Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
SACS: Self-Study Report

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. (Continuing education/service programs)

Compliance Status: Compliance

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| Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi values continuing education, outreach, and service programs and includes these programs in the University's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan. The University's vision statement includes, "Texas A&M-Corpus Christi will invigorate and strengthen the region and state through its educational programs, research initiatives, and outreach efforts [1]." The University's mission statement includes, "Through a commitment to excellence in teaching, research and service, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi prepares students for lifelong learning and for responsible participation in the global community [2]." Several strategic planning principles apply to these initiatives including: 2) achieve targeted national prominence, 3) promote lifelong learning and global citizenship, 5) increase research and creative activity, 6) commit to student diversity and quality, and 8) build and sustain mutually supportive relationships [3].

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi supports a thriving collection of programs. There are many programs centrally located in the Office of Community Outreach with others housed in other academic and athletic departments. The Office of Community Outreach offers a variety of programs designed to support the mission of the University. Alignment of outreach activities with the University mission is reflected in the Community Outreach mission statement, "The Office of Community Outreach is dedicated to achieving the Imperatives of the Momentum 2015 Strategic Plan by building successful community/university partnerships, engaging faculty and students, and providing programs to meet community needs [4]." Community Outreach serves as a public service arm of the University. Established in 1993, Community Outreach ensures that University resources, including facilities, knowledge, and expertise, and volunteer hours, are available to meet community needs. All age levels are served through Community Outreach, and one does not need to be a University student to receive outreach services. Through creative problem solving, Community Outreach staff members work with community partners and University faculty, students, and staff to assist the Coastal Bend with a variety of services including events and conferences, workforce and economic development, continuing education, youth programs, and environmental outreach. Outreach activities are documented in the Office of Community Outreach Annual Report [5].

Community Outreach is charged with administering continuing education and professional development programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi [6]. The Director of Workforce Development partners with faculty to ensure compliance with professional continuing education standards [7]. After reviewing course information and verifying compliance, the Director of Workforce Development authorizes continuing education units (CEUs) and provides certificates [8]. Community Outreach partners with faculty to develop and deliver customized courses to respond to community training requests. Current projects under way include hands-on, intermediate-level computer software workshops and a series of supervisor development seminars [9]. Dr. Paul
Merritt, assistant professor of psychology, developed and delivered a Memory Power workshop on building and using the mind's memory more effectively. Dr. Merritt’s area of research at A&M-Corpus Christi is memory and cognition [10].

Dr. Sam Hill III, associate professor of psychology, developed and delivered an anger management workshop to Navy personnel and Department of Defense civilian employees stationed at Naval Station Ingleside. Dr. Hill provided strategies and tools for dealing with stressful situations and resolving problems constructively [11]. Professional photographer John Watson conducted a series of interactive, hands-on workshops to teach participants basic, intermediate, and advanced digital photography [12].

Community Outreach offers a wide range of online, career development courses designed to prepare learners for high-demand occupations in healthcare, business, and computer technology [13]. These non-credit certificate programs are six-month, blended learning courses that include both online and textbook instruction. Hundreds of stimulating online personal enrichment courses are available through Community Outreach’s E-Learning Center. Topics range from using the Internet and popular software to foreign language and parenting skills [14]. Both career development courses and personal enrichment courses are included in Outreach’s WEAVE assessment. The course providers offer participants the opportunity to complete a course evaluation [15].

Community Outreach partners with the Texas Society of Certified Professional Accountants (TSCPAs) to deliver continuing education seminars for CPAs seeking to maintain their professional credentials. TSCPA is a nonprofit, voluntary, professional organization committed to serving the public interest with programs that advance the highest standards of ethics and practice within the CPA profession [16].

Community Outreach offers the Pre AP and AP Teacher Summer Institute. Endorsed by the College Board, this five-day continuing education program is designed for teachers in the Coastal Bend and across the state to acquire new teaching techniques in the classroom to prepare middle and high-school level advanced-placement students for higher education [17]. Community Outreach partners with Educational Testing Services (ETS) to administer Texas educator certification examinations for the Texas Education Agency. The exams are designed to ensure that future teachers have the content and professional knowledge necessary for an entry-level position in Texas public schools [18].

Dr. Jim Lee, professor of economics, conducted a quantitative analysis of the projected economic benefits of Bayfest 2008 on the Corpus Christi metropolitan area using 2005-2007 historical data. Dr. Lee’s research estimated that Bayfest 2008 would generate a total economic impact of $8.87 million from direct, indirect, and induced spending and wages [19]. Dr. W. Scott Sherman, assistant professor of management, facilitated several strategic-planning sessions for the executive staff and board of the South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind. South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind is a nonprofit corporation that works to provide employment and educational opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired [20]. Director of Workforce Development, Carole Peterson, facilitated a strategic planning session for the board of directors of the Aransas Pass Chamber of Commerce. The Aransas Pass Chamber of Commerce is working to enhance business, tourism, recreation, and economic development in its community [21].
Community Outreach worked with Career Services at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and with Del Mar College and WorkSource of the Coastal Bend to develop an internship program for small businesses in Corpus Christi. The Corpus Christi Business and Job Development Corporation provided funding to match employers' wages for upper-level student interns. Employers receive top-quality assistance for their businesses, students receive relevant experience at a respectable wage, and the city receives the benefit of new jobs created by growing small businesses. The first phase of this project provided funding for 80 interns from A&M-Corpus Christi [22].

The public education and outreach program of the Pollution Prevention Partnership provides information to the community about air quality and recommends practices to keep Corpus Christi air within clean standards. Information is presented to the community via clean air fairs where the public can test-drive clean vehicles and participate in many other "clean-air" activities, teacher workshops that provide materials and supplies for K-12 "clean-air" curricula, and community and media briefings and presentations [23].

AutoCheck is a proactive program designed to reduce harmful emissions from vehicles. This is accomplished by holding free screening events throughout the area. Vehicles found to be polluting are given a free repair voucher. This program educates the community about the emissions health of their vehicle and encourages the public to properly maintain their vehicles [24]. Transportation planning and programming includes providing resource tools and programs that may reduce emissions associated with transportation. Programs include the development of a bicycle/pedestrian transportation plan, clean commuter public transportation plans, and the development of a Web-based transportation corridor planning site [25]. The Clean School Bus program includes retrofitting area school buses with pollution-prevention equipment. The installation of the equipment will reduce the emissions from each bus by approximately 20 percent for particulate matter, 40 percent for hydrocarbons, and 30 percent for carbon monoxide [26].

Respiratory health research conducted by Community Outreach, the College of Nursing, and Driscoll Children's Hospital compared days when Corpus Christi experienced elevated levels of ozone with pediatric respiratory admissions at Driscoll Children's Hospital. On days when ozone levels are expected to be high, public announcements are provided for respiratory sensitive members of the community such as asthmatic children and the elderly [27].

Beginning in fall 2008, the University Elite Islander program began providing dual-credit courses to area high school students on the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi campus. Course offerings include various core curriculum courses from the College of Liberal Arts, two entry-level GIS courses, and a variety of math courses [28]. The success of this program is assessed by monitoring the number of institutional agreements reached with area school districts (WEAVE, 2007-2008, Education & Youth Issues Outcome/Objective 2) [29] [30].

Community Outreach helped high school students participating in CHRISTUS Spohn's T.E.C.H. (Teens Exploring Careers in Healthcare) Camp explore Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's healthcare and technology programs. The program was open to children of CHRISTUS Spohn employees. During their visit to A&M-Corpus Christi, the students practiced drawing blood from high-tech patient simulation mannequins at the College of Nursing. The students used test tubes
and microscopes to solve healthcare mysteries in the Clinical Laboratory Science lab and learned about innovative ways to use electricity, mechanics, and hydraulics in the Engineering Technology lab [31].

Faculty, staff, and students conducted summer camps for children and youth that encompassed a wide variety of themes, including academic camps, such as Young Authors Camp, Computer Science Engineering and Technology, Waves of Science, Computer Challenge and others. Environmentally themed camps included Kritter Kamp and Environmental Education/Kayaking. Performing arts camps included Band Camp and Drum Major Camp. Sports camps including baseball, softball, men's and women's basketball and volleyball featured University coaches and athletes. While National Youth Sports Program and Gulf Coast Environmental Education Program were designed to serve the underprivileged youth of the Corpus Christi community, other camps such as Islander Cross Country and The Camp on the Coast Summer Theater Workshop attracted some of the most talented young athletes and thespians from across the state [32]. Community Outreach operated the Summer Nutrition Program, which supplied free meals to 100 underprivileged summer campers for three weeks while they attended camp on the Corpus Christi campus [33].

The Gulf Coast Environmental Education Program provided young people with the opportunity to learn to kayak in order to explore the coastal environment. This series of one-week camps include activities such as kayak training, environmental education, and wetland exploration. Visits and tours included educational facilities such as the Coastal Conservation Association/Texas Parks & Wildlife Redfish Hatchery, the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Talley Island Education Center, Texas State Aquarium and others. The Environmental Protection Agency requested permission to use the project's final report in future training programs [34].

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi photography and technical writing students worked together to create a traveling photo exhibit of local foster children hoping to find permanent, loving families. The Heart Gallery is an annual community engagement project led by the College of Liberal Arts to raise awareness of Child Protective Service's foster adoption program. The exhibit features children who are harder to place due to their age, usually 9 years and above, or because they are in a sibling group. More than 30 of the children included in the Heart Gallery have been placed in adoptive homes since the project began in 2005 [35].

MathCounts is a middle school math program developed by the National Association of Professional Engineers. Community Outreach sponsored the annual MathCounts Regional Competition where teams from 15 schools across the region competed for a chance to advance to the state competition. More than 100 middle school students participated in the competition [36].

A&M-Corpus Christi hosted the 111th annual meeting of the Texas Academy of Science, a three-day meeting of the faculty and student members of the Texas Academy of Science. More than 525 people attended this event on the University campus [37]. Other events hosted by A&M-Corpus Christi include Boy Scouts of America Troop 56 Swim Test Training, Buccaneer Classic Music Festival, Camp Sandcastle, Career & Technical Education Leadership Academy, Career & Technical Education Recruitment and Retention Conference, Corpus Christi Rural Transit Authority Board of Directors Planning Session, Herff Jones Yearbook Workshop, The People's Law School, STARRS Junior Triathlon Training, Surveying II: The Advanced Short Course, Veterans Civic Council, and
When Hollywood Comes to Town. Event sponsors are required to complete and submit an event request form that provides information reviewed prior to event approval [38].

The College of Liberal Arts provides a continuous array of performances and exhibits during the academic year through its School of Visual and Performing Arts, including the Performing Arts Center's programming. These events include approximately four curated shows in two art galleries as well as student shows throughout campus [39]. The Theatre Department presents four productions per year as well as student one-act plays [40]. The Music Department presents several performances each semester primarily by ensembles, particularly band, orchestra, and choir [41]. In addition, numerous faculty and student recitals are held. Individual departments sponsor talks by visiting scholars throughout the year.

In addition, the college works cooperatively with the World Affairs Council of South Texas to bring visiting speakers to campus to give topical lectures open to all students, faculty, and staff [42]. The state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center provides a variety of performances throughout the year that are available to the public [43]. The center provides opportunities for K-12 students to experience the performing arts through the Bravo! Kids Concert Series. The Performing Arts Center hosted many non-profit organizations through the Community Arts Advisory Council Grant Program, giving area non-profit performing arts organizations free rental of the facility for a day [44]. Area high schools take advantage of the superior acoustics in the Performing Arts Center to tape their honor band recordings for Texas Music Educator Association consideration [45].

The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies hosts the Weekly Seminar Series, which began on October 13, 2006 and continues to be held weekly on Fridays at 3:30 p.m. in the Harte Research Institute Conference Center. The purpose of the series is to provide a regular, consistent forum for seminar presentations by faculty, research scientists, students, and visiting scientists related to watersheds, coastal, and ocean science, particularly within, but not limited to, the Gulf of Mexico. A social time following the seminar facilitates interaction among colleagues and furthers discussion of the topic of the day. Seminars are free and open to the public [46].

The Antonio E. Garcia Arts and Education Center, 2021 Agnes St. in the heart of Corpus Christi's Westside, connects the University to the community by providing student-staffed programs to families in Corpus Christi. The Garcia Center offers an art after-school program that includes homework and reading assistance, programs that provide individual/family counseling, access to art exhibits, literacy programs, dance classes, a variety of cultural events, and other educational programs [47]. Most of the programs are completely staffed by A&M-Corpus Christi students working on undergraduate, masters, or doctoral degrees.

The Title V Office at A&M-Corpus Christi is home to the GO Center Program. GO Centers provide early college awareness to students at area high schools. GO Centers help students to research multiple post-secondary institutions and careers of their choice, take tests on-time, and complete a checklist to ensure all requirements are met. The Collegiate GO Center mentors maintain an excellent rapport and partnership with the counselors at their designated high school location [48].

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi faculty and staff give to charity through the State Employee Charitable Campaign. The 2008 campaign was unusually successful, raising $46,020, exceeding the 2007
campaign by $16,272 for a 55 percent increase. Campaigns for the previous four or five years raised a little less than $30,000 each year. The SECC team decided that a better-developed organization to spread the word and encourage participation was needed. Accordingly, the team recruited "captains" from every administrative department/unit rather than from buildings. The net result was 91 new contributors, and those new contributions accounted for the increase. The success of the campaign was recognized with an Honorable Mention Award for Increased Participation (64 percent increase) and the 2008 Outstanding Campaign Award for the Coastal Bend Region [49].

BoldFuture for the Coastal Bend is a grassroots community visioning initiative designed to engage residents of Nueces and San Patricio counties in developing a unified long-term vision and action plan to guide the community into the future. The initiative encompasses three phases and a follow-up. It is chaired by community leaders and managed by educators from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Del Mar College. It is currently funded by the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, and the San Patricio County Economic Development Corporation, and has been endorsed by local government entities as well as numerous community organizations [50].

In addition to the institutional activities already described, A&M-Corpus Christi provides additional "informal" community services through individual academic service learning assignments, student organization service projects, and individual student, faculty, and staff initiatives both on campus and in the community. These services incorporate a wide assortment of activities including writing grants for non-profits, remodeling community centers, participating in beach cleanups, tutoring and mentoring children, fund raising for charities, volunteering at animal shelters and wildlife rehabilitation facilities, and many others.

A&M-Corpus Christi offers seven academic post-baccalaureate certificate programs. The College of Science and Technology offers certificate programs in Geomatics, Geographic Information Systems, and Clinical Laboratory Science [51]. The College of Nursing offers certificate programs in Health Care Administration, Family Nurse Practitioner, Leadership in Nursing Systems, and Nurse Educator [52]. Complete certificate program descriptions including course listings are available in the Graduate Catalog.

**Conclusion**

As evidenced above, the University is dedicated to providing community outreach programs, service programs, and continuing education that are in alignment with the University's mission to "strengthen the region and state through its educational programs, research initiatives, and outreach [1]."

**Evidence**

- UD 659 vision
- UD 042 3.10.5-05 TAMUCC New Mission Statement
- UD 165 Strategic Principles Definitions
- CD 465 Outreach Overview
- CD 466 Community Outreach Annual Report 2007-2008