

Overview of Academic Vision and Master Planning Initiative

Updated January 6, 2016

In early spring 2014 after the institution's Strategic Planning initiative was well underway, the Curriculum Committee (a standing committee within the Academic Affairs Advisory Council) with leadership and support from the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, began Phase 1 of a three-phase initiative to develop of the institution's first Academic Vision and Master Plan (AVMP). At a university-wide town hall meeting on February 27, the Provost/VPAA and committee chair provided an oral overview of the AVMP initiative.

Phase 1 involved the development of an Academic Vision and underpinning core values. Curriculum Committee members reviewed all of the input from internal and external constituents (students, faculty, staff, community and business representatives) obtained during the strategic planning process and categorized the data into major themes. From these themes, primary components for the Academic Vision were identified. Faculty penned a draft vision statement and nine supporting core values and distributed to all faculty via email for input. After all faculty input was considered, a final Academic Vision statement and underpinning core values were published, disseminated and posted on the university's website.

Phase 2 of the Academic Vision and Master Plan began in fall 2014 with the development of a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for course redesign to operationalize the new academic vision through high impact practices (HIPS). Five faculty were awarded with mini-grants and stipends (\$5000 each) to redesign a specific course to be taught and evaluated for impact during the 2015-16 academic year. Included in Phase 2 was the selection of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic for its 10th year reaffirmation in 2016. Faculty and staff were focused on the selection of a QEP topic that was congruent with the new Academic Vision and core values.

In preparation for Phase 3, a regional, state, and national needs assessment to identify the nexus of the workforce demand and student interest for new degrees at A&M-Texarkana was conducted in summer 2014. The ultimate goal was to identify new undergraduate and graduate degrees/concentrations/certificates for development and implementation over the next six years—through 2021, the institution's 50th birthday. The internal needs assessment was conducted by a committee appointed by the Provost and chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Faculty and staff were represented on the committee. The committee also used other state and national needs assessment data including a report by TIPS Strategies on regional needs (careers) commissioned by Workforce Solutions of Northeast Texas, a report commissioned by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board focused on the trends in jobs over the entire state of Texas along with data from O*NET and the Texas Workforce Commission (include in the A&M Texarkana Comprehensive Needs Assessment).

Phase 3 formally began in fall 2014 when the comprehensive needs assessment data were submitted to faculty and staff in a town hall meeting and to the public for input via the President's external advisory council. The data were then presented to each college faculty by their respective dean, and work began on identifying and prioritizing degrees that should be offered over the next six years. After hours of reviewing needs assessment data and considering resource investments, the Provost and Deans developed a list of 24 degrees and two degree

concentrations to submit to a New Degree Think Tank composed of faculty, staff, and administrators. After two meetings of the New Degree Think Tank in late spring and summer 2015, firm decisions regarding new degrees for 2016-17 and 2017-18 were determined. Proposals for the four new degrees approved for 2016-17 implementation were written and submitted to The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents for approval at the February 2016 meeting.