

University Consortium to Serve Northwest Houston

Texas A&M University System · Texas Southern University · Texas State University System · University of Houston System

Request for Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Approval
to Deliver Programs in Northwest Houston

May 20, 2009

I. Overview and Summary of Request

In accordance with Chapter 5, Subchapter D of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules, the Texas A&M University System (on behalf of Prairie View A&M University), the Texas State University System (on behalf of Sam Houston State University), the University of Houston System (on behalf of the University of Houston and UH-Downtown), and Texas Southern University request approval to develop five coordinated, single-institution Higher Education Centers in Northwest Houston. The need and justification for this expansion are demonstrated by the significant growth in Northwest Houston and the demand for increased academic offerings. If approved, the universities will begin program delivery in the spring 2010 semester. Programs will be offered at the upper-division level leading to baccalaureate degrees and the graduate level as well. This proposal has the support of the Northwest Houston community, including the community colleges, school districts, businesses, and civic groups.

II. Need for Expanded University Programs in Northwest Houston

The Northwest Houston area is a vibrant, diverse, and large segment of greater Houston. With some 1.4 million people and growing, it has a larger population than San Antonio. The demographic profile reveals that it is approximately 51% White, 29% Hispanic, 14% African-American, and 6% Asian. At present there is no comprehensive, public, upper-level university physically located this region. For the past three years, the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs of the Texas State, Texas A&M and University of Houston Systems have been working collaboratively to develop an operating agreement and program delivery model that will be of benefit to the northwest region, to the greater Houston metropolitan area, and to the State of Texas and its goal of addressing the challenges associated with the Closing the Gaps initiative. As a first step in their planning process, the Vice Chancellors conducted a needs analysis of Northwest Houston and developed a set of guiding principles through which they would deliver programs in the region. This document, "Principles and Procedures for Developing Public Higher Education in the Northwest Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area," has been included with this proposal as Appendix I. Relevant information demonstrating the need for expanded higher education opportunities in Northwest Houston has been included below. In short, high growth in population, community college and public school enrollment, as well as a large professional workforce and strong support from the community, are all indicators of success for this initiative.

Population Growth

Population growth in Northwest Houston has been dramatic. In 1990, there were 875,502 people living in the region. Today there are 1.4 million (an increase of 60%). Conservative projections place the population at 1.7 million by 2015.

Community College & Public School Enrollment

Northwest Houston is served primarily by Lone Star College (48,520 students). Within the district, Cy Fair College and Tomball College would serve as primary feeder institutions for the Northwest Higher Education Centers. There has been tremendous enrollment growth at these colleges. Cy-Fair College opened in 2002, and enrollment since has grown to 13,205 students. At Tomball College, current enrollment is 8,766. In the HCC System, the

Northwest Campus enrolls over 10,500 students. In terms of public school enrollment, Northwest Houston is served primarily by five school districts (Cypress-Fairbanks, Katy, Klein, Magnolia, Tomball) with a current student population of over 222,000. By 2010, enrollment in these districts is expected to increase to approximately 250,000.

Workforce Profile

The number of jobs in Northwest Houston exceeds 300,000, 67% of which are white collar positions. In addition, 28% of the population has earned at least a bachelor's degree.

Community Support

Support from Lone Star College and business and community leaders in Northwest Houston for an expanded presence of upper-level and graduate university programs is strong. In fact, the Chancellor and other senior leadership of Lone Star College have been instrumental in the planning of this initiative, particularly with regard to the identification of facilities and facilitating student transfer from the community college. As evidence of community support, a successful bond election was held in the region, through which Lone Star College was able to purchase 1.2 million square feet of office space (previously owned by Hewlett-Packard) to start a higher education center. It is the goal of the universities submitting this proposal to locate their operations at this center.

III. How Best to Serve the Region? University Consortium and Coordinating Council to Serve Northwest Houston

The University Consortium to Serve Northwest Houston includes all of the institutions with both a history of and interest in serving the Northwest Houston community, including the Texas A&M University System (Prairie View A&M), the Texas State University System (Sam Houston State University), the University of Houston System (UH and UH-Downtown), and Texas Southern University. The operating model the Consortium proposes for Northwest Houston is one where each university operates as a single-institution Northwest Houston Higher Education Center under the direction of a Coordinating Council, which includes the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs of the three university systems, the Provost of TSU, and a representative from Lone Star College serving in an ex officio capacity (most likely the chief academic officer). Specifically, the Coordinating Council will be responsible for:

- Approval of proposed degree programs, to ensure there is sufficient demand for the programs and not unwarranted duplication of effort.
- Coordination of collaborative initiatives among the universities – and among the universities and community colleges, public schools, and the community – when it is mutually advantageous.
- Coordination of shared services (e.g., security, custodial, facilities, IT, library, parking, etc.), when it makes sense to do so (e.g., to achieve economies of scale and operational efficiencies).

- Considering additional academic program requests and resolving any issues related to program duplication.
- Reviewing each institution's delivery of programs once approved. If a university with degree authority does not deliver an academic program in the allotted time frame (typically within one year of approval by the Coordinating Council and notification to the CB), the Coordinating Council may rescind program authority and offer it to the other university partners.

In working through these issues, the Coordinating Council will follow the guiding principles (see Appendix I) developed by the Academic Affairs Vice Chancellors as part of their three-year Northwest Houston planning initiative. They will also create an Administrative and Academic Support Council (AASC) comprised of the individuals responsible for managing the off-campus operations in Northwest Houston and task them with identifying opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing, in order to achieve higher levels of administrative efficiency and better service to students.

Beyond these general coordinated activities, each university will be individually responsible for delivering programs, providing student services and managing operations. The Consortium considered organizing itself as a multi-institution teaching center (the participating institutions do, after all, have significant experience with this operating model) but decided that a coordinated confederation of universities had numerous advantages. First, the universities will be able to market their own "brand names," which are already well understood by potential students. The creation of a new MITC, on the other hand, would not be readily understood or marketable to students. Second, by providing their own student services professionals (e.g., academic and financial aid advisors), the universities will be able to provide the highest level of commitment and services to students – much more so, in fact, than if a central MITC staff were hired, since these professionals would represent several institutions at once. And finally, the Consortium believes that all of the essential coordinating activities can be managed by the Coordinating Council without the creation of the separate, expensive MITC administration.

IV. Academic Programs

To date, the Coordinating Council has developed an unduplicated table of academic programs to be delivered at the Northwest Houston Higher Education Centers beginning in 2010. This table is a product of thoughtful, collegial discussions spanning the last twelve months and guided by the "Principles and Procedures for Developing Public Higher Education in the Northwest Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area." The Coordinating Council will continue to meet on a regular basis to consider additional academic program requests from the partner universities and to review each institution's delivery of approved programs. If a university with degree authority does not deliver an academic program in the allotted time frame (typically within one year of approval by the Coordinating Council and notification to the CB), the Coordinating Council may rescind program authority and offer it to the other university partners. Unlike many of the existing MITCs and System Centers, this provision provides the highest level of accountability and assures the community that its higher education needs are being met.

Academic programs will be delivered by a combination of full- and part-time, tenure-track and instructional faculty. Faculty will be appointed by the academic units of the University partners and will meet the same standards and qualifications as faculty teaching on the home campus to insure academic program quality.

TABLE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Northwest Houston Higher Education Centers

Proposed Program Start Dates
Programs at PVAMU NW HEC: Fall 2009
Remaining UG Programs: Spring 2010
Remaining G Programs: Fall 2010

Prairie View A& M University

- M.A., Counseling
- M.S., Accounting
- M.S., Community Development
- M.S., Nursing (Nursing Administration)
- M.S., Nursing (Nursing Education)
- M.Ed., Administration and Supervision

Sam Houston State University

- B.A./B.S., Sociology
- B.A., Spanish
- B.S., Interdisciplinary Studies with EC-12 Special Education
- B.S., Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 Math
- B.S., Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 Science
- B.S., Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 English, Language Arts, Reading and Social Studies
- B.S., Kinesiology
- M.A., Instructional Leadership
- M.A., Special Education
- M.Ed., School Counseling
- M.Ed., Special Education
- M.L.S., Library Science
- M.Ed., Administration and Supervision
- Ph.D., Counselor Education

Texas Southern University

- B.A., Entertainment and Recording Industry
- B.B.A., Management Information Systems
- B.S., Administration of Justice
- B.S., Computer Engineering Technology
- B.S., Electronics Engineering Technology
- B.S., Aviation Sciences Management
- B.S., Environmental Health

University of Houston

- B.A., Communication
- B.S., Consumer Science and Merchandising
- B.S., Logistics and Supply Chain Technology
- B.S., Organizational Leadership and Supervision
- Bridge Program in Hotel and Restaurant Management
- Bridge Program in Engineering
- Global Business minor
- M.S., Human Resource Development
- M.S., Technology Project Management
- Graduate Certificate in Accountancy
- M.Ed., Administration and Supervision

University of Houston-Downtown

- B.A., Humanities
- B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 Generalist
- B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 Bilingual Generalist
- B.A., Math with Secondary Certification in Business, Natural Sciences or Social Studies
- B.A./B.S., Social Sciences
- B.A.A.S., Safety Management
- B.B.A., Accounting
- B.B.A., Finance
- B.B.A., Computer Information Systems
- B.B.A., General Business
- B.B.A., Management
- B.A.A.S., Criminal Justice
- B.S., Criminal Justice

- B.S., Biological and Physical Sciences with Secondary Teacher Certification
- M.A.T., Teaching
- M.S., Criminal Justice

V. Administration of NW Houston Higher Education Centers

While the Coordinating Council will provide strategic guidance for the implementation of university programs and services in Northwest Houston, each participating university will be responsible for providing faculty, support staff, and instructional support for academic programs delivered in Northwest Houston. Every effort will be made, however, to identify areas of mutual interest, whereby operational efficiencies and economies of scale can be achieved by collaborating on providing common services for students and the community. This could include shared library resources, testing centers, food service operations, facilities maintenance, information technology, and grounds-keeping. This will be the responsibility of the Academic and Administrative Support Council (AASC), which will meet regularly to address issues related to all aspects of student support services for the participating universities and Lone Star College.

The administration of each university's academic program at their respective higher education center is discussed in the addenda that follow this overview document.

VI. Student Support Services

Students attending the NW Higher Education Centers will receive comparable student services to those found on their respective home campuses. More specifically, students will be served by extending access to the following services:

Admissions

Students seeking admission to programs offered at the NW Higher Education Centers may apply online via the Apply Texas application. In addition, professional staff at the Centers will be available to assist students with any questions they may have regarding the application process.

Academic Advising

Enhancing the availability of academic advising for students in NW Houston is a critical element in improving college participation and success in the region. The participating universities will extend greater access to advising services for students by adding professional advising staff on-site and/or scheduling regular visits to their Higher Education Centers. Center staff will be expected to coordinate advising activities and to provide general academic advising information to students. Students will also have access to advising services provided online by each of the universities.

Registration

Registration and Enrollment Services will be available online to all students taking courses at the NW Higher Education Centers. Center staff will be available to assist students with the registration process.

Financial Aid

Students may apply for financial aid online using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students will be able to check the status of their financial aid application by contacting the Financial Aid Offices at their university by email, telephone or fax. They may also check their status by logging into their enrollment services portal at their home university. The participating universities will provide financial aid counseling on-site on either a full- or part-time basis.

Student Recruitment

The enhancement of university student recruiting activities in NW Houston is another key element in improving college participation and success rates in the region. Each university has committed to increase the number of visits to high schools, community colleges, and community events by university recruiters. This will be achieved through a combination of adding full-time professional student recruiters in the region and scheduling more frequent visits by recruiters from the participating universities. In addition, regular recruiting/advising events will be scheduled at the Higher Education Centers for prospective students and/or their parents. It should also be noted that marketing/communication materials will be more broadly distributed in the region with the opening of the NW Houston Higher Education Centers.

Retention Programs

Retaining students and ensuring degree completion is an issue of great importance to the participating universities. By expanding a wide-range of student support services, including academic advising, financial aid counseling, and providing greater access to mentoring, tutoring and skill development activities, we expect to retain students at the NW Houston Higher Education Centers at a rate comparable to our home campuses.

Testing Services

Students will have greater access to testing services with the opening of the NW Houston Higher Education Centers. Several of the participating universities will develop testing centers as part of their respective Center plans. It is expected that the creation of Testing Centers and Testing Services will be an area where the participating universities and Lone Star College will closely collaborate to provide service.

Detailed information related to the administration and student support services provided by the participating universities is included in the addenda.

VII. Facilities Considerations

The Northwest Houston Higher Education Centers will be adequate to support the delivery of instruction and student support services relative to the number of students, faculty and staff that will be utilizing each Center.

Classrooms

Classrooms available at the Centers will be comparable to those found on each home campus. Most will have full internet capability (including wireless), multimedia projection capability, and teaching/presentation tools. In addition, each Center may develop capability to support instructional television based upon programmatic need. Classrooms will be acquired and provisioned by each university. PVAMU will utilize its existing facility at 16000 Steubner Airline. The remaining university partners will collaborate with Lone Star College to acquire appropriate classrooms and administrative space.

Student Services

Each Higher Education Center will provide access to space dedicated to the delivery of student services, including academic advising, financial aid counseling, learning resources, and testing services. Student service space will also be provided for food service and/or vending operations and student commons/study space. Space and facilities for student services will be developed individually by each university based on programmatic need. PVAMU will provide student services using its existing facility at 16000 Steubner Airline. The other universities, individually or in partnership, will provide student services in their respective Center or in combination with Lone Star College as appropriate.

Library Services

Students enrolled at the NW Houston Higher Education Centers will have adequate library resources to successfully complete their programs of study. Students will be served by electronic databases and services provided by their home campus library. In addition, students will have access to library holdings through TexShare. Several of the university partners will also develop Learning Resource Centers to provide study space, computer workstations, and library staff to facilitate the delivery of instructional materials to students at the Centers. Students at the Centers will also have easy access to library materials and services at Lone Star College.

Information Technology

The NW Houston Higher Education Centers will have information technology capabilities to support classroom activities and to support student learning. The Centers will have both hard-wired and wireless internet capability. Classrooms will have multimedia projection capability; some will support instructional television based on programmatic need. Students will have access to computer workstations and/or wireless internet capability. Printing and copying services will also be provided to students at the Centers.

Bookstore

Books for courses offered at the NW Houston Higher Education Centers can be ordered online through their home campus bookstore or from other online vendors.

VIII. Partnership Initiatives and Closing the Gaps

The proposed NW Houston Higher Education Centers will significantly impact the state's college participation and success goals. In addition to providing access to baccalaureate and graduate degrees, the enhancement of partnerships with area community colleges and the extension of critical student services will increase the number of students entering into the college-going pipeline.

Dual Enrollment

The NW Houston Higher Education Centers will offer undergraduate upper-division and graduate-level programs. Regional community colleges, including Lone Star College and HCC-Northwest, will provide lower-division instruction and dual credit programs at area high schools. The university partners have strong partnerships with the regional community colleges that will allow them to promote 2+2+2 programs to students enrolled in dual credit. In addition, students will be able to enroll concurrently at regional community colleges and the Higher Education Centers based upon meeting university admission standards.

Course/Program Articulation

The University partners have articulation agreements in place with regional community colleges that will be served by the NW Houston Higher Education Centers.

Joint Admissions

Several university partners have Joint Admissions agreements in place with Lone Star College and Houston Community College. These programs serve the community college population by providing access to university services, including admission counseling, advising, student retention services, and library services, prior to their actual transfer into university programs. It is expected that additional joint admissions agreements will be implemented with the approval of the NW Houston Higher Education plan.

Shared Facilities

Although the NW Houston Higher Education Centers will operate as single-university Higher Education Centers, every effort will be made to share facilities and services to increase operational efficiencies while providing the highest quality support for students and our academic programs. In the initial phase of operations, PVAMU will offer programs at its current facility at 16000 Steubner Airline. The other university partners will work with Lone Star College to acquire appropriate space to serve the needs of their respective academic programs and their students. The Academic and Administrative Support Council (AASC) will explore opportunities to collaborate on providing common services and sharing facilities.

Partnerships

All of the university partners have strong partnerships with regional school districts, community colleges, and business/community organizations. In addition, they have experience collaborating in other higher education initiatives with other universities and community colleges.

Innovative Programs

The university partners have developed several innovative programs designed to promote college participation and success and to facilitate the transfer of students from the community college to the universities. These include joint admissions programs, cooperative or embedded university advising at the community colleges, and reverse articulation of credits to the community college to facilitate the completion of the associate's degree. Other programs are designed to serve as "bridge" programs to specialized areas such as engineering and hotel and restaurant management. Pathways have also been created to provide access to selected bachelor's degrees for students completing the A.A.S. degree at the community colleges.

Detailed information related to innovative programming by the participating universities is included in the addenda.