

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI

## GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION

IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF MODERN GRADUATE EDUCATION strategic planning of graduate recruitment becomes more important than ever. It is a world of winners and losers with big brands and big box universities collecting disproportionate returns. A well-thought strategic graduate recruitment plan that engages all stakeholders in a collaborative process of planning and execution provides an effective hedge against this trend.

A strategic graduate enrollment plan is a piece of larger planning for an institution. Goals of this plan are largely dictated by the institution-wide strategic goals, like those outlined in our own Momentum 20/20 Plan. In the section below we will discuss goals and objectives set for Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi that are relevant to graduate recruitment. In the sections that follow we will discuss graduate recruitment goals and actions in the context of the four university-wide strategies to grow the graduate enrollment at the Island University.

### UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC GOAL ONE:

ATTRACT A DIVERSE AND HIGHLY QUALIFIED STUDENT BODY OF 15,000 STUDENTS CONSISTENT WITH OUR MISSION AS A HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION AND ONE THAT SERVES STUDENTS REPRESENTING THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS .

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVE TWO: INCREASE THE PROPORTION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS TO 20 PERCENT OF THE STUDENT POPULATION.

- Strategy 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive, integrative, data-driven recruitment plan to attract graduate students committed to learning.
- Strategy 2: Provide targeted graduate programs and comprehensive services via distance learning to meet the needs of students unable to be on campus for a traditional program.
- Strategy 3: Recruit highly qualified graduate students from different areas of the world to enable multicultural experiences for all students.
- Strategy 4: Increase our competitiveness in the recruitment and funding of outstanding graduate students.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Masters	585	617	640	664	688	702
Doctoral	52	54	56	57	59	61
Total	637	671	696	721	747	763

## GOALS

A STRONG STRATEGIC PLAN begins with setting overarching goals. The following sets of goals for graduate enrollment assume 2% annual growth and break down components of the graduate enrollment funnel into its constituent parts: number of applications needed, number of students admitted, and number of students enrolled. Individual goals are set for three categories: master's, doctoral, and international enrollments.

### O.1 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MASTER'S STUDENTS ENROLLED:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Applied	1667	1700	1734	1769	1804	1841
Admitted	975	1020	1049	1079	1110	1132
Enrolled	585	617	640	664	688	702

### O.2 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS ENROLLED:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Applied	118	120	123	125	128	130
Admitted	61	63	65	67	69	70
Enrolled	52	54	56	57	59	61

### O.3 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS ENROLLED:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	94	102	108	112	114
% of population	14.75%	14%	14.75%	15%	15%	15%
Actual	94	.	.	.	.	.

## STRATEGIES

STRATEGIES PROVIDE GENERAL DIRECTION for our efforts and at the most general level help close the gap between current state and the overarching goals. In order to be effective each strategy needs a set of actions – specific behaviors – that collectively will help close the gap between where we are and where we would like to be. Those actions are bound by a timeline providing incremental steps for improvement. Those steps for improvement can be objectively measured providing feedback and accountability in movement towards the goal. Finally, it takes a village to implement a strategy and identification of critical players helps move towards securing institutional support for a strategy. While multiple stakeholders are involved in realizing strategy identifying a lead person helps provide accountability, coordinate efforts, and avoid diffusion of responsibility. Paragraphs that follow discuss individual strategies for growing graduate population: recruitment, financial support, diversity and internationalization, marketing & communication, and optimization of processes and the use of resources.

## STRATEGY: RECRUITMENT

### O.4 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ATTENDED DOMESTIC IN-PERSON RECRUITING VISITS & VENUES:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	*	35	40	45	50
Actual	0	.	.	.	.	.

\*2021 TEXAS SWING SCHEDULE IS NOT AVAILABLE YET.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, FACULTY

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

#### ACTIONS:

- Attend all feasible fairs in the immediate service area (primary market)
- Maximize attendance at the Texas Swing events (secondary market)
- Engage, encourage, and incentivize faculty to recruit at conferences, symposia, and meetings
- Explore attending graduate fairs in targeted tertiary markets that produced application in the past

#### PRIMARY MARKET:

- Coastal Bend

#### SECONDARY MARKET:

- Texas
  - Houston
  - San Antonio
  - College Station

#### TERTIARY MARKET:

- Texas
  - Cameron and Hidalgo counties
  - Laredo
  - San Marcos (Texas State University)
  - Austin
  - Temple (Fort Hood)
  - Dallas
- Key US States
  - California
  - Florida

- Key Nationwide Locations
  - La Jolla, CA (UC–San Diego and Scripps)
  - Loveland, CO (Colorado State University)
  - Tempe, AZ (Arizona State University)
  - Pocatello, ID (Idaho State University)
  - Ames, IA (Iowa State University)
  - Wilmington, NC (UNC–Wilmington)
  - Tampa, FL (University of South Florida)
  - Tallahassee, FL (Florida State University and Florida A&M University)
  - Clinton, MS (Jackson State University)

O.5 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ATTENDED DOMESTIC VIRTUAL RECRUITING EVENTS:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	40	45	50	55	60
Actual	40	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

ACTIONS:

- Maximize attendance at virtual and hybrid graduate fairs across the United States
- Attend discipline-specific virtual and hybrid graduate fairs for disciplines represented at TAMUCC
- Host virtual college-specific graduate program showcase events
- Host virtual graduate chats

O.6 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RECRUITING TRIPS LEAD BY GRADUATE STUDENTS OR FACULTY AND FUNDED THROUGH THE DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	n/a	2	3	4	5
Actual	0	0	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, FACULTY

LEAD: DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, JACEK JOŃCA-JASIŃSKI

ACTIONS:

- Appropriate funding for recruitment at professional meetings and conferences that is proportional to the number of students currently enrolled in a program
- Form a fund to provide supplementary travel funding for graduate students who agree to recruit at national conferences/meetings
- Advertise to graduate students, faculty, and staff availability of supplementary funding to recruit at national conferences/meetings
- Establish relationships with key stakeholders and departments that could be helpful in our recruitment efforts

## STRATEGY: FINANCIAL SUPPORT

### O.7 INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS AND ASSISTANTSHIPS (EXCLUDING FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID):

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	.	.	.	.	.	.
Actual	.	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

LEAD: TO BE DETERMINED

ACTIONS:

- Begin conversations with the Division of Academic Affairs
- Begin conversations with the President's Office and the Chief Financial Officer
- Advocate for the Institutional Advancement to explore creating graduate student scholarship endowments with naming rights from both private citizens and corporate entities

### O.8 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CAMPUS ASSISTANTSHIPS FUNDED INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	.	.	.	.	.	.
Actual	.	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

LEAD: TO BE DETERMINED

ACTIONS:

- Begin conversations with the Division of Academic Affairs
- Advocate on behalf of graduate education and funding for graduate students, doctoral students in particular

## STRATEGY: DIVERSITY AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

O.9 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL RECRUITING EVENTS, EITHER IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	5	.	.	.	.
Actual	0	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

LEAD: TO BE DETERMINED

ACTIONS:

- Begin conversations with the Division of Academic Affairs
- Establish an International Recruitment Working Group that spans the Division of Enrollment Management and the Division of Academic Affairs and helps coordinate international recruitment efforts, optimizes use of resources, and avoid duplication of efforts
- Participate in the EducationUSA College Fairs in target markets
- Participate in the EducationUSA Advisor Meetings in target markets
- Liaison with the Alumni Association to engage network of our alumni as volunteer recruiters
- Participate in the International Education Week
- Create dedicated admission pages for each target market country

PRIMARY INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

- India
  - Delhi Metro
  - Mumbai
  - Hyderabad
  - Chennai
  - Kolkata
  - Bangalore
- China
  - \* Shenzhen
  - \* Shanghai
  - \* Beijing
  - \* Nanjing
  - \* Suzhou
  - \* Changhsu
  - \* Hong Kong

## SECONDARY INTERNATIONAL MARKET

- Vietnam
  - \* Ho Chi Minh City (south)
  - \* Da Nang (central)
  - \* Hanoi (north)

## TERTIARY INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| – Nigeria       | – Mexico   |
| * Lagos (south) | * Mexico City                                    |
| * Kano (north)  | * Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (Monterrey) |
| – Saudi Arabia  | * Puebla   |
| * Medina        | * Guadalajara                                    |
| * Jeddah        | * Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas (Reynosa)   |
| * KAUST         |  |
| * Riyadh        |  |

O.10 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TARGETED RECRUITING EVENTS FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS (HSIs), MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIs), AND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs):

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	16	17	18	19	20
Actual	15	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

ACTIONS:

- Attend all available graduate fairs at HBCUs, HSIs, and MSIs in Texas
- Make contact with the following HBCUs in Texas and offer an info-session and a recruitment visit:

– Huston-Tillotson University	– Texas College
– Prairie View A&M University	– Paul Quinn College
– Texas Southern University	– Wiley College
- Reach out to Texas A&M University–Prairie View and inquire if they would be interested in developing a two-way pathway for students that seek degrees not offered at the home institution but are offered at the sister university.
- Reach out to other system HSIs and inquire about potential of building mutually beneficial pathways.

O.II INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ATTENDED RECRUITING EVENTS TARGETING McNAIR AND SACNAS SCHOLARS:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	6	7	8	9	10
Actual	1	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

ACTIONS:

- Maximize attendance of McNair fairs
- Forge relationships with individual McNair programs and SACNAS chapters in primary and secondary markets

O.I2 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FULLY ONLINE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IRRESPECTIVE OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	15	15	15	17	19	21
Actual	15	15	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

LEAD: TO BE DETERMINED

ACTIONS:

- Begin conversations with the Division of Academic Affairs
- Add online-only delivery mode to existing certificate programs
- Create online-only certificate programs from existing specializations
- Incentivize developing online programs by faculty
- Partner with outside entities with significant experience developing and commercializing online programs
- Grow resources supporting online students
- Provide equal access to university services to online students



## STRATEGY: MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

### O.13 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INFORMATIONAL EVENTS AND THE AMOUNT OF RESOURCES DESIGNED TO ASSIST GRADUATE ADVISING FACULTY AND STAFF:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	110	115	117	119	120
Actual	104	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

#### ACTIONS:

- Annually organize two (3) round tables for graduate coordinators and graduate advisors
- Annually organize two (2) application review panel workshops
- Annually distribute 104 bi-weekly graduate coordinator reports
- Annually organize nine (9) brown-bag advisor/coordinator Q&A lunches (1 per month)

### O.14 GROW NUMBER OF INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS, DIGITAL AD CAMPAIGNS, SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS, PROMOTIONAL ITEM TYPES, AND WEBCASTS PROMOTING GRADUATE EDUCATION:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	13	16	19	22	25
Actual	10	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

#### ACTIONS:

- Order and grow inventory, variety, and quality of promotional items
- Maintain up-to-date and complete inventory of graduate program rack cards
- Grow number of digital ad impressions
- Grow social media engagement percentages
- Increase the number of social media outlets
- Develop landing pages

O.15 MAXIMIZE THE USE OF CRM TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TOUCH-POINTS WITH SUSPECTS, PROSPECTS, APPLICANTS, AND ADMITTED STUDENTS:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	6	8	10	12	12
Actual	4	6	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, TRAGETX, TIM BOULAN

LEAD: DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, JACEK JOŃCA-JASIŃSKI

ACTIONS:

- Interested in Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi? Let us help you get started! email
- Still interested in the Island University? email
- Documents received but no application email
- Application received email
- Student ID issued email
- Missing documents email
- Application processed email
- Application completed email
- Decision letter
- Congratulations email
- Next steps email
- Financial Aid email
- How to register email
- Admitted but not enrolled email

O.16 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PROGRAM-LEVEL GRADUATE RECRUITMENT PLANS:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal	n/a	10	20	30	40	50
Actual	0	.	.	.	.	.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

LEAD: GRADUATE RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, ROBERT BENAVIDES

ACTIONS:

- Reach out to academic departments and offer assistance in developing recruitment plans
- Meet with departmental staff in order to gain better understanding what are the critical recruitment areas, venues, and vehicles

## STRATEGY: OPTIMIZATION OF PROCESSES AND USE OF RESOURCES

### O.17 DECREASE TIME-TO-DECISION\*:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Goal (days)	n/a	38	36	34	32	30
Actual	38	38	.	.	.	.

\* – SPAN BETWEEN THE DATE APPLICATION IS COMPLETE AND THE DATE AN ADMISSION DECISION IS MADE.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, GRADUATE COORDINATORS, FACULTY

LEAD: GRADUATE ADMISSIONS COORDINATOR, BIANCA ENRRIQUES

#### ACTIONS:

- Implement process simplification strategies
- Help identify areas for potential automation
- Help identify idle resources that can be re-allocated to other processing tasks
- Systematically communicate with Graduate Coordinators regarding needed admission decisions

### O.18 SIMPLIFY PROCESSES

Year	Goals	Status
2021	Review processes	In-progress
	Eliminate unnecessary processing tasks	In-progress
	Eliminate legacy practices	In-progress
	Eliminate duplicate tasks	In-progress
	Stop enforcing enforceable program-level requirements	In-progress
2022	Replace taxing practices such as last 60 GPA calculations with more optimal cumulative GPA	
2023	Continued simplification and optimization	
2024	Continued simplification and optimization	
2025	30-day turn around	

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, GRADUATE COORDINATORS, FACULTY, COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

LEAD: DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, JACEK JOŃCA-JASIŃSKI

#### O.19 ADD MORE EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY:

Year	Goals	Status
2021	New website	In-progress
	Phase I: Graduate Admissions paperless initiative.	In-progress
	Phase I: Graduate Admissions online application rolled out for MAcc program.	
	Phase I: Graduate Admissions Application Review Panel rolled out for MAcc program.	
	Implement comprehensive ApplyTexas to Banner crosswalk	Requested
	Automate IF-THEN diagnostic reports	Requested
	Automate filing of resumes, letters of recommendation, and admission essays	In-progress
	Automate population of redundant IF-THEN Banner entries	
	Automate loading of GMAT scores	In-progress
	Automate loading of PTE scores	
	Automate loading of IELTS scores	
2022	Implementing Graduate Admissions paperless initiatives with respect to 2023 processes.	
	Phase II: Graduate Admissions online application rolled out for MBA program.	
	Phase II: Graduate Admissions Application Review Panel rolled out for MBA program.	
2023	Continued improvement of paperless initiatives and expanded roll out.	
	Phase III: Graduate Admissions online application rolled out for opting-in programs.	
	Phase III: Graduate Admissions Application Review Panel rolled out for opting-in programs.	
2024	Paperless initiatives campus-wide roll out.	
	Phase IV: Graduate Admissions online application rolled out for all programs.	
	Phase IV: Graduate Admissions Application Review Panel rolled out for all programs.	
2025	Paperless	

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: OFFICE OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS, TARGETX IT STAFF, GRADUATE COORDINATORS, FACULTY

LEAD: DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS, JACEK JOŃCA-JASIŃSKI

## SWOT ANALYSIS

AN HONEST SWOT ANALYSIS helps capitalize on the strengths in what we do while helping minimize or mitigate our weaknesses. It provides a survey of internal (strengths, weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities, threats) and helps guide us towards managing risk and optimizing outcomes. The sections that follow describe our strengths, key challenges (weaknesses), as well as our opportunities and threats.

## STRENGTHS

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- Firm presence in the Coastal Bend
- Aging U.S. population
- Demographic shifts and growing Hispanic/LatinX population
- Beautiful campus location
- Booming programs in the College of Business
- High demand computer science programs with strong customer base in India
- Proximity to Mexico

## KEY CHALLENGES

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- Lack of competitive funding for graduate students
- Unresolved model for interdisciplinary degrees
- Resistance to developing graduate certificate programs
- Resistance to funding students enrolled in certificate programs
- A campus culture in which graduate research and education have not been so important
- A campus culture that is highly resistant to change
- Inefficient technology or inefficient use/implementation of technology
- Inadequate staffing
- Salaries below market value
- Insufficient IT support
- Extensive and time consuming bureaucratic processes
- Low accountability
- Complex web of legacy practices.
- Last 60 credit hours GPA calculation that delays reviews of applicants
- Unfunded mandate to process Study Group applications.
- Lack of strategic operations and reliance on knee-jerk reactions

## OPPORTUNITIES

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- Capture larger segment of Texas market outside of the Coastal Bend service area
- Capture segment of the US market outside of Texas
- Capture segment of the international market, especially in Mexico
- Ample room to expand existing on-campus graduate programs into the on-line realm
- Room to add additional graduate business programs and capitalize on the success of the existing ones
- Room to grow online programs in the College of Education and Human Development
- Room to grow the cybersecurity graduate program
- Developing graduate certificates targeting working professionals

## THREATS

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- Growing competition from big brand and big-box universities
- Growing competition from other regional campuses of TAMUS and from UT-schools
- Emerging regional study destinations across Asia and Middle East
- Ongoing pandemic. Impact on international enrollment particularly from India
- Concentrated risk due to non-diversified graduate student portfolio with large portion of the population enrolled in one graduate program.
- Reliance on one for-profit partner for international recruitment
- Concentrated risk due to heavy reliance on the Coastal Bend for graduate applicants
- Concentrated risk due to majority of students in Computer Science graduate program from one nation
- Distance from a major airport
- Distance from major Texas population centers (Houston, Dallas)

## REVISION HISTORY

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LAST REVISED: JUNE 29, 2021

- Reviewed by the Office of Graduate Recruitment and Admissions team on June 24, 2021
- Submitted for internal review on June 25, 2021