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

2.4 The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. (Institutional Mission)

Compliance Status: Compliance

Narrative

The revised mission statement for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, approved in July 2009, is clearly defined, comprehensive, and is appropriate and specific to the University. It is shown below:

Revised Mission Statement - 2009

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is an expanding, doctoral-granting institution committed to preparing graduates for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship in the global community. We are dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, creative activity and service and our supportive, multicultural learning community provides undergraduate and graduate students with a challenging educational experience. The university's federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) provides a foundation for closing educational gaps, while its strategic location on the Gulf of Mexico and on the cultural border with Latin America provides a basis for gaining national and international prominence.

Section 61.0511 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires every public institution of higher education to develop a mission statement "reflecting the three missions of higher education: teaching, research, and public service [1]." The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) defines the term "mission statement" as "the formal statement of the mission of ... a public university or health related institution. The Mission Statement takes the form of a narrative that addresses the fundamental purpose of the institution with respect to its teaching, research, and public service responsibilities from a regional, state, and national perspective [2]." Based on the above guidelines, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's mission statement is clearly appropriate for an institution of higher education. By affirming dedication "to teaching, research, creative activity and service," the statement addresses the "missions of higher education." Similarly, it focuses on student learning, which is fostered by a "supportive, multicultural learning community." Through this learning environment, students are afforded "a challenging educational experience." Because learning should not end with graduation, the institution prepares its students "for lifelong learning." The institution is committed to providing continuing education, community outreach, and public service programs that are consistent with its mission, as discussed in the response to Principle 3.4.2 [3].

From fall 2000 to fall 2008, student enrollment grew from approximately 6,800 to more than 9,000. The institution has also grown in terms of academic degrees, research, campus facilities, and support services, while continuing to pursue excellence in its programs. This expansion has included a significant increase in doctoral degree programs, doctoral student enrollment, and doctoral research. Whereas A&M-Corpus Christi offered one doctoral program in 2000, it now offers five. Enrollment in doctoral programs has grown from 56 students in fall 2000 to 207 students in fall 2008. Reflecting these developments, the mission statement describes the University as an "expanding, doctoral-granting..."
In addition to being appropriate for higher education, the mission statement is specific to the institution. It describes distinctive features of A&M-Corpus Christi that contribute to its institutional identity, including its federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The HSI designation enables the University to better serve the people of South Texas, and it "provides a foundation for closing educational gaps." The mission statement, therefore, reflects the institution's commitment to achieving the goals of the Texas higher education plan, "Closing the Gaps by 2015." Addressing the changing demographics of Texas, the state plan sets goals for closing the educational gaps in student participation, student success, excellence, and research [4].

By highlighting the island University's location on the Gulf of Mexico, the mission statement identifies another distinctive aspect of the institution's identity [5]. A&M-Corpus Christi is strategically located to offer academic programs and promote research in disciplines related to coastal and marine environments, marine biology, fisheries, the sustainability of the gulf, marine policy and law, ports and international trade, geospatial surveying of the coastline and ocean depths, and international issues related to the seas. Additionally, the proximity of the cultural border with Latin America provides opportunities to address - through teaching, research, and public service - regional issues that also "connect to national and international issues and concerns [5]." Among these issues are education, health care, immigration, and economic development. Thus, the institution's location helps to define its mission as it seeks to serve the South Texas region [5].

Finally, the revised mission statement aligns with the institution's Momentum 2015 strategic plan, launched by President Flavius Killebrew and the University community in 2005. (The response to Principle 2.5, Institutional Effectiveness, discusses the planning process in more detail [6].) Central to the Momentum 2015 plan are three unifying themes of excellence, expansion, and engagement. A set of imperatives provides direction for moving the institution forward [7]. The addition of effectiveness as a fourth theme in 2007 affirms the institution's commitment to assessment and accountability [8]. Ten related strategic objectives, listed below, support the mission:

1. Provide Excellent Academic Programs and Instruction
2. Achieve Targeted National Prominence
3. Promote Lifelong Learning and Global Citizenship
4. Provide a Supportive and Safe Campus Environment
5. Increase Research and Creative Activity
6. Commitment to Student Diversity and Quality
7. Commitment to Faculty and Staff Diversity and Quality
8. Build and Sustain Mutually Supportive Relationships
9. Expand University Impact and Stature
10. Manage Resources Efficiently and Effectively

Examples of the alignment of mission, themes, and objectives follow: The first objective, which focuses on excellent academic programs, aligns with the theme of excellence and with the mission statement's commitment to excellence in teaching, research, creative activity and service. Likewise, attaining national prominence (the second objective) aligns with the theme of excellence and with the concept in the mission statement that A&M-Corpus Christi's strategic location "provides a basis for gaining national and international prominence." The third objective, lifelong learning and global citizenship, reflects the theme of engagement and reiterates the mission of "preparing graduates for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship in the global community." Similarly, the other objectives align with one or more of the themes and build upon the institutional mission.
The revised mission statement will guide future planning and will be the foundation for the institution's assessment process. Academic program reviews, conducted on a periodic schedule, require alignment with the institutional and program missions, as does the WEAVEonline assessment management system. As discussed in the response to Principle 2.5, WEAVEonline, a Web-based assessment tool, is used for annually evaluating both academic and non academic programs [6]. Additionally, the budget process and allocation of resources are tied to WEAVEonline.

Prior to the adoption of the 2009 revised mission statement, A&M-Corpus Christi was guided by a vision statement and a mission statement developed through a comprehensive, broad-based campus process in the early part of the decade, as discussed in the response to Principle 3.1.1 (Board - Institutional Mission) [9]. These vision and mission statements, shown below, were approved by the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System on July 26, 2002, [10] and by the THECB on April 24, 2003 [11].

2003 Vision and Mission Statements

Vision
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to becoming one of the leading centers of higher education in the Gulf of Mexico region while serving the intellectual, cultural, social, environmental, and economic needs of South Texas. As a result, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will invigorate and strengthen the region and state through its educational programs, research initiatives, and outreach efforts.

Mission
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is devoted to discovering, communicating, and applying knowledge in a complex and changing world. The university identifies, attracts, and graduates students of high potential, especially those from groups who have been historically under-represented in Texas higher education. Through a commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi prepares students for lifelong learning and for responsible participation in the global community.

The revised mission statement and the previous 2003 version share a commitment to achieving excellence in teaching, research, and service; to closing educational gaps; and to preparing students for lifelong learning and participation in the global community. Like the revised statement, the 2003 mission statement was clearly defined, comprehensive, and appropriate for higher education. It was also specific to the institution, especially when combined with the related vision statement. Although the two mission statements share a common philosophy, the revised version reflects the institution's recent growth and development, aligns more closely with the strategic planning process, and sets the foundation for future planning.

The revised mission statement was developed, reviewed and refined during 2007 and 2008. The Momentum 2015 Steering Committee in 2007 reviewed the existing 2003 mission statement and considered ways to effectively align the mission statement, the Momentum 2015 plan, and goal development. By addressing the question of why A&M-Corpus Christi exists, planners identified key elements to be included in a revised mission statement [12]. An amended mission statement and institutional objectives were distributed at the fall 2007 University faculty meeting, and were also circulated to various groups in the University community for input and approval. The review continued in 2008, resulting in further refinement and clarification of the proposed mission statement based on
commentary from different constituent groups. After completing the campus approval process in fall 2008, the mission statement was approved by the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System on January 22, 2009 [13]. Subsequently, the Academic Excellence and Research Committee of the THECB endorsed the amended mission statement on June 22, 2009, paving the way for approval by the full THECB on July 30, 2009 [14]. Although the institution does not consider the revision of the mission statement to be a substantive change, it has notified the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools about this development [15].

The University will communicate its revised mission statement to its constituencies, including students, faculty and staff, alumni, and the community, through multiple venues. The 2003 mission statement has been publicized on the University Web site [16], published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs [17] [18], and included in other publications such as the faculty handbook [19]. These methods of communication will continue to be used, along with announcements by campus offices. Because the new mission statement was not yet fully approved by the THECB before the deadline for catalog printing, the 2009-2010 undergraduate and graduate catalogs contain the 2003 mission statement. Subsequent catalogs, however, will include the revised 2009 mission statement.

Other sections of this report that focus on the University mission include 3.1.1 (Board - Institutional Mission) and 3.2.2.1 (Board Authority - Institutional Mission). Providing a historical perspective, the narrative for Principle 3.1.1 describes the periodic review of the mission statement during the past decade by the institution, its governing board, and the THECB [9]. The response to Principle 3.2.2.1 explains how the legal authority and operating control of the institution are defined, with regard to its mission, by state law, the rules of the THECB and the policies of The Texas A&M University System [20].

**Conclusion**

As described above, the revised mission statement of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi addresses teaching and learning, research and public service. The new mission statement is clearly defined, comprehensive, specific to A&M-Corpus Christi, and appropriate for higher education. As has been done previously, the institution will communicate its mission statement to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community through multiple venues.

**Evidence**

- SD 054 EDUCATION CODE CHAPTER 61.0511
- BD 154 THECB - Terms and Definitions
- BD 155 Closing the Gaps
- UD 745 crossroads map
- UD 025 Strategic Plan-Momentum 2015
- UD 051 Momentum 2015 Effectiveness Addendum
- BD 160 Graves 073102 mission BOR approval 2002
- SD 108 Hill 042503 mission THECB approval 2003
- UD 544 Steering Committee Mtg Agenda 032007
- BD 063 Aproval of Amended Mission 2009
- SD 109 Stephenson 073109 THECB approval -mission 073009
- CO 026 Killebrew 072109 Notify - mission statement w enclosures
- UD 659 vision
- UD 127 AMCC Catalog 2008-09 university