *SOYE* will include a sophomore residential experience, a welcome back program, mentoring, money management, career exploration, study abroad opportunities, self-assessment, leadership development, community service, wellness programs, Experience Dallas and Road Warriors.

*Transfer Year Experience (TYE)* – Research shows that transfer student experiences are diverse and that they tend to have distinct needs from other students who are new to the university. They often struggle in their transition to a new institution. The *TYE Program* will be developed to ensure that students who transfer to UT Dallas have a smooth transition and get connected right away. The focus of the *TYE* will be to provide opportunities to develop a sense of belonging as well as positive relationships with faculty, staff and students. A new *TYE* office and website will be established as one-stop “front doors” to the university, and a *TYE* Program Coordinator will be identified to support this new program. Attempts will be made to reach out to community college students who have signed up for the Comet Connection Program to engage them even before they are officially enrolled at UT Dallas. Components of the *TYE Program* may include special orientation programs, targeted communications, residential living-learning and service opportunities, career development, Experience Dallas, mentoring and leadership programs, and other special cultural and social events. In addition, a Tau Sigma chapter, an academic honor society designed specifically for transfer students, will be established to recognize and promote the academic achievements of transfer students.



*Senior year Experience (SRYE)* - College seniors are often overwhelmed with the realization that they will soon be “on their own” as college graduates. A *SRYE Program* with a focus on ensuring a successful senior year while planning for the next life transition will be developed. The *SRYE Program* will allow students to celebrate their successes and to take advantage of opportunities such as Experience Dallas, Service Learning, job search preparation through a Career Coach, graduate/professional school exploration, workshops on financial planning, time management, professional networking, preparing for potential separation from friends and family, and staying connected as alumni. The *SRYE Program* will also include opportunities for service and celebration of achievements.

### ***Action 1.2     Student Learning and Development***

Research shows that students who are actively involved on campus will likely have a more satisfying and successful experience; thus, Student Affairs provides UT Dallas students with a wide variety of living and learning contexts in which to develop, apply and practice their skills and knowledge. Student Affairs is committed to maximizing opportunities for students to integrate their in- and out-of-class educational experiences. In collaboration with other campus partners, the following programs will be further developed over the next ten years.

*Leadership Development* – A more comprehensive leadership development program that encompasses all developmental levels, from emerging- to engaged- to enterprising-leaders will be refined and implemented. Student Affairs will continue to enhance established programs such as Emerging Leaders, the Women’s Leadership Conference, Peer Mentoring and Servant Leadership and will work toward establishing a Leadership Development Center and active participation in the national Kellogg Foundation Leader Shape Program. In addition, leadership development opportunities will continue to be provided through Student Government, the Student Union & Activities Advisory Board (SUAAB), the Student Organization Forum (SOF), Student Media (which includes *The Mercury*, Radio UTD and *A Modest Proposal*), and the Student Fee Advisory Committee and other campus committees.

*Living Learning Communities (LLC)* – Students’ living environments can play a vital role in their personal, social and intellectual growth. In fall, 2006, Student Affairs started a living-learning program for freshman to establish a link between their academic and personal development. The goal of this program is to integrate curricular and co-curricular learning and to facilitate more faculty-student interaction. Living-learning communities allow participants to share common academic and residential experiences that ultimately lead to greater peer support, student engagement and retention. During the next ten years, the UT Dallas Living-Learning Program will be expanded to include at least 500 student participants in fifteen freshman and non-freshman living-learning communities. Options for non-residential learning communities will also be explored. In addition, the Living-Learning Program will promote a new faculty-in-residence component to the program and explore other ways to increase faculty and staff involvement.

*Service Learning* – The UT Dallas Service Learning Program takes a “Leadership in Action” approach, giving students opportunity not only to serve but to engage in the educational process that accompanies such service. The program integrates community service, instruction and



reflection to teach civic responsibility, teamwork, and problem solving in real-life situations. The program will continue to be expanded to include a wider array of service opportunities, more connections with academic courses of study and a greater awareness of the significance of students' contributions to their community.

*Student Involvement* – Student Involvement programs are an extremely important part of campus life. These extra- and co-curricular programs provide a wide variety of opportunities for student development, learning, leadership, community building, service and interaction among students, faculty and staff. Activities and programs that fall within this area include registered student organizations, Greek Life, the Student Union & Activities Advisory Board (SUAAB), Student Government, Spirit Squads and Late Night Programs. Engaging a growing student body with varied interests will require the availability of a larger number and variety of student organizations. Efforts will be made to grow the number and types of opportunities for involvement over the next ten years, with a target of 300 available student organizations.

The goal is to expand the Greek Life Program to twenty-five recognized chapters over the next ten years. The Greek Program will be assigned dedicated space in the Student Union as it becomes available to accommodate the initial expansion of the program. Working with the national Greek organizations, Student Affairs will evaluate potential funding and support for Greek housing and/or a Greek lodge to support the expanded program. In addition, efforts will be made to hire more Greek student affairs professionals and to educate the UT Dallas campus about the value of having Greek organizations on campus.

The Student Union & Activities Advisory Board (SUAAB) sponsors and/or co-sponsors over 70 events each year, providing a wide array of cultural, musical and social events for students. Serving on the Board itself gives students valuable learning and leadership opportunities. Over the next ten years SUAAB will expand and enhance programming to include an even greater emphasis on building tradition and community at UT Dallas. Assuming the availability of appropriate funding, SUAAB will reinstitute the “Big Event” and will continue to play an active role in family day and homecoming activities as well.

The Student Government (SG) provides valuable opportunities for students to practice their leadership and community-building skills. Working to ensure that they represent the majority voice of the student body, SG and Senate members and their advisors will continue to evaluate current services and implement new services as appropriate. In addition, SG will continue to pursue electronic voting options for annual elections, conduct feasibility studies and initiate appropriate support mechanisms (including fee referenda, etc.), and work more closely with other student leaders (such as SUAAB, SOF, and Greeks). Student Affairs will continue to work with SG leadership to identify areas within the organization that need University support. For example, the Communications Chair will work more closely with the Student Affairs Marketing Manager to market events and the work that SG is doing on behalf of students, and the Technology Chair will work more closely with the Student Affairs Web Manager to ensure a quality web presence and sound, secure technical practices related to the SG office.

With an increase in the number of more traditionally-aged college students at UT Dallas, school spirit has begun to grow. The spirit squads, which include cheerleading, the dance team (Power

Dancers), spirit groups (UTD Crush and Diamond Dolls), and the mascot have helped to enhance school spirit and will be further developed in the future. A change in the mascot and the development of a school fight song are currently underway. As the campus community rallies around these projects and the spirit squads, school pride and spirit are expected to elevate.

The award-winning *Mercury* and Radio UTD continue to offer information forums and outlets for expression by students and for students under the umbrella of Student Media. Both offer students opportunities to practice leadership, decision-making, administrative and business skills. Over the next ten years, current forms of media will be enhanced and new forms of media will be explored. In addition, oversight and advisement for *A Modest Proposal* will be moved to the Student Media umbrella in fiscal year 2009. Future efforts will include ways to connect the various forms of media being used more intentionally to ensure appropriate coverage of news and a wider range of entertainment for constituents. Student Media will also enhance collaborations and partnerships with student organizations to create new media projects and will expand advertising sales to raise funds to support the program.

To further enhance the university experience, the Experience Dallas program will offer opportunities for students to connect with the greater Dallas-Fort Worth community. University-sponsored cultural, recreational, entertainment, and other community events will be offered throughout each academic year to help students experience what the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex has to offer. In addition to these University-sponsored events, students can take advantage of discount tickets to other area attractions and events through the Comet Center.

*Career Development* – The Career Center plays a major role in helping students to integrate their liberal and professional education while preparing them for life, work and leadership. Over the next ten years, the Career Center will focus on the expansion of experiential education programs, including job shadowing and internships that give students opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-life settings. Through Career Clubs, credit-bearing courses, workshops, career counseling, and major- and industry-specific employer events, students will have opportunities to define their career and life goals and find their niche in preparation for life after college. A more intensive career coaching program will also be developed to help graduating students prepare for a successful job search and first professional experience. The Career Center will also work with other units to expand career development efforts to student employees, mentor and peer assistant programs.

*International Student Services* – The international student population is a very important component of the UT Dallas culture and mission. The International Student Services Office (ISSO) provides a wide variety of programs and services to help international students in their transition to U.S. culture and their development as global leaders. Over the next ten years the ISSO will continue to expand its services and programs to meet the ever-changing and ever-growing requirements of Homeland Security and the needs of a growing international student population. The focus of ISSO programs will be leadership development, mentoring, retention, student engagement and global education. The ISSO will continue to work with the Global Village student organization to get more international and domestic students involved in global education and leadership programs and will look for opportunities to expand campus and community partnerships in support of international students. Looking to the future, programs

such as cross-cultural service learning, international living learning communities, international student success, international speakers' bureau, international student diversity council, English as a second language and international alumni chapters will be developed to ensure the success of UT Dallas international students.

### ***Action 1.3     Student Health and Wellness***

Recognizing that student success is dependent upon their mental and physical well-being, the Student Counseling and Student Health Centers and the Health Education Program are committed to delivering high-quality health and wellness programs and services. With this in mind these units will continue to assess the needs of the student body, enhance current services and programs and add new services and programs to meet the needs. Student Affairs will consider the expansion of medical services to include on-site x-ray and lab services and a women's clinic. The new Student Services Building, currently in the planning stages, will provide needed space for these expanded services.

The Health Education Program will expand collaborations with other campus units to offer wellness components to as many student programs as is relevant and feasible. Health Education will continue to expand the Alcohol and Other Drug Program (AOD) to promote healthy choices, minimize risks and create a culture in which abstention from the use of alcohol and other drugs is acceptable. Student Affairs will also consider the possibility of adding a dietician and related programming to its offerings.

The Student Counseling Center will also expand collaborations and affiliations with campus and community resources in order to expand programs and services that address students' mental and emotional health. The Student Counseling Center will play a major role in the new Behavior Assessment and Intervention Team (BAIT) and will reach out to campus departments more proactively to raise awareness and educate the campus community on issues related to mental and emotional health.

### ***Action 1.4     Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreational Sports***

Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreational Sports provide students an outlet for recreation and competition at various levels. They also provide many opportunities for learning, leadership and personal growth. The Intercollegiate Athletics Program will continue to build on past successes and will also explore what the next phases of the program should be as UT Dallas grows. One of the first considerations for the program will be the addition of football and/or track programs. This endeavor will include the partnership of the City of Richardson for facility provisions. The CHAMPS Life Skills Program, which provides leadership and life skills training for student athletes, will also be reinstituted, and fund raising and development efforts will be expanded. UT Dallas is committed to a strong NCAA Division III athletic program. At some point in the future, the University will grow to a scale where consideration could be given to a different competition level. It is not clear when that time might come.

The Recreational Sports Program will continue to expand club sports and intramural teams, as well as indoor and outdoor recreational options. Club Sports will be expanded to include a

minimum of twelve teams. Both the intramural and the club sports programs will include expanded leadership development and team-building programs. Recreational options will include a climbing wall, ropes course, boulder grotto, and a skate park, as budget is available. The group exercise program will be expanded to include cross fit, deep water aerobics, and jazzercise. Non-credit classes, such as ballroom dance, salsa and water safety instruction, will also be added. The personal training program will continue to grow its clientele to over 50 members.

## **Initiative Two: Provide quality facilities to accommodate expanded services, programs and 4000 residential students**

Physical spaces and the quality of facilities can enhance or impede learning, social interaction and service delivery. Student Affairs has set forth a plan for the renovation of current facilities and the construction of new facilities that will facilitate student learning and development and the delivery of high-quality customer service. Every attempt will be made to ensure that facilities are environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

### ***Action 2.1      Student Services Building***

Planning for a new Student Services Building is already underway. This building will be located adjacent to the Student Union building and will house a number of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management offices, including the Career Center; Counseling Center; Dean of Students Office; Disability Services; Health Services and Health Education; Housing Operations and Residential Life; International Student Services; Judicial Affairs; Living Learning, Service Learning and New Student programs; the Multicultural and Women's Centers; Financial Aid, Registrar, Bursar and Enrollment Services. Co-locating these programs and services will make it more convenient for students to take care of business and access the resources they need. It will also free up space in the Student Union, McDermott Library, Hoblitzelle Hall and the Conference Center that can be used for the expansion and enhancement of other student and academic support programs.

### ***Action 2.2      Residential Facilities***

Residential facilities to accommodate an estimated 4000 students will be needed over the next ten years. Construction of a new 400-bed residence hall to open in fall, 2009, is already underway. A new dining facility adjacent to the Student Union will open at the same time. The new residential facility will be the first of its type on the UT Dallas campus and is being built to enhance the living learning community concept. A minimum of two additional residential facilities (including a 400-bed and a 700-bed facility with satellite "grab-and-go" food service) and an additional dining facility will need to be constructed during the next ten years as well. Planning for the next 400-bed facility will begin within the next few months. In addition, apartments in phases V and VI of University Village will need to be renovated. Providing quality living conditions for residential students is a high priority and crucial to an effective learning environment.

### ***Action 2.3     Student Union and Other Student Support Facilities***

Generally, students spend as much or more time doing other things as they do attending class and studying. The Student Union generally serves as the hub of that activity. After moving the Student Affairs programs and services already mentioned into the new Student Services Building, the Student Union will continue to house the Comet Café, the Pub, game room, TV room, lounge areas, the Comet Center (ID cards and Experience Dallas), meeting rooms, Student Government, Radio UTD, *The Mercury*, Greek Life, SUAAB, the Center for Student Involvement (CSI), and Student Union and Student Involvement administrative offices. As funding becomes available, the Student Union will need to be renovated, and additions to the building will need to be considered. These renovations and additions will need to provide space for the expansion of current programs and the addition of new programs, such as a Leadership Center. In addition, several major infrastructure projects must be addressed, including roof replacement and electrical updates. Ultimately a new 250,000 square foot building will need to be constructed; at least the planning for this new building will need to commence within the next ten years.

Student Affairs will also need to address the needs of a growing Greek program and consider the construction of a Greek Lodge with at least twenty-five chapter rooms. The construction of a non-denominational chapel that would be open to all religions is also under consideration. A chapel would provide a place for religious activities, weddings and memorial services to address the spiritual needs of the campus community.

### ***Action 2.4     Athletic and Recreational Facilities***

To accommodate anticipated enrollment growth and the expansion of both the intercollegiate athletic program and the recreational sports program, Student Affairs, with the help of external partners, will need to invest in a number of improvements and expansions of current buildings and facilities and in the construction of new facilities over the next decade. These new and improved facilities will provide more opportunities for competition, recreation, social interaction, spectator and fan growth, team building, and leadership development to a growing, diverse student body.

As funding becomes available, the athletic program will need a space for hospitality and recruiting events. Athletics will also need to improve the baseball, softball and soccer facilities, including the construction of covered spectator stands, a press box, concession and on-site locker facilities. Continued expansion and enhancement of field maintenance services will need to be addressed annually to provide the quality and safety of the space for participants and spectators. In addition, a new tennis facility with six indoor and twelve outdoor courts, spectator viewing areas, locker rooms, restrooms, office space and team rooms will need to be constructed. In order to add an intercollegiate track program, a new regulation track facility will need to be constructed. Planning will also need to begin for the construction of a new Intercollegiate Athletic Building that includes practice courts, offices, locker rooms, an academic enhancement center, strength and conditioning facilities, merchandise shop and conference room. The construction of a new athletic facility will compliment efforts for the expansion of the indoor recreational sports program in the current Activities Center.

The Recreational Sports Program will also need an outdoor recreation complex, including a 50-foot climbing wall; a 100-yard high/low ropes course; and a team-building course. In addition, an outdoor *sportsplex*, including two outdoor basketball courts; two sand volleyball courts; a sundeck with a splash pool; and a picnic area with outdoor restrooms and showers will need to be constructed. Other facilities under consideration for the recreational sports program are a boulder grotto and a skate park.

### ***Initiative Three: Tell the UT Dallas Student Affairs story better***

The growth and change in UT Dallas from a graduate institution to a more traditional campus has presented many challenges to Student Affairs. Demands on programs and services have grown, and staff members have worked hard to address the changing needs and expectations of a diverse student body; however, the story of Student Affairs at UT Dallas needs to be told better and more aggressively in order to engage more students, faculty and staff in the Student Affairs learning experience.

#### ***Action 3.1     Marketing and Web Development***

A web developer and a marketing manager were recently added to the Student Affairs staff to coordinate a more cohesive communication plan and begin the process of telling the story better and more consistently through print and electronic media. These efforts will continue to be enhanced during the next ten years. Unit websites will be reviewed and re-designed to speak to a more technologically-savvy group of students. Units will also explore new technologies available for the electronic delivery of programs and services where appropriate. Student Affairs will continue to review the marketing needs of individual units and will look for ways to share resources and streamline communication efforts.

#### ***Action 3.2     Recruiting Prospective Students***

Student Affairs will continue to play an active role in recruiting efforts with the Division of Enrollment Management to entice prospective students to be a part of UT Dallas because of its exciting Student Affairs programs. Units will continue to participate in recruiting events sponsored by the Office of Enrollment Services and will also look for opportunities to include prospective students and their families in campus life events and communications. Understanding that effective recruiting continues until students are actually sitting in the classroom and throughout their first year on campus, Student Affairs units will continue to develop and deliver quality programs and communications throughout the process.

#### ***Action 3.3     Newsletters and Annual Report***

Student Affairs will develop and produce a periodic Student Affairs newsletter to be distributed in print and on the web and a comprehensive annual report publication highlighting the major accomplishments of the Division each year. Individual units will continue to produce unit-level annual reports, and units such as the Career Center, Student Activities, Housing Operations, Student Health Center and New Student Programs will continue to produce and distribute their own newsletters as well.



### ***Action 3.4      Campus Connections***

Student Affairs will continue to work with the Office of the Vice President for Communications to identify new marketing opportunities and to coordinate internal and external marketing and communication efforts. Annual meetings with Deans and other campus constituents will be held to keep them informed about activities and initiatives in Student Affairs and to solicit their input. Student Affairs will also capitalize on other opportunities to share the story, such as alumni and other UT Dallas departmental publications and publications of professional associations where appropriate.

#### **Initiative Four: Strengthen and expand internal and external collaborations and partnerships in order to leverage and grow resources and provide meaningful, integrated programs and services**

The most effective institutions use an integrated approach to learning that involves collaborations and partnerships among all campus units. An integrated approach is also more efficient in that it affords opportunities to share resources and eliminate duplication of effort. To achieve this integrated, seamless learning environment, Student Affairs will focus on strengthening current partnerships and reaching out to form new partnerships and collaborations that lead to new resources and learner-centered programs and services.

### ***Action 4.1      Academic Partners***

Student Affairs has enjoyed a productive partnership with Academic Affairs at UT Dallas, but as the University grows and student and parent expectations increase, that partnership will need to be strengthened and expanded. Student Affairs will reach out to academic colleagues to collaborate on programs, assessment, research and enrichment activities for faculty, staff and students, beginning with the new GEMS program and the Office of Educational Enhancement. Student Affairs will be proactive in finding meaningful, productive ways to be involved in the GEMS program. Academic colleagues will be asked to collaborate and participate in the various learning programs coordinated by Student Affairs, such as the Living-Learning Communities, Service Learning, Leadership Development, and Freshman-, Sophomore-, Transfer- and Senior-Year Experience programs.

In consultation with the academic schools, the Career Center will expand credit-bearing course offerings, experiential learning opportunities, and major-specific career programs. Judicial Affairs and the Dean of Students will continue to work closely with faculty on matters related to academic integrity. Disability Services will expand their efforts to inform faculty and staff about matters related to accommodations for students with disabilities. All Student Affairs units will continue to work actively with UT Dallas' academic schools to provide education, information and service to students, faculty and staff.

### ***Action 4.2      Diversity and Community Engagement***

Student Affairs is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive, safe environment for all students, faculty, and staff. The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement is a critical



partner in this endeavor. Student Affairs will continue to partner with the Multicultural Center, Women's Center and the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement to provide educational programs on diversity and multiculturalism and empower faculty, staff and students to be agents of change in an increasingly diverse and global community.

#### ***Action 4.3     Other Campus Partners***

Partners from other campus units are also critical to the success of Student Affairs at UT Dallas. The Division of Business Affairs offers not only opportunities for staff development through the Office of Human Resources Management but also gives assistance with fiscal and human resource management, business continuity planning and process improvement. Student Affairs staff will continue to be encouraged to participate in available training opportunities, as well as in the LEAN University model to eliminate processes and/or procedures that do not add value to the work of the Division. Student Affairs will also work closely with Business Affairs units on the design and construction of new facilities, the improvement of existing facilities, and the delivery of high quality auxiliary services (such as food services, the bookstore and housing) that affect the lives of students.

Student Affairs will continue to work with the Office of Development to identify additional funding sources and to engage UT Dallas alumni more actively with currently enrolled students. Student Affairs will continue to manage the Alumni Grant Fund and coordinate the Alumni Grant Fund Committee, which considers proposals from students for special projects. As mentioned previously, partnerships with the Division of Enrollment Management and the Office of Communications will be enhanced in order to tell the Student Affairs story more broadly and effectively and to engage prospective students with the campus community even before they are enrolled. The Offices of Strategic Planning and Analysis and the Vice President for Research will also play critical roles in the future of Student Affairs at UT Dallas as the Division develops a more aggressive assessment model. Student Affairs will work with the Office of Public Affairs as new initiatives are developed that require legislative support and with Information Resources as the need for more electronically delivered programs and services increases.

#### ***Action 4.4     External Partners***

Student Affairs is dependent on several critical partnerships with colleagues external to the University. The City of Richardson and surrounding communities offer a wide variety of opportunities to enhance the learning experience of UT Dallas students. Student Affairs will continue to enhance current partnerships and will build new partnerships with community organizations in order to provide students with more service and work opportunities and more joint university/community programs. Examples of such partnerships are the Athletic Comet Club, corporate sponsors and partners, the Lake Highlands Girls Classic Soccer League and the Dallas Texans Soccer League, both of which are helping to enhance UT Dallas athletic/recreational sports facilities in exchange for the ability to utilize the fields for their own events.

## **Initiative Five: Build a culture of accountability through assessment and continuous improvement**

The successful implementation of any strategic plan is dependent upon a quality assessment plan that focuses on improvement. Student Affairs knows intuitively that its programs and services do make a difference, but without adequate data to support that intuitive knowledge, the Division will not be able to fully understand its contribution to the greater work of the University or to student development and learning. A well-planned assessment effort can help shape programs, services and learning experiences that produce desired student outcomes.

Student Affairs has conducted assessment at various levels for a number of years; however, the primary focus of those assessments has been student satisfaction, service utilization, program participation, student needs and operational efficiencies. While these are not unimportant, it became apparent that assessing these elements alone did not address the contribution of Student Affairs to student learning and development. With a more intentional focus on student learning at the heart of Student Affairs programs and services, the following actions will be taken to provide the verifiable evidence needed to make strategic decisions for the future.

### ***Action 5.1      Learning Outcomes***

Each unit within Student Affairs will identify specific learning outcomes they believe to be relevant to their respective areas. Since it is not feasible to measure each and every learning outcome each year, units will create annual assessment plans to identify which outcomes will be the focus of their assessments each year. Ultimately, units will have a longer-term assessment plan, which will identify how their outcomes will enter the cycle for periodic assessment over time. The data collected will be analyzed and will be the basis for decisions about program or service changes and future budget requests related to student learning, engagement and retention.

In addition to individual assessments of learning outcomes, the Division of Student Affairs will identify learning domains that are deemed descriptive of broad desired outcomes for UT Dallas graduates. These learning domains will be aligned with the broader University general education outcomes, and individual units within Student Affairs will align their respective desired outcomes with both the Division- and University-level outcomes.

### ***Action 5.2      Program Reviews***

In addition to assessing specific, desired learning outcomes, which place the focus on what students gain; Student Affairs will also conduct periodic individual program reviews using the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards) as a guide to measure operational efficiencies and program effectiveness. Program reviews will focus on service and program delivery and existing policies and procedures, with a goal toward continuous process improvement that supports student learning and development. As a part of the review process, all units will also participate in annual budget hearings with the Vice President and Assistant Vice Presidents for Student Affairs.

### ***Action 5.3     Staff Development***

A well-trained, professional staff is the most valuable resource to an effective Student Affairs organization. The work of Student Affairs organizations continues to evolve and thus requires new skills and new knowledge for staff members to be effective. The UT Dallas Division of Student Affairs is committed not only to hiring well but also to providing on-going professional development opportunities to its staff. Professional growth and development will position Student Affairs staff members to make valuable contributions to student success and retention. In addition to staying up to date in their respective fields through their involvement in professional associations at the local, state, regional and national levels, Student Affairs staff will be given training in such areas as student development theory, assessment, fiscal management, strategic planning, diversity, technology, conflict resolution, customer service, work/life balance, and supervising others.

### **BUSINESS MODEL**

The Division of Student Affairs at UT Dallas will continue to make every effort to be good stewards of resources assigned to the Division. Understanding that funding dynamics at a public institution are ever-changing and subject to the realities of enrollments, Student Affairs will make every attempt possible to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and enhance programs without large increases in budgets and staff. Assessments and program evaluation will be utilized for continuous process improvement and fiscally responsible strategic planning. Since most of the programs in Student Affairs are funded with student fees, the Student Fee Advisory Committee will continue to review and approve requests for new initiatives, new fees, and/or fee increases. This will ensure that students have a say in how their fee dollars are spent.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The vision outlined in this document is a lofty one; there is much to be accomplished in a short period of time. The success of such a lofty strategic plan is highly dependent upon each unit within the Division being actively engaged and doing their strategic part. The Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) will assign oversight responsibilities for each initiative and each action item, and those with oversight responsibility will work with the assistant vice presidents to prepare an implementation timeline to define targeted milestones and progress check points. The Office of the VPSA will report progress toward the targeted milestones and/or changes in the plan deemed necessary on an annual basis.