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

**Compliance Status:** Compliance

### Narrative

Based on the identification of expected outcomes and the assessment of the achievement of these outcomes, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides evidence of improvement in the area of community and public service. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi’s relationship with the larger community is identified as a key to the institution’s success in the Momentum 2015 Strategic Plan [1]. In the Momentum 2015 Strategic Plan, one of the four unifying themes is engagement. The university community is actively engaged in the larger community and provides a wide range of services as described in Principle 3.4.2 [2]. This principle includes detailed examples of the community service activities of the University and describes how those activities are assessed as well as how the results of assessment are used to ensure continuous improvement.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi academic departments, Student Affairs components, the Office of Community Outreach, and University research centers and institutes conduct ongoing assessment of their activities to identify expected outcomes, establish measures for those outcomes, determine if the outcomes are achieved, and develop action plans for continued improvement. This is accomplished using WEAVEonline, a central, Web-based assessment program [3]. Programs within the five colleges, the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, the Office of Community Outreach, and Go Centers all provide programs that serve the community and all use WEAVEonline to plan, assess, and improve programming. Several components of the Division of Student Affairs including the University Center and Student Activities, Disability Services, University Counseling Center, University Health Center, Recreational Sports, Career Services, Housing, Women's Center and the Office of Student Affairs also include community service as part of their mission [4].

The University provides a diverse collection of community service activities. The Office of Community Outreach offers dual-credit courses for area high school students through the Elite Islander Program [5]. Outreach provides online continuing education for career development and personal enrichment [6] [7]. Through sponsorship from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Texas Parks & Wildlife, Community Outreach provides summer outdoor kayaking camps for youth [8]. One joint initiative between Community Outreach and the College of Liberal Arts created an exhibit called the Heart Gallery, a collection of photographs and biographies of foster children designed to promote adoption of hard to place children [9]. Community Outreach conducts summer Pre A/P (advanced placement) and A/P Teacher Workshops and other educational events and conferences [10]. Community Outreach also sponsors Math Counts, a regional middle school mathematics competition [11]. Additionally, Community Outreach works with the Athletics Department and faculty and staff from academic departments to offer a wide range of summer camps for children and youth [12].

Programs within each college provide a range of seminars, performances, educational offerings,
youth programs, and service-learning projects to individuals and organizations around the region. The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies hosts the Weekly Seminar Series, a public forum for faculty, research scientists, and students to present their research findings [13]. The Antonio E. Garcia Arts and Education Center is a neighborhood center operated through the College of Education [14]. Faculty, staff, and students provide the West Side community with after-school programming including reading and homework assistance, literacy programs, art and dance classes, cultural events, and individual/family counseling. The after-school programs are supported by the Food Bank of Corpus Christi and Art Museum of South Texas, with instruction provided by undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Education. The College of Liberal Arts provides performances and exhibitions through the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the Performing Arts Center [15]. The Performing Arts Center's Bravo! Kids Concert Series gives K-12 students the opportunity to experience the performing arts [16].

Students in the Leadership and Managerial Effectiveness class at Texas A&M -Corpus Christi made "Christmas in November" boxes, which contained items such as personal supplies, candies, magazines and movie DVDs for deployed military personnel. Several veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan received Returning Hero Baskets, which included passes from local businesses for movies, meals and sporting events. In addition, the class raised $8,000 in cash and gift-in-kind donations, and created the Military Family Resources website for NAS Corpus Christi personnel and their families. The Piecemakers by the Bay Quilt Guild also donated 25 red, white, and blue "Quilts for Heroes" that were included in the package [17].

One project is the result of a partnership between Community Outreach, Career Services at Texas A&M -Corpus Christi, Del Mar College and WorkSource of the Coastal Bend. The group worked with the City of Corpus Christi to develop an internship program for small businesses in Corpus Christi. The Corpus Christi Business and Job Development Corporation provides funding to match employers' wages for upper level student interns. Students work in their field, earning double minimum wage and employers are able to have highly skilled temporary employees at only minimum wages costs. The project contract was recently extended for another year with funding for 108 student intern positions [18].

Each of the entities providing these services uses WEAVEonline to identify expected outcomes, assess whether outcomes were achieved, and use the results to make improvements. In conjunction with WEAVEonline, other tools are used to support internal assessment and reporting and also for reporting to program and project sponsors. One tool used for internal assessment is customer or participant surveys. The director of events and conferences in the Office of Community Outreach provides these to all community organizations that use university facilities for events [19]. These surveys are collected and reviewed to determine the quality of the services the University provides and to identify areas for improvement. The Director of Events and Conferences utilizes numeric scales and written evaluations to assess client and conference participant satisfaction and improve services. Written evaluations offer suggestions for improving university services. The following are areas that client and conference participants suggested we improve in 2007-08:

- Camden Miramar Residence Halls
- University classroom facilities with chair desks
- Pre-conference e-communication
The following actions were taken in response to evaluations:

- Arrangements now are made by bid process with local hotels to provide lodging for all conference participants at hotels instead of residence halls.
- University facilities with free-standing tables and chairs instead of chair-desks are reserved for the use of continuing professional education conferences.
- Pre-Conference e-communications were improved through the merging of compatible database and e-mail applications.

Some programs use pre-tests and post-tests to determine changes in participants' knowledge and perceptions. The Women's Center uses pre- and post-tests for internal assessment and reporting in WEAVEonline [20]. Community Outreach uses pre- and post-tests to measure participants' level of learning and changes in awareness of the environment in the Gulf Coast Environmental Education Program [21]. The results contained in the final report represent a comprehensive assessment of the program provided to the sponsor that demonstrates successful completion of the program goals and improvement based on previous evaluations [22]. The third party reviewer reported that there was a statistically significant improvement in students' knowledge of wetlands/aquatic systems in the Gulf Coast as a result of participating in the program. This improvement remained consistent across all sex and racial/ethnic categories of participating students. Participants, regardless of their gender, rated their experience of the program and their awareness of their environment positively. There were, however, some significant racial/ethnic differences: Hispanic and African American students rated their experience of the program and awareness of their environments more positively than their white counterparts. The reviewer commended the University for having more racial diversity among participants this year than previous years and using a very effective instructional strategy. The reviewer recommended increasing the total number of future participants and encouraging all participants to complete the data collection instrument.

The Pollution Prevention Partnership is an externally funded air quality initiative. This program provides outreach to the community to educate citizens on air quality and includes AutoCheck, a vehicle emissions testing and repair program. AutoCheck is a proactive program designed to reduce harmful emissions from vehicles. This is accomplished by holding free screening events throughout the area. Vehicles that are found to be polluting are given a free repair voucher. Gas caps are checked for leaks and tire pressures checked and adjusted. Through these events this program educates the community members about the emissions health of their vehicles and encourages them to properly maintain their vehicles [23]. 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 commute public transportation plans, and the development of a Web-based transportation corridor planning site [24]. 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 [25].

In addition to WEAVEonline, all Pollution Prevention Partnership activities are planned in cooperation with the program sponsor and outcomes are reported to the sponsor in quarterly and annual reports.
Outcomes include numbers of outreach activities and events, numbers of vehicles tested and repaired, and estimates of corresponding emissions reductions.

The Title V program is another example of a University program that does planning, assessment, and improvement using WEAVEonline while concurrently conducting assessments of program activities with reports to the program sponsor. Title V is home to the Go Centers, which are outreach offices located on junior high and high school campuses that provide students with resources and assistance to prepare them for college admission. There are three junior high and 28 high school Go Centers. The Title V Detailed Assessment Report contains a Mission Statement, Outcomes/Objectives, Related Measures, Achievement Targets and Findings. Each year the standards are raised to encourage continuous improvement within the program. According to the Detailed Assessment Report, the Go Center program has consistently completed its objectives and has met or exceeded all achievement targets [27]. These examples demonstrate how externally funded programs are evaluated for both their contribution to the University’s mission and successful completion of program outcomes for the sponsor organization.

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 series is free and open to the public. 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. Assessment of the Seminar Series has been measured by attendance which has been consistent [28]. The Series will be included under community outreach and service in the Harte Research Institute’s WEAVEonline assessment for 2008-2009.

The Division of Student Affairs includes community service in each of its departments. The University Center and Student Activities staff participated in a number of community service projects in 2007-2008. Projects included Corpus Christi Wishes & Dreams Monetary Drive and Toy Drive, City of Corpus Christi Animal Care Advisory Board, and Habitat for Humanity during Alternative Spring Break. Student Organizations are also active in community service. The EDGE Leadership Program hosted its first annual car show, which raised $300 for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Homecoming Court candidates read to students at St. Patrick's Elementary School. Together Islanders Develop Excellence (TIDE) conducted a toiletry drive for the Women's Shelter. Greek organizations volunteered at the Humane Society, participated in Kid's Fest, did Greek-ffiti graffiti removal and donated 156 hours of service and raised $7,578 for community service agencies. Each department establishes outcomes, measures results, and does future planning regarding community service. A complete accounting of Student Affairs’ community service activities is included in the Division of Student Affairs Detailed Assessment Report, included in the supporting documentation [29].

Some community service activities are not academic-based initiatives. The State Employee Charitable Campaign is one example. The State Employee Charitable Campaign was unusually successful on the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi campus in 2008. The campus community raised $46,020 for local, state, national, and international charities, exceeding the 2007 campaign by $16,272 for a 55 percent increase and well above the goal of $33,000. Campaigns for the previous
four or five years raised a little under $30,000 each year. A better developed organization to spread the word and encourage participation was needed. Accordingly, the SECC team recruited "captains" from every meaningful department/unit rather than from buildings. The net result was 91 new contributors, and those new contributions accounted for the increase [30]. The University’s campaign received the 2008 Coastal Bend Region Outstanding Campaign Award [31].

**Conclusion**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi identifies the expected outcomes of community and public service events. The University uses WEAVEonline, surveys, and pre-test and post-test measures to assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes and provides evidence of how improvement is made based on the results. In compliance with the university mission and strategic plan, the University strives to play an active and meaningful role in the community.

**Evidence**

- UD 025 Strategic Plan-Momentum 2015
- UD 593 WEAVEOnline Homepage 4.0
- UD 376 Dual-Credit Institutional Agreement
- UD 377 Career Development Course List
- UD 378 Personal Enrichment Course List
- CD 211 EPA GCEEP Project Final Report
- OD 068 Heart Gallery Program Booklet
- CD 212 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure
- UD 333 MathCounts Media Release
- CD 213 Summer Camp List for 2008
- CD 214 Harte Weekly Seminar Series Announcement
- CD 215 Garcia Center Web Site
- CD 216 PAC Event Schedule
- CD 217 Grant application for use of PAC
- UD 379 Service Learning Press Release
- UD 380 small business internship contract
- CD 218 Outreach Customer Satisfaction Survey
- UD 381 Women’s Center Assessment
- CD 219 Outreach GCEEP Pre-test
- CD 220 EPA GCEEP Project Final Report
- CD 221 AutoCheck Program Website
- CD 222 Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority
- UD 382 Clean School Bus Contract with Valero Refining
- CD 223 Rider 8 Final Report
- UD 383 Title V Detailed Assessment Report
- CD 224 HRI Weekly Seminar Series Attendance
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