



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges*

COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Name of Institution: Stephen F. Austin State University

Date of Submission: 09/08/2020

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Part 1. SIGNATURES ATTESTING TO RESPONSE

By signing below, we attest to the following:

1. That Stephen F. Austin State University has conducted an honest assessment of Response and has provided complete and accurate disclosure of timely information regarding Response with the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements of the Commission on Colleges.
2. That Stephen F. Austin State University has attached a complete and accurate listing of all programs offered by the institution, the locations where they are offered, and the means by which they are offered as indicated on the updated "Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews," and that the comprehensive assessment of Response reported on the Response Certification includes the review of all such programs.
3. That Stephen F. Austin State University has provided a complete and accurate listing of all substantive changes that have been reported and approved by the Commission since the institution's last reaffirmation as well as the date of Commission approval.

Accreditation Liaison

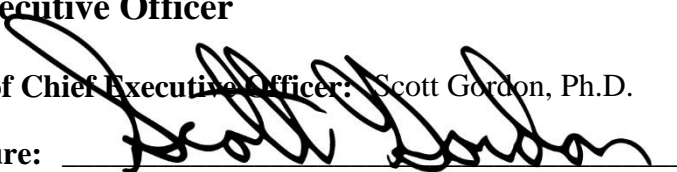
Name of Accreditation Liaison: Marc Guidry, Ph.D.

Signature: 

Date: 09/03/2020

Chief Executive Officer

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Scott Gordon, Ph.D.

Signature: 

Date: 09/03/2020



**Part 2. LIST OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES APPROVED
SINCE THE LAST REAFFIRMATION**

Approval Date	Description of Substantive Change
2011	
6/27/2011	Addition of the M.A. in Hispanic Studies (30 hours; 17 new courses).
2012	
5/20/2012	Addition of the M.S.N. Family Nurse Practitioner (46 hours; 15 new courses, additional faculty, additional library resources).
6/1/2012	Closure/consolidation of the following degree programs: M.S. in Chemistry M.S. in Computer Science M.S. in Physics M.A. in Music M.M. in Conducting B.A. in French* B.A. in Spanish* B.S.F. in Forest Recreation (consolidated into B.S.F. in Forestry Management) M.S. in Statistics** M.S. in Mathematics** M.S. in Spatial Sciences (consolidated into M.S. in Forestry) B.S.R.H.B. in Orientation and Mobility (consolidated into B.S.R.H.B. in Rehabilitation Services) *B.A. in Modern Languages added to consolidate French and Spanish programs **M.S. in Mathematical Sciences created to consolidate graduate programs in mathematics and statistics
2014	
10/3/2014	Initiation of a new off-campus instruction site at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler for the M.S. in Biotechnology and the M.S. in Environmental Science.
2016	
7/22/2016	Initiation of a new off-campus instructional site at Lone Star College Montgomery (Woodlands campus), where 50% or more of the coursework necessary for the BSW and the MSW will be offered through a combination of face-to-face, ITV, and online modalities.



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2017	
2/20/2017	Creation of the M.S. in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner degree program, to be delivered 50% or more via electronic distance learning.
7/26/2017	Creation of a degree completion program for the B.B.A. in Business Communication and Corporate Education, to be delivered online.
9/15/2017	Addition of the M.S. in Cyber Security (30 hours; 5 new courses).
2018	
5/7/2018	Addition of the M.S. in Publishing (36 hours; 8 new courses).
11/26/2018	Addition of the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning (36 hours; 11 new courses) to be delivered 100% online.
11/26/2018	Closure of off-campus site at the UT Health Science Center at Tyler. (This site stopped functioning in 2016, but SFA's notification on the closure was late.)
11/26/2018	Closure of the B.A. in Art History degree program.
9/21/2018	Addition of the B.S. in Data Analytics (120 hours; 5 new courses) to be delivered more than 50% online.
2019	
1/22/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Nacogdoches High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
1/22/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Center High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
1/22/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Cushing High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
1/22/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Garrison High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
6/7/2019	Closure of the M.A. in General Communication degree program.
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Longview High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Wills Point High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Newton High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)



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9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Warren High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Palestine High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Kirbyville High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
9/5/2019	Initiation of new off-campus instructional site: Burkeville High School (dual credit; 25-49% of a bachelor's program to be offered there; all general education core curriculum courses)
11/8/2019	Addition of the M.A. in National Security (36 hours; all new courses; includes two embedded, stackable certificates in Homeland Security and Intelligence Studies)
11/8/2019	Closure of the M.S. in Biotechnology
2020	
7/27/2020	Notification of Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Tarleton University, the SFA Didactic Program in Dietetics Consortium
4/8/2020	Temporary Emergency Relocation of Instruction: Moving all courses, both on main campus and at all sites, to online/distance education due to COVID 19 for Spring and Summer terms
7/17/2020	Closure of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree program in Special Education—Initial Teacher Certification
7/17/2020	Closure of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree program in Elementary Education with Initial Certification in Grades EC-6
7/17/2020	Closure of the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree program in Elementary Education with Initial Certification in Grades 4-8



Part 3. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF RESPONSE

Integrity

Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

- 1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters.
(*Integrity*) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative



Mission

Section 2: Mission

2.1 The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.
(*Institutional mission*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to our identity as a regional comprehensive institution, which addresses teaching, student learning, research, and public service:

Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

This mission statement captures the comprehensive scope of our activities, addressing teaching and learning, as well as research and public service.

The mission statement fulfills [Texas Education Code Sec. 51.359 \[01\]](#), which states, "Each institution of higher education shall develop a statement regarding the role and mission of the institution reflecting the three missions of higher education: teaching, research, and public service."

In 2015, SFA developed a strategic plan, which strengthened the mission with a strategic vision called SFA Envisioned. SFA Envisioned contains six goals:

1. Overarching Goal: Transformative Experiences for SFA Students: We will engage our students in experiences that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community.

2. Foundational Goal: Meaningful and Sustained Enrollment Growth: Through an appropriate mix of relevant programs, delivery methods and locations, we will attract an increasing number of students seeking to prepare themselves for the future. Enrollment growth will be evidence of our productive participation in



achieving the state's strategic goal for developing a more educated population. In addition, growth provides the foundation for our ongoing fiscal sustainability.

3. Supporting Goal A: Attract and Support a High-Quality Faculty and Staff: Our faculty and staff are the university's greatest assets. It is all of us together who engage our students in the high-impact practices that provide the transformative experiences they seek. To successfully fulfill our mission, we must attract and retain highly qualified people.

4. Supporting Goal B: Foster Academic and Co-Curricular Innovation: As the needs of our students evolve, so should our curricular and co-curricular programs. We will be innovative in the ways we reach our students and prepare them for lifelong learning and successful careers in the 21st century.

5. Supporting Goal C: Redefine University Culture: We will have an energetic and respectful workplace where civility, inclusivity, and accountability are guiding principles for everyone.

6. Increase Connections: We will embrace the strengths of our stakeholders to better enable us to provide a stellar learning experience for our students and contribute to the quality of life of everyone we touch.

The university [mission \[02\]](#) and [vision statements \[03\]](#) are published for full public access on the university website. Additionally, the mission statement is published in the [General Bulletin \[04\]](#) (electronic only) and the [Graduate Bulletin \[05\]](#) (electronic only). It is consistent across these sites.

The institution's mission is in compliance with [Texas Education Code, Section 51.354 \[01\]](#), which states that "each institution of higher education has the general responsibility to serve the public and, within the institution's role and mission, to:

1. transmit culture through general education;
2. extend knowledge;
3. teach and train students for professions;
4. provide for scientific, engineering, medical, and other academic research;
5. protect intellectual exploration and academic freedom;
6. strive for intellectual excellence;
7. provide educational opportunity for all who can benefit from postsecondary education and training; and
8. provide continuing education opportunities.

The mission statement explicitly addresses teaching as one of the main purposes of the university, and the expectation is to achieve excellence in teaching students. The mission statement also addresses teaching by emphasizing the creation of a learner-centered environment where faculty and staff can engage students interactively. The concern for fostering learning in





an environment that centers on student engagement underscores the value SFA places upon the co-curricular experience, where students make meaningful connections with faculty and staff both in and beyond the classroom. The mission statement's attention to preparing students for the challenges of living in a global community reflects SFA's position in an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse Texas. Both of these values—creating a learner-centered environment and preparing students for living in a global community—are captured in the overarching goal of SFA's vision statement, making them truly distinctive of a SFA education: creating “transformative experiences” for students “that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community.” These learner-centered, transformative experiences include closely monitored practica and [internships \[06\]](#), [study abroad opportunities \[07\]](#), leadership training embedded in the university's [co-curricular programs \[08\]](#), [learning communities \[09\]](#) for first-generation students, and other interactive offerings that go beyond the typical lecture-style classroom. The charge of creating a learner-centered environment is further reflected in Supporting Goal B of SFA's vision statement, fostering “Academic and Co-Curricular Innovation.” This goal reiterates that one of the hallmarks of the university is to synthesize classroom experience with learning that takes place in student organizations and other venues outside the classroom.

The mission statement also makes the achievement of excellence in research, scholarship, creative work, and service unequivocal drivers of the university. The mission statement's insistence on excellence in research reflects SFA's full range of degrees, extending from the bachelor's degree to the doctoral degree. Over the years, SFA has increased the number of its graduate programs, where research is paramount to a program's viability.

As detailed and evidenced in this response, SFA has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. SFA's mission addresses teaching, learning, research, and public service.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Sec.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Mission - SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Vision Statement.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Undergraduate General Bulletin - Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Internship Opportunities Webpages.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Study Abroad Options.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Leadership Programs - Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Residential Learning Communities.pdf](#)



Eligibility

Section 3: Basic Eligibility Standard

3.1.a An institution seeking to gain or maintain accredited status has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.
(*Degree-granting authority*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has degree granting authority from the appropriate government agency, the state of Texas. Stephen F. Austin State University is a state institution created and governed by the Texas Education Code, [Chapter 101 \[01\]](#), which went into effect on September 1, 1971. According to Sections 101.01 and 101.11 of the code, "Stephen F. Austin State University is a coeducational institution of higher education located in the city of Nacogdoches....The control and management of the university is vested in a board of nine regents appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate." [Section 101.41 \[01\]](#) of the code describes the powers and duties of the board as "the same powers and duties that are conferred on the Board of Regents, State Senior Colleges, with respect to institutions in that system." The university's degree-granting authority is, therefore, extended from those powers listed in [Section 95.24 \[02\]](#), which states that the board "may determine the conditions on which students may be admitted to the universities, the grades of certificates issued, the conditions for the award of certificates and diplomas, and the authority by which certificates and diplomas are signed." [Chapter 61 \[03\]](#) of the code established the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which authorizes programs, degrees, and certificate programs offered by Stephen F. Austin State University.

As part of its authorized degree offerings, SFA delivers online degree programs and courses taken by out-of-state students. To ensure the appropriate state authorizations, SFA participates in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). NC-SARA "pertains to approval of distance education courses and programs offered across state lines by post-secondary institutions that already have degree authorization in at least one state." State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA's) "centralize the authorization process for each institution in a single state called the institution's 'home state'" (Texas, in the case of SFA). See [SARA FAQs \[04\]](#). By establishing state-level reciprocity agreements, NC-SARA sets up comparable national standards for interstate offerings of post-secondary distance education courses and programs. Therefore, colleges or universities in a SARA state need only their "Home State" authorization to offer distance education to students in any other SARA member state. Texas became a SARA state in 2016. See [SFA's SARA Renewal Letter \[05\]](#)











Prior to 2016, SFA's state authorization procedure was as such:

1. Letters were sent to each state requesting certification or information regarding certification to offer distance education courses and programs in each state. (draft provided [\[06\]](#))
2. Documentation and payment (as applicable) were submitted to apply for authorization as indicated by each state. Note: The majority of states did not require approval so long as the institution did not establish a physical presence in the indicated state.
3. Authorization was maintained at intervals as required by each state.
4. The Center for Teaching and Learning worked with Institutional Research to track students that were both out-of-state and only DE, or out-of-states in the Border States.

Example letters are attached [\[07\]](#) [\[08\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Texas Education Code Chapter 95.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Education Code Chapter 61.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] NC-SARA FAQs webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SARA Renewal Confirmation Letter.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Draft - SFA Form Letter - Out-of-state authorization.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] State Authorization - Alaska.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] State Authorization - Colorado.pdf](#)



3.1.b An institution seeking to gain or maintain accredited status offers all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. (For exceptions, see SACSCOC policy "*Core Requirement 3.1.b: Documenting an Alternative Approach.*")
(*Course work for degrees*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) provides instruction for all coursework required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees (bachelor's, master's and doctoral). For example, all coursework required for the [Bachelor of Science in Nursing \(BSN\) \[01\]](#), the [Master of Arts in History \[02\]](#), and the [Doctor of Philosophy in Forestry \[03\]](#) is offered through SFA, as indicated in the current degree plans and redacted transcripts of recent graduates from these programs. See [Redacted Transcripts of Recent Graduates \[04\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

 [\[01\] BSN Degree Plan.pdf](#)

 [\[02\] MA History.pdf](#)

 [\[03\] Program Forestry, PhD.pdf](#)

 [\[04\] Redacted Transcripts for BSN, MA & PhD.pdf](#)



3.1.c An institution seeking to gain or maintain accredited status is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs.
(Continuous operation) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has been in operation continuously since it opened in 1923, as described in the “Location and History” section of the SFA Website (Figure 1). As SFA currently holds SACSCOC accreditation and remains in continuous operation, per the note for Standard 3.1.c in the Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, no further documentation is necessary to address this standard.



Figure 1 – 3.1.c – “History of SFA.”



Governing Board

Section 4: Governing Board

4.1.a The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution.
(*Governing board characteristics*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University is established by Chapter 101 of the Texas Education Code. [Section 101.11 \[01\]](#) provides that “the control and management of the university is vested in a board of nine regents appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.” Members of the board hold office for staggered terms of six years, with the terms of three members expiring on January 31 of each odd-numbered year. Vacancies are filled by appointment for the unexpired portion of the term. [Id. § 101.12 \[01\]](#). Additionally, a non-voting student regent is appointed by the governor by June 1, or as soon thereafter as practicable for a one-year term expiring the next May 31. The student regent is not a member of the board of regents. [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.356. \[02\]](#) The powers and duties of the board of regents are delineated in [Tex. Educ. Code § 101.41 \[01\]](#), which references [Subchapter B of Texas Education Code, Chapter 95 \[03\]](#).

Additionally, the state legislature has prescribed several responsibilities for governing boards of institutions of higher education, including:





- preserve institutional independence and defend [the institution's] right to manage its own affairs;
- enhance the public image of the institution; interpret the community to the campus and the campus to the community;
- nurture the institution so that it achieves its full potential within its role and mission;
- insist on clarity of focus and mission;
- provide policy direction for the institution;
- establish goals consistent with the institution’s role and mission;
- appoint and evaluate the president of the institution, including assisting such individual in the achievement of performance goals;
- set admission standards; and
- ensure its formal position on matters of importance are communicated clearly to the coordinating board.

On the local level, the board of regents further defines its power and duties through its Rules and Regulations, last amended April 30, 2019.



[Section 4 of the Rules and Regulations \[04\]](#) provides that the board of regents shall meet at least four times per year, usually in January, April, July, and October. The chair or a majority of the members of the board may call special meetings of the board. All meetings are open to the public and broadcast over the internet as required by law. A majority of the membership is required to establish a quorum, and no formal action can be taken in the absence of a quorum.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Texas Education Code Section 51.356.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Education Code Chapter 95.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)



4.1.b The institution has a governing board of at least five members that exercises fiduciary oversight of the institution.
(*Governing board characteristics*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The board has the legal responsibilities of a fiduciary in the management of funds under the university's control. [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.352 \[01\]](#). The board is expressly granted control of all appropriations for the support and maintenance of the university, purchase of land and buildings, and erection or repair of property. It has explicit authority to formulate rules for the general control and management of the university, the auditing and approving of accounts, and the issuance of vouchers and warrants necessary for the efficient administration of the university. [Tex. Educ. Code § 95.28 \[02\]](#). The board has the obligation to file financial statements; the power of eminent domain; and the authority to acquire land, manage property, and accept donations, gifts, grants, and endowments. [Id. § 95.29-.36 \[02\]](#). The board requires the president to ([Section 12, Rules and Regulations \[03\]](#)):

- recommend appropriate operating budgets and supervise expenditures under the approved budget;
- ensure efficient management of business affairs, property, and the physical plant;
- provide active leadership in the fund development for the university;
- have ultimate responsibility for proper administration of contracts and purchases; and
- accept grants and contracts.

Additionally, the board requires that certain items must be approved before purchase, and has delegated to the president approval for other purchases. See [Policies 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[04\]](#) and [1.3 Contracting Authority \[05\]](#). The Vice President for Finance and Administration, Dr. Danny Gallant, serves as the university's chief financial officer and reports directly to the president.

Evidentiary Documents

 [\[01\] Texas Education Code Section 51.352.pdf](#)

 [\[02\] Texas Education Code Chapter 95.pdf](#)

 [\[03\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)

 [\[04\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)

 [\[05\] Policy 1.3, Contracting Authority.pdf](#)



4.1.c The institution has a governing board of at least five members that ensures that both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial interest in the institution.

(Governing board characteristics) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Neither the members of the board nor president currently have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interests in the university. State law and university policy prohibit familial relationships that would result in nepotism. [Tex. Gov't Code Ch. 573 \[01\]](#), [Policy 11.16 \[02\]](#), [Section 10, Rules and Regulations \[03\]](#) provides that no board member may approve a contract or agreement of any character in which that member, directly or indirectly, has a pecuniary or substantial interest without prior advice of the general counsel. State law provides that any member of the board who has a personal or private interest in a measure, proposal, or decision pending before the board shall publicly disclose that fact to the board in a properly called meeting, and may not vote or otherwise participate in the decision. Tex. [Gov't Code § 572.058 \[04\]](#). Additionally, all board members are required to complete and file a personal financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission. [Id. § 572.021 \[04\]](#). The president, like all employees of the university, is required to annually report any financial or familial interests that may impact the university. See [Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics, and Confidentiality \[05\]](#).

Board members are made aware of their duties, responsibilities, and ethical considerations using a variety of methods. Numerous members of the university administration assist in orientation of new board members prior to their first meeting. See [Orientation Manual 2020 \[06\]](#). Additionally, during each member's first year of service, he or she is required to attend trainings developed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. [Tex. Educ. Code § 61.084-.0841 \[07\]](#). This includes an intensive short course (Figure 1) and attendance at a [leadership conference \[08\]](#).



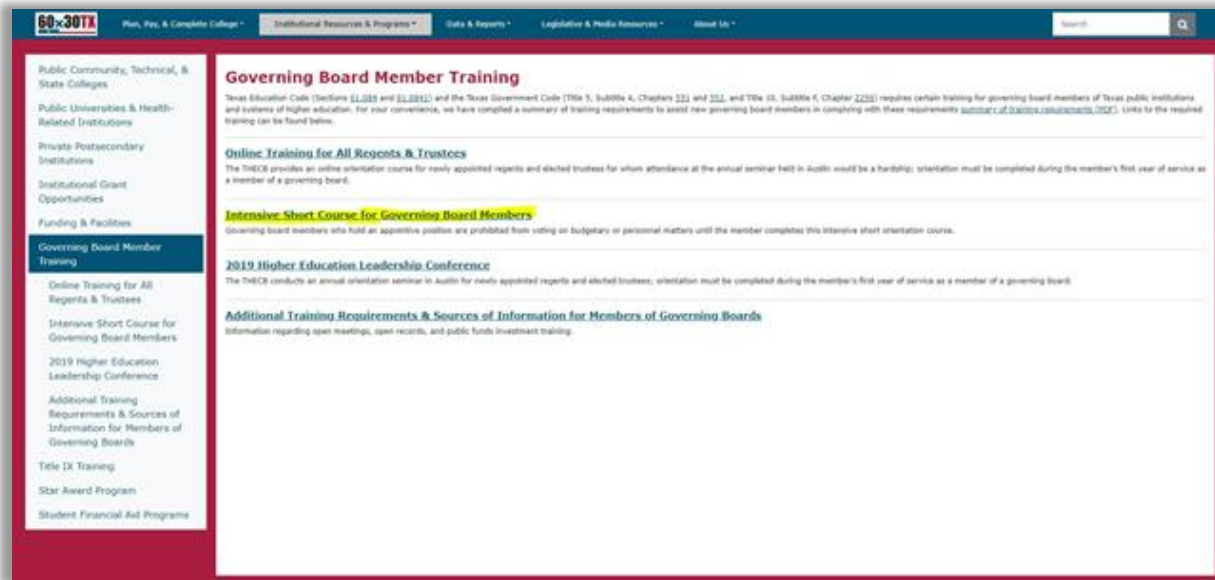


Figure 1- 4.1.c - THECB Governing Board Training Resources.

If attendance at the leadership conference is not possible, members may attend an online training (Figure 2).

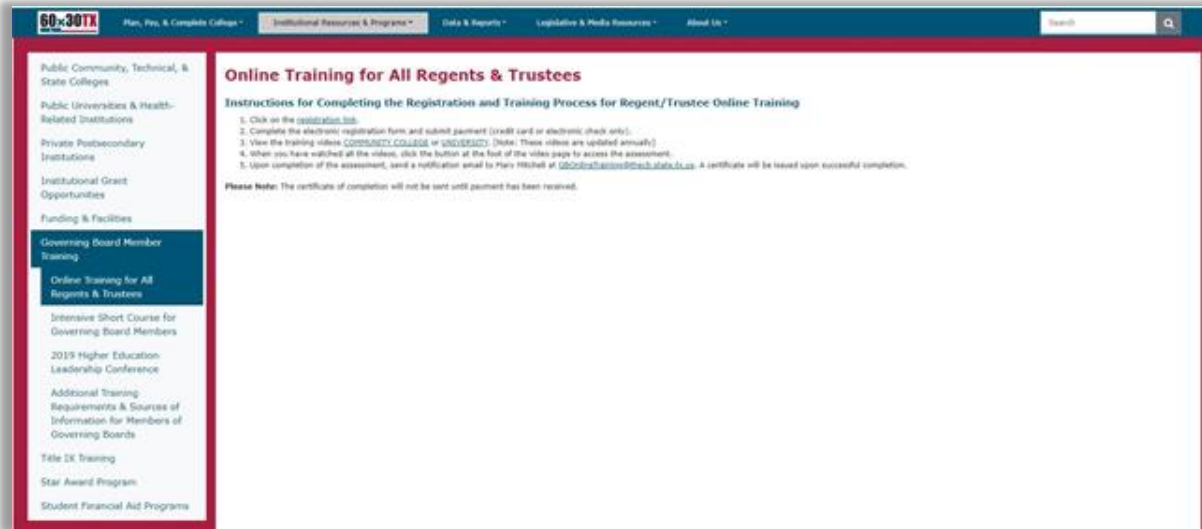












Figure 2 - 4.1.c - Online Training for All Regents & Trustees..

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board also provides information regarding Open Meetings Act training, Public Information Act training, Public Funds Investment Act training, and resources from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. See [Additional Training Requirements & Sources of Information for Members of Governing Boards \[09\]](#). Finally, the university also requires its board members to take its trainings on property, procurement, and ethics. See [Training Certificates \[10\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents



-  [\[01\] Govt. Code Chapter 573 Degrees of Relationship; Nepotism Prohibitions.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 11.16, Nepotism.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 572 Personal Financial Disclosure, Standards of Conduct.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Orientation Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Texas Education Code Section 61.084.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] 2019 Leadership Conference.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] THECB - Additional Training Requirements.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] BOR Training Certificates.pdf](#)



4.1.d The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or institutions separate from it. (*Governing board characteristics*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The board structure prevents a minority of the board, or other outside agencies, from controlling or exerting undue influence on the actions of the board. First, with the staggered terms of board members, every two years three members' terms expire. Second, parliamentary procedure generally conforms to Roberts' Rules of Order. See [Board Rules and Regulations at Section 6 \[01\]](#). Agenda items are first considered by each committee with responsibility over the respective area. Committee meetings are usually held the day prior to the board meeting. For example, committees met on [July 23, 2018 \[02\]](#) for the July 24, 2018 meeting, and on [April 23, 2018 \[03\]](#) for the April 24, 2018 meeting. The committee members determine whether to bring the item before the full board. Once before the full board, the committee chair makes a motion to approve the item, which must be seconded by another member, and then voted upon by the board in order for it to be enacted.

The board holds its statutorily required annual meeting in April. [Tex. Educ. Code § 101.20 \[04\]](#). At this meeting, the chair of the board appoints the members of the four standing committees: Executive Committee, Academic and Student Affairs Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, and Finance and Audit Chair Committee. The Executive Committee serves as an advisory committee only and may only make recommendations to the board for approval. The board chair may appoint special committees at any time. The Nominating Committee, which serves to nominate members for officer positions with the board, is appointed prior to the January meeting for the purpose of nominating board officers at the January meeting. Each committee's roles and responsibilities are delineated in the Rules and Regulations. See [Section 9, Rules and Regulations \[01\]](#). There are three board officers chair, vice-chair, and secretary—and each is elected by majority vote. However, no member is permitted to serve more than two consecutive terms as chair unless the members re-elect by a vote of at least six (6) members. Id. at [Section 6 \[01\]](#).








The chair presides over the board meetings, is responsible for setting the agenda for all meetings, has the authority to call any special meetings, and serves as an ex officio member of all board committees. The chair is responsible for apprising members of the board of their duties and responsibilities under the law. Id. at [Section 6 \[01\]](#).

At its meetings, the board will consider for approval various items and hear a variety of reports from the administration. As the policy-making body of the university, the board has enacted [Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[05\]](#). This policy requires board approval of such items as: construction and renovation projects, actions involving employees, delegations of administrative authority, policy statements, certain contracts, certain real property



transactions, establishment or setting of tuition and fees, curriculum matters, naming opportunities, the annual operating budget, biennial legislative requests, and long range master plans and strategic plans. For example, at its [January 27-29, 2019 meeting \[06\]](#), the board approved policy revisions, set tuition rates, approved various employee items, and selected a presidential search firm. At its [October 28-29, 2018 \[07\]](#) meeting, the board approved policy revisions, approved a resolution for bond financing, selected an architect and construction manager-at-risk for several projects, purchased property near campus, named a classroom and obstacle course, and approved the audit charter.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] BOR Agenda July 22-24, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] BOR Agenda April 23, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] BOR Meeting Minutes January 27-29, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] BOR Meeting Minutes October 28-29, 2018.pdf](#)



4.1.e The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is not presided over by the chief executive officer of the institution.
(*Governing board characteristics*) [CR]

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

As previously stated, the control and management of the university is vested in the board of regents. [Tex. Educ. Code § 101.11 \[01\]](#) . Board member biographies are maintained on the board’s website (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – 4.1.e - “Stephen F. Austin State University, Board of Regents, Board Members.” SFA,

The board has four positions that report directly to it – president, general counsel, chief audit executive, and coordinator for board affairs. See [Sections 11, 13, 14, and 15, Rules and Regulations \[02\]](#). The university’s organizational chart (Figure 2) also describes the reporting structure:



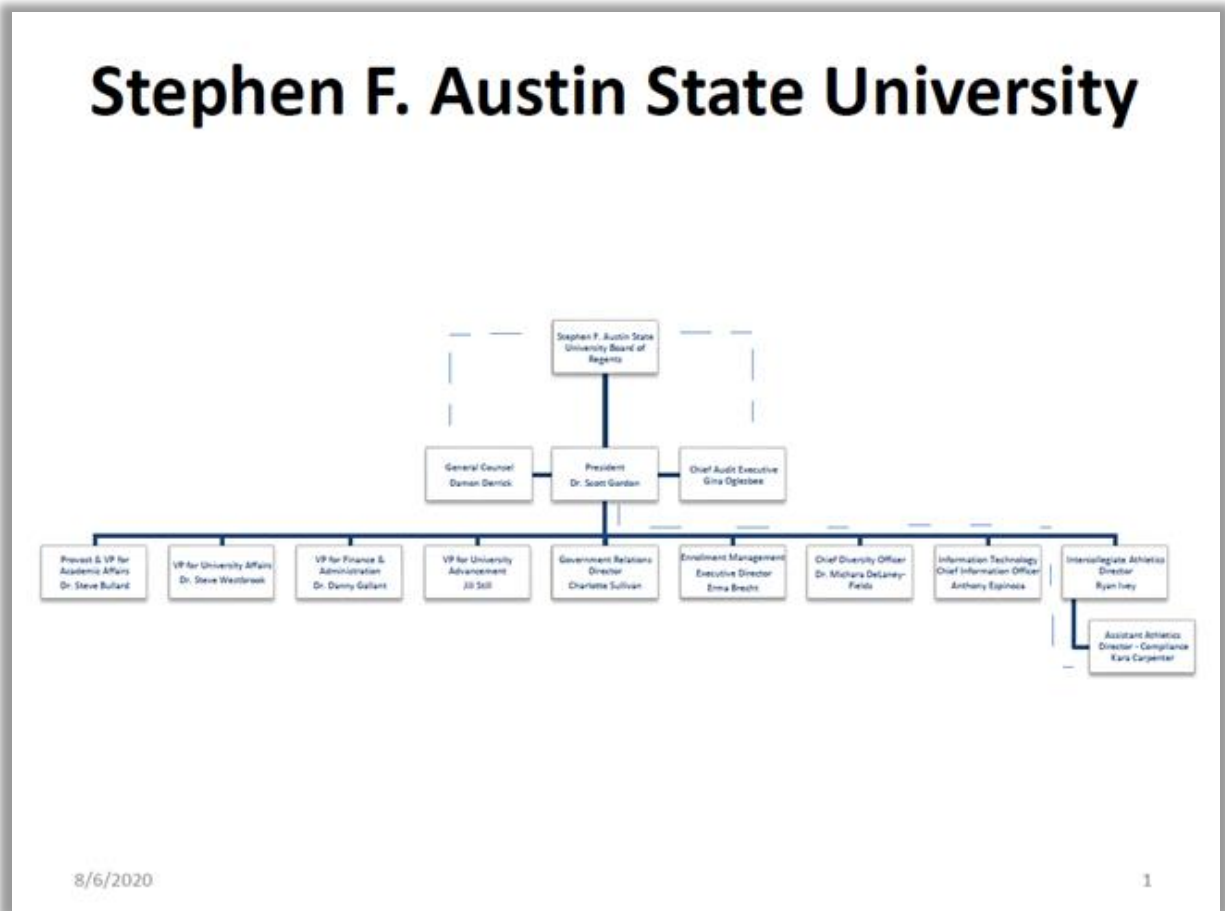


Figure 2 – 4.1.e. – Stephen F. Austin State University, Organizational Charts.

The president serves as the chief executive officer and is evaluated and elected on an annual basis by affirmative vote of a majority of the board members. The president holds office without fixed term and at the pleasure of the board, not the chair or any individual member. [See Section 11, Rules and Regulations \[02\]. Section 12 \[02\]](#) of the Rules and Regulations details the authority, duties, and responsibilities of the president, including that the president is answerable to the board and has discretionary powers broad enough to effectively administer the university within the policies and guidelines established by the board.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)



4.2.a The governing board ensures the regular review of the institution's mission.
(*Mission review*)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

The governing board ensures the regular review of the institution’s mission.

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is guided by a clear and comprehensive [mission statement \[01\]](#):

Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

The mission statement is reviewed annually as part of the board’s self-evaluation and prior to the commencement of any major institutional planning cycle, which typically occurs every five to ten years. The previous [strategic plan \[02\]](#) was in effect from 2008-2013, and then extended by board action on [May 9, 2014 \[03\]](#) to remain in effect until a new plan was developed. The new plan was developed from January 2014 – July 2015. See Timeline & Progress, Strategic Plan website (Figure 1).

Envision SFA...

is what we called the five-phase collaborative strategic planning process that informed the development of our **SFA Envisioned** strategic plan. Below is the Envision SFA website as it existed during the planning process:

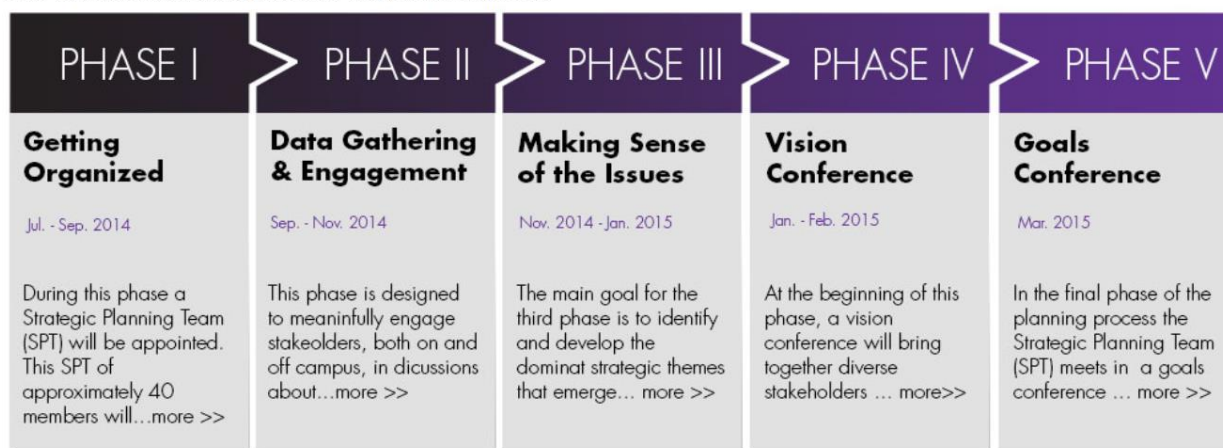









Figure 1 – 4.2.a. – “Stephen F. Austin State University, Envision SFA, Planning Process.” SFASU,



The university's current mission statement was reaffirmed as part of its current [strategic plan \[04\]](#), entitled SFA Envisioned, and is in effect from 2015-2023. The Board of Regents adopted this plan on [July 28, 2015 \[05\]](#), in accordance with university [policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[06\]](#). The most recent review of SFA's mission occurred during the board's self-evaluation on [July 19, 2020 \[07\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Mission - SFA Envisioned SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Strategic Plan 2008-2013.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] BOR Meeting Minutes May 9, 2014.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Strategic Plan 2015-2023.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 27-28, 2015.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Board Evaluation July 2020.pdf](#)



4.2.b The governing board ensures a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making function of the board and the responsibility of the administration and the faculty to administer and implement policy.

(Board/administrative distinction)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The statutes under which the university operates and the policies established by the university clearly differentiate between the policy making functions of the Board of Regents and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

The responsibilities of governing boards in the state of Texas are defined in [Texas Education Code, Section 51.352 \[01\]](#). It provides that the board will “exercise the traditional and time-honored role for such boards as their role has evolved in the United States and shall constitute the keystone of the governance structure.” It continues to state that the board “shall provide the policy direction” for the university, “establish...goals consistent with the role and mission” of the university, and appoint and evaluate the president.

The Board of Regents has set out a process for proposing or revising university policies. [Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format \[02\]](#). The policy requires certain items to be brought before the board on an annual basis, and all other policies to be brought at least every three years. Each policy is assigned to a senior administrator responsible for overseeing compliance with the policy.

Board meetings are open to the public and livestreamed on the board website. [Tex. Gov’t Code Ch. 551 \[03\]](#). The board chair is responsible for setting the agenda for each board meeting. [Rules and Regulations, Section 6 \[04\]](#). However, the president makes recommendations to the board on matters that require board approval. [Id. at Section 12 \[04\]](#). The president is also required to submit a written report to the board prior to each meeting. [Id. at Section 17 \[04\]](#). These board orders typically consist of items that, by policy, require board submission and approval. [Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[05\]](#). The president makes a recommendation for each item, and this is presented to the board by either the president or vice-president. For example, see [Report to the Board of Regents \(April 28-30, 2019\) \[06\]](#), and [Report to the Board of Regents \(January 27-29, 2019\) \[07\]](#).

The president is given “discretionary powers broad enough to effectively administer the university within the policies and guidelines as set forth by the Board of Regents.” The president is also required to interpret the board’s policies to the faculty and staff and interpret the university’s programs to the board. He/she is responsible for nominating all faculty, administrative officers, and professional staff for hire, promotion, retention, or dismissal. He/she



is responsible for the efficient management of the business affairs and physical property of the university. [Rules and Regulations, Section 12 \[04\]](#).

The university maintains an active faculty senate, consisting of representation from each college. (Table 1).

SFASU Faculty Senate					
Name	College	Department School	Rank	Term	Senate Committee
Gina Harden	Business	Management & Marketing	Associate Professor	2019-2021	Administration & Finance
Chris McKenna	Business	Business Communication & Legal Studies	Assistant Professor	2018-2021	Administration & Finance
Pamela Rogers	Business	Management & Marketing	Assistant Professor	2019-2022	Elections
Derek Cegelka	Education	Kinesiology & Health Science	Assistant Professor	2018-2021	Ethics
Dustin Joubert	Education	Kinesiology & Health Science	Assistant Professor	2018-2021	Professional Welfare
Kathy Sheriff,	Education	Human Services	Associate Professor	2017-2020	Academic Affairs
Sarah Straub	Education	Elementary Education	Assistant Professor	2019-2022	Professional Welfare
Heather Olson-Beal	Education	Secondary Ed. & Ed. Leadership	Professor	2019-2020	Professional Welfare
Brian Uriegas	Education	Secondary Ed. & Ed. Leadership	Assistant Professor	2018-2021	Administration & Finance, Chair
Wesley Berg	Fine Arts	Art	Assistant Professor	2017-2020	Professional Welfare, Chair
Christina Guenther	Fine Arts	Music	Professor	2019-2022	Academic Affairs
Jamie Weaver	Fine Arts	Music	Associate Professor	2017-2020	Academic Affairs, Chair
Franta Majs	Forestry & Agriculture	Agriculture	Assistant Professor	2019-2022	Communications
Brian Oswald	Forestry & Agriculture	Forestry	Professor	2019-2020	Faculty Government & Involvement
Jeremy Stovall	Forestry & Agriculture	Forestry	Professor	2017-2020	Senate Strategic Planning
Kristin Bailey-Wallace	Liberal & Applied Arts	Social Work	Assistant Professor	2019-2022	Professional Welfare
Scott Drury	Liberal & Applied Arts	Psychology	Associate Professor	2019-2022	Ethics
Donald Gooch	Liberal & Applied Arts	Government	Associate Professor	2018-2021	Ethics,
Al Greule	Liberal & Applied Arts	Mass Communication	Associate Professor	2018-2020	Communications,



Name	College	Department School	Rank	Term	Senate Committee
Larry King	Liberal & Applied Arts	Languages, Culture, & Communication	Professor	2019-2020	Faculty Government & Involvement
Andrew Lannen	Liberal & Applied Arts	History	Associate Professor	2018-2021	Senate Strategic Planning,
Scott Sosebee	Liberal & Applied Arts	History	Associate Professor	2017-2020	Communications
James Adams	Sciences & Mathematics	Physics, Engineering, & Astronomy	Assistant Professor	2019-2022	Senate Strategic Planning
Sara Bishop	Sciences & Mathematics	Nursing	Associate Professor	2020	Elections
Angela Jones	Sciences & Mathematics	Nursing	Assistant Professor	2017-2020	Elections,
Pushkar Ogale	Sciences & Mathematics	Computer Science	Assistant Professor	2018-2021	Administration & Finance
Kefa Onchoke	Sciences & Mathematics	Chemistry & Biochemistry	Professor	2017-2020	Elections
Kyle Ainsworth	Library	ETRC	Librarian	2017-2020	Faculty Government & Involvement, Chair
Todd Barrios	Adjunct	Hospitality Administration	Chef Instructor	2017-2020	Elections
Laurie Rogers	Adjunct	Business Communication & Legal Studies	Lecturer	2018-2021	Academic Affairs











Table 1 – 4.2.b. – SFASU Faculty Senate Roster

The faculty senate’s constitution provides that it “shall formulate and recommend academic policy for the university, acting with due regard to the autonomy, requests, and needs of the specific departments, divisions, schools, and colleges, to the advice of the president of the university and to the regulations of the Board of Regents of Stephen F. Austin State University and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University Systems.” [Constitution of the Faculty Senate \[08\]](#). The Board of Regents provides an opportunity for the chair of the faculty senate to appear and provide a report at each quarterly board meeting. [Rules and Regulations, Section 19 \[04\]](#). These reports detail the activities of the faculty senate each quarter and serve to bring attention to issues important to the faculty. [See Chair Address to the Board of Regents, January 2019 \[09\]](#).

The board has delegated the administration of each academic unit. Each academic unit is led by a unit head, typically a chair or director, who is responsible for establishing and maintaining “a climate conducive to the pursuit of knowledge,” providing leadership in establishing a visionary direction and maintenance of standards for the unit, advocating for the unit, ensuring quality of programs, managing and allocating resources, managing personnel procedures and processes, and promoting the unit to external constituencies. [Policy 4.4, Administration of Academic Units \[10\]](#).



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Section 51.352.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 551 Open Meetings.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Report to the Board April 28-30, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Report to the Board January 27-29, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Faculty Senate constitution.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] BOR Address January 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 4.4, Administration of Academic Units.pdf](#)



4.2.c The governing board selects and regularly evaluates the institution's chief executive officer.
(CEO evaluation/selection)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The Board of Regents is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the university's chief executive officer – its president.

In late October 2018, then-president Dr. Baker Pattillo fell ill and was unable to fulfill the duties of president. The board met on [October 30, 2018 \[01\]](#), and named Dr. Steve Westbrook as acting president until the president was able to return to his duties, in accordance with university [Policy 2.4, Authority to Act in the Absence of the President \[02\]](#), and [Board Rules and Regulations, Section 11 \[03\]](#). On December 14, 2018, the board accepted the retirement of Dr. Baker Pattillo and named Dr. Steve Westbrook as interim president. [Minutes of the Board of Regents, December 14, 2018 \[04\]](#). Following the appointment of Dr. Westbrook, the board appointed a professional search firm to assist in the search for the next president of the university. See [Minutes of the Board of Regents, January 27-29, 2019 \[05\]](#). Under the board rules, “the board will accept for consideration suggested nominations from a screening committee representing the board, the faculty, the staff, the Alumni Association, the community, and the student body.” [Rules and Regulations, Section 11 \[03\]](#).

Members of the screening committee (Figure 1) representing each of the aforementioned groups were appointed in a special telephone meeting on February 22, 2019.

As stated in the meeting minutes, “the screening committee is charged with working directly with R. William Funk & Associates to screen candidates for SFA’s next president. The committee will review credentials and conduct preliminary interviews. The committee will conclude its service by reviewing qualifications of suitable candidates for presentation to the Board of Regents.” [Minutes of the Board of Regents, February 22, 2019 \[06\]](#).

Presidential Search Screening Committee

- **Board of Regents**
 - Nelda Blair - Secretary, Board of Regents
 - Alton Frailey - Vice Chair, Board of Regents
 - Bridgettee Henderson - Chair, Board of Regents
- **Faculty Representative**
 - Jason Reese Ph.D.
 - Assistant Professor of Management and Marketing
 - Chair of SFA Faculty Senate
- **Staff Representative**
 - Erma Nieto Brecht - Executive Director of SFA Enrollment Management
- **Alumni Association Representative**
 - Charlotte Ashcraft
 - President-Elect of the SFA Alumni Association
 - Vice President, Marketing Director Commercial Bank of Texas
- **Student Representative**
 - Jeffrey Agouna-Deciat - President of the SFA Student Government Association
- **Community Representative**
 - Robert Flores - CFO of Elliott Electric

Figure 1 – 4.2.c. – Presidential Search Screening Committee



The Board of Regents performed management and oversight of the presidential search process in a specially called meeting on [April 8, 2019 \[07\]](#), at its regularly scheduled board meeting on [April 30, 2019 \[08\]](#), and in specially called meetings on [June 29, 2019 \[09\]](#), and [July 19-20, 2019, \[10\]](#).

At its quarterly meeting on [July 21-23, 2019 \[11\]](#), the board named Dr. Scott Gordon as the sole finalist for the presidency. Details of the presidential search timeline (Table 1) and the announcement of the finalist (Figure 3) were made available on the Presidential Search [webpage \[12\]](#).

Timeline	Search Process Activity	Responsibility
February 22, 2019	Appointment of Screening Committee	Board of Regents
March 11-12, 2019	Public engagement to develop Profile/Leadership Statement	R. William Funk & Associates Screening Committee
April	Confirmation of the Profile/Leadership Statement	R. William Funk & Associates Board of Regents
April – May	Advertisement for the position and Profile/Leadership Statement used to search for candidates	R. William Funk & Associates
May – June	Candidates are screened and top ~10 candidates are identified	R. William Funk & Associates Screening Committee
June – July	Initial interviews with top ~10 candidates are conducted	R. William Funk & Associates Screening Committee
July	Board of Regents considers comments from interviews Leading candidates are identified and interviewed by Board of Regents and select campus/community constituents	Board of Regents R. William Funk & Associates
July – August	Finalist is identified and formal announcement made Formal action to approve appointment made (to occur at least 21 days following announcement)	Board of Regents

Table 2 – 4.2.c. – SFA Presidential Search Timeline



Presidential Search

SFA Regents select presidential finalist

NACOGDOCHES, Texas – The Stephen F. Austin State University Board of Regents unanimously named Dr. Scott Gordon, a first-generation college student who became provost of Eastern Washington University, as sole finalist for SFA president.

A native of Malone, New York, Gordon received his bachelor's degree in biology from the State University of New York at Cortland. He earned a master's degree and doctorate in botany and mycology from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and holds certifications from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education in educational management and leadership.

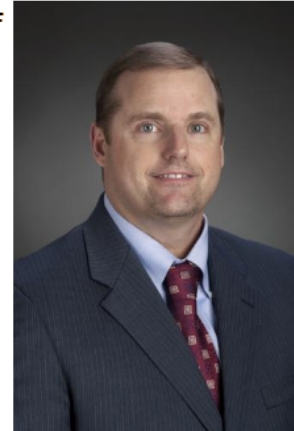


Figure 1 – 4.2.c. – SFA Presidential Search Finalist




















On August 17, 2019, the Board of Regents formally voted to hire Dr. Scott Gordon as the next president of Stephen F. Austin State University. [Minutes of the Board of Regents, August 17, 2019 \[13\]](#).

This authority is delineated in the university's governing statute, which provides that "the board shall select the president of the university." [Tex. Educ. Code § 101.16 \[14\]](#).

Additionally, Texas law provides that the board shall "appoint the president or other chief executive officer..., evaluate the chief executive officer..., and assist the officer in the achievement of performance goals." [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.352\(d\)\(3\) \[15\]](#). This is reflected in the board's rules that provide that "annually when the budget is passed, the Board of Regents shall conduct a performance review of the president and elect the president of the university by affirmative vote of a majority of its members." [Rules and Regulations, Section 11 \[03\]](#).

Each July meeting, the board has voted to elect the president of the university upon completion of a performance evaluation in the preceding executive session. See [Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 22-24, 2018 \[16\]](#), and [Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 23-25, 2017 \[17\]](#). The university's previous president, Dr. Baker Pattillo, received only oral performance evaluations. [Letters of Presidential Evaluation Completion \[18\]](#). The Board chose not to conduct an evaluation of the interim president as his service in that role was for less than one year. The university's current president, Dr. Scott Gordon, will receive a written performance evaluation. See [Performance Evaluation Letter for 2019 -2020 Performance \[19\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Meeting Minutes October 30, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 2.4, Authority to Act in the Absence of the President.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] BOR Meeting Minutes December 14, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] BOR Meeting Minutes January 27-29, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] BOR Meeting Minutes February 22, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] BOR Meeting Minutes April 8, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] BOR Meeting Minutes April 28-30, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] BOR Meeting Minutes June 29, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 19-20, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 21-23, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Presidential Search webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] BOR Meeting Minutes August 17, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Texas Education Code Section 51.352.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 22-24, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 23-25, 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] President Evaluations \(Patillo\).pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] President Evaluation Letter for 2019-2020 \(Gordon\).pdf](#)



4.2.d The governing board defines and addresses potential conflict of interest for its members.
(*Conflict of interest*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The Board of Regents is subject to various state statutes and university policies that define and address conflicts of interest for its members. For example, board members may not accept or solicit gifts that might influence how they would perform their duties, engage in business or other activity that would require disclosure of confidential information, engage in activities that would impair their independence of judgment, create a substantial conflict of interest by personal investments, or accept a benefit for exercising their authority. [Tex. Gov't Code § 572.051 \[01\]](#). This provision further requires the board to adopt an ethics policy consistent with state law. The board, therefore, has passed [Policy 2.6, Ethics \[02\]](#), addressing the following potential conflicts of interest:

1. Conflicts of interest as outlined in [Tex. Gov't Code § 572.051 \[01\]](#).
2. Bribery and gifts
3. Official misconduct and misuse of state property, including electronic resources and confidential information.
4. Acts of agencies and individuals regarding political activity
5. Employees involved in purchasing, contracting, and investments
6. Public servant of interest in property
7. Conflicts of interest for officers
8. Nepotism
9. Equity ownership and management participation relating to research, development, licensing and exploitation of intellectual property
10. Acting as an agent

Potential conflicts of interest specifically addressing the Board of Regents are stated in [SFA Policy 2.6, Ethics, Section 6.Conflicts of Interest for Officers \(Regents\) \[02\]](#):

In addition to the statutory restrictions outlined above or in referenced policies, officers of the university, namely regents, are held to relatively strict standards for conflicts of interest under law. Conflicts of interest may involve indirect or direct pecuniary interests as established in Texas common law. Specific statutory exceptions have been carved out to allow regents to recuse themselves from specific actions. [Section 572.058 \[01\]](#) of the Government Code permits regents to disclose a personal or private interest in a measure, proposal, or decision pending before the board and not participate in board action involving that matter. [Section 51.923 \[03\]](#) of the Education Code allows the university to contract with nonprofit corporations which may have one or more regents serving on their board or a



regent serving as an officer or employee of the nonprofit. The statute also permits the university to contract with business entities in which a regent has an interest. If a regent has a “substantial interest” in the business entity and board approval is required, that regent must recuse himself or herself from the decision on behalf of the university. A regent has a “substantial interest” if the regent or the regent’s spouse, child, parent, father or mother in-law, son or daughter in-law, stepparent, or stepchild: owns one percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity or owns either one percent or more or \$15,000 or more of the fair market value of the business entity; funds received by the regent from the business entity exceed one percent of the regent’s gross income for the previous year; or the regent is an officer of the business entity or its governing board. Regents should contact the general counsel on possible conflict of interest matters and disclose to counsel potential direct or indirect pecuniary interests in matters pending before the Board of Regents. Potential transactions with relatives of regents should also be disclosed to the general counsel for advice and counsel to avoid any appearances of a conflict of interest.

Additionally, the university’s [Ethics policy \[02\]](#) details how conflicts of interest are managed. A regent may self-disclose a personal or private interest in a measure, proposal, or decision pending before the board, and then refrain from participating in that matter. [Tex. Gov’t Code § 572.058 \[01\]](#). If a regent has a “substantial interest” in a business entity who has a contract before the board, the regent must recuse him or herself from the decision. Substantial interests, by definition, include interests of certain members of a regent’s family. [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.923 \[03\]](#). Regents are further required to file financial statements with the state, which include financial activity by the individual and of their spouse and dependent children. [Tex. Gov’t Code §§ 572.021-.023 \[01\]](#). Ethical considerations in the procurement of goods and services are further defined in [Policy 17.21, Purchases from Officers or Employees \[04\]](#), and [Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality \[05\]](#). For example, at the July 28, 2015 meeting of the Board of Regents, the board considered an item to select an architect for a housing operations facility. One of the board members had a familial relationship with an employee at one of the architectural firms being considered. As a result, this member recused herself from the discussion and vote. See [Minutes of the Board of Regents – July 28, 2015, Board Order 15-40 \[06\]](#). Another example occurred at the January 30, 2018 meeting of the Board of Regents, when the board considered a resolution to approve qualified financial institutions and investment brokers. Several regents had personal interests (through board service) with one or more of the numerous financial institutions being considered, and as a result, three regents recused themselves from the discussion and vote. See [Minutes of the Board of Regents – January 30, 2018, Board Order 18-16. \[07\]](#)

Furthermore, state law also prohibits nepotism. It provides that:

A public official may not appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the appointment or confirmation of the appointment of an individual to a position that is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees of office if: (1) the individual is related to the public official within [the third degree of



consanguinity or second degree of affinity]; or (2) the public official holds the appointment or confirmation authority as a member of a state or local board, the legislature, or a court and the individual is related to another member of that board, legislature, or court within [the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity]. [Tex. Gov't Code § 573.041 \[08\]](#).

This is also addressed in university [policy 11.16, Nepotism \[09\]](#), which provides that:

No relative of a member of the Board of Regents may be employed for any position with the university. However, an exception to this rule will be made in cases where the relative has been continuously employed in the position for a period of thirty (30) days prior to the appointment of the related regent. When a relative is allowed to continue in a position because of the operation of this exception, the regent who is related to such person in the prohibited degree shall not participate in the deliberation or voting upon the appointment, reappointment, employment, confirmation, reemployment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of the relative, if such action applies only to the relative and is not taken with respect to a bona fide class or category of employees.












To further protect the integrity of the institution, the board's Rules and Regulations state that:

The Board of Regents shall approve no contract or agreement of any character in which a member of the board, directly or indirectly, has a pecuniary or substantial interest, without prior advice of the general counsel. Regents must self-disclose potential direct or indirect pecuniary or substantial interests in matters pending before the Board of Regents. Potential transactions with relatives of regents should also be disclosed to the general counsel for advice and counsel to avoid any appearances of a conflict of interest. [Rules and Regulations, Section 10 \[10\]](#).

Board members are informed of applicable conflict of interest policies, rules and regulations, and state law during new board member orientation. See [Orientation Manual 2020 \[11\]](#).



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 572 Personal Financial Disclosure.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 2.6, Ethics.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Education Code Section 51.923.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 17.21, Purchases from Officers or Employees.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 27-28, 2015.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] BOR Meeting Minutes January 28-30, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 573 Degrees of Relationship; Nepotism Prohibitions.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 11.16, Nepotism.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] BOR Orientation Manual.pdf](#)



4.2.e The governing board has appropriate and fair processes for the dismissal of a board member.

(Board dismissal)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) adheres to appropriate and fair processes for the dismissal of a board member, as prescribed by the state of Texas.

A board member can only be dismissed through an impeachment proceeding in the Texas Legislature.

The governor with the advice and consent of the senate appoints members of the Board of Regents. [Tex. Educ. Code § 101.11 \[01\]](#). As state officers, regents may be removed from office by impeachment. [Tex. Gov't Code § 665.002 \[02\]](#). The foundation of the legislature's authority is provided in the Texas Constitution. [Tex. Const. art. 15, § 7 \[03\]](#). An impeachment proceeding includes presenting an article of impeachment, investigating the matter, and acting on an article of impeachment. [Tex. Gov't Code § 665.001 \[02\]](#). If impeached by the house, the senate meets as a court of impeachment in a trial of the individual. [Id. at § 665.021 \[02\]](#).

No board member at SFA has been dismissed; as a result, no examples of implementation of the above statutes are available. The university maintains no institutional-level policies or procedures, as the dismissal of a regent is within the sole purview of the legislature.

Evidentiary Documents

 [\[01\] Texas Education Code Chapter 101.pdf](#)

 [\[02\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 665 Impeachment and Removal.pdf](#)

 [\[03\] The Texas Constitution Article 15 Impeachment.pdf](#)



4.2.f The governing board protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies.
(*External influence*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The governing board of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies.

Texas state law provides that each governing board “is expected to preserve institutional independence and to defend its right to manage its own affairs through its chosen administrators and employees.” [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.352\(a\)\(1\) \[01\]](#). Board members are made aware of this duty through a variety of methods. New members are oriented by numerous members of university administration prior to their first board meeting. See [Board Orientation 2020 \[02\]](#). Additionally, during members' first year of service, they are required to attend trainings developed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). [Tex. Educ. Code § 61.084-.0841 \[03\]](#). This includes an [intensive short course \[04\]](#), and attendance at a [leadership conference \[05\]](#). If attendance at the leadership conference is not possible, members may attend an [online training \[06\]](#). The THECB also provides information regarding Open Meetings Act training, Public Information Act training, Public Funds Investment Act training, and resources from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. See [Additional Training Requirements & Sources of Information for Members of Governing Boards \[07\]](#).

Safeguards that protect the institution from undue influence of external bodies or persons include provisions that board members may not accept or solicit gifts that might influence how they would perform their duties, engage in business or other activity that would require disclosure of confidential information, engage in activities that would impair their independence of judgment, create a substantial conflict of interest by personal investments, or accept a benefit for exercising their authority. [Tex. Gov't Code § 572.051 \[08\]](#). This provision further requires the board to adopt an ethics policy consistent with state law. The board, therefore, has passed [Policy 2.6, Ethics \[09\]](#). This policy defines the various state laws and regulations, as interpreted by the Texas Ethics Commission, regarding conflicts of interest and what the university expects of its board members and employees. This includes the conflicts identified above and even conflicts that could occur regarding political activity. [Tex. Gov't Code §§ 556.004-.009 \[10\]](#).

Additionally, board members who have a conflict of interest must recuse themselves before other board members may vote or take an action on a measure, proposal, or decision before the board. [Tex. Educ. Code § 51.923 \[11\]](#). Regents may also “not appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the appointment or confirmation of the appointment of an individual to a position that is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees of office if: (1) the individual is related to the public official within [the third degree of consanguinity or second



degree of affinity]; or (2) the public official holds the appointment or confirmation authority as a member of a state or local board, the legislature, or a court, and the individual is related to another member of that board, legislature, or court within [the third degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity].” [Tex. Gov’t Code § 573.041 \[12\]](#).

Finally, SFA [policy 11.16, Nepotism \[13\]](#), provides that:















No relative of a member of the Board of Regents may be employed for any position with the university. However, an exception to this rule will be made in cases where the relative has been continuously employed in the position for a period of thirty (30) days prior to the appointment of the related regent. When a relative is allowed to continue in a position because of the operation of this exception, the regent who is related to such person in the prohibited degree shall not participate in the deliberation or voting upon the appointment, reappointment, employment, confirmation, reemployment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of the relative, if such action applies only to the relative and is not taken with respect to a bona fide class or category of employees.

The board has further ordered that its faculty “are free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction, and to voice and publish individual conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that they consider relevant.” To this end, the board has ordered that “faculty must be free from the fear that others, inside or outside the university community, may threaten their professional careers or the material benefits accruing from it.” [Policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility \[14\]](#).

There are no cases where external bodies or individuals sought undue external influence.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Education Code Section 51.352.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] BOR Orientation Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Education Code Section 61.084.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] THECB - Intensive Short Course for Governing Board Members.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] THECB - 2018 Higher Education Leadership Conference.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] THECB - Online Training for All Regents Trustees.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] THECB - Additional Training Requirements.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 572 Personal Financial Disclosure.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 2.6, Ethics.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 556 Political Activities by Certain Public Entities.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Texas Education Code Section 51.923.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 573 Degrees of Relationship; Nepotism Prohibitions.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 11.16, Nepotism.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility.pdf](#)



4.2.g The governing board defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations.
(*Board self-evaluation*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The governing board of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations. The board’s Rules and Regulations state, “annually when the budget is passed, the Board of Regents will conduct a self-evaluation of its responsibilities and expectations.” It continues that the “evaluation will consider the principles of board governance as specified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), applicable state law, the Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, and the university’s mission statement and strategic plan. [Rules and Regulations, Section 26 \[01\]](#).






In practice, this evaluation is conducted at the July meeting of the board of regents. For example, see [Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 21-23, 2019 \[02\]](#). To assist in this endeavor, the board completes an evaluation form divided into five sections: Orientation and Education, Legal Responsibilities, Organization and Structure, SFA Strategic Plan, and Evaluation. [Board of Regents Evaluation \[03\]](#).

The orientation and education section evaluates the board on its initial orientation programs and the chair of the board may order any refresher training. The legal responsibilities section lists the numerous requirements of the board as provided in [Texas Education Code Section 51.352 \[04\]](#) and asks the members to rate their compliance with each section. The organization and structure section is an in-depth evaluation of the Rules and Regulations of the board as they pertain to the operating structure and its efficiency. The SFA strategic plan section evaluates the board’s focus and attention on ensuring that the university remains committed to its strategic plan. Finally, the evaluation section seeks a meta-assessment on the evaluation process itself, asking the board to respond with how the process may be improved. See [Board of Regents Self-Evaluation 2019-2020 \[05\]](#).

Evaluation of CEO succession and board interaction with other boards is not addressed in our board self-evaluation. However, in the past five years, the SFA board has not interacted with the SFA Foundation board, or any other board.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 21-23, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Board of Regents Self Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas Education Code Section 51.352.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA Board of Regents Self-Evaluation 2019-2020.pdf](#)



4.3 If an institution's governing board does not retain sole legal authority and operating control in a multiple-level governance system, then the institution clearly defines that authority and control for the following areas within its governance structure: (a) institution's mission, (b) fiscal stability of the institution, and (c) institutional policy.
(Multi-level governance)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University is one of four independent public universities in Texas. It is not part of any state university system. The Board of Regents, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, is the sole legal authority over the mission, fiscal stability, and institutional policy of the university, subject, however, to the laws and regulations of the state of Texas. This section is, therefore, not applicable.



Section 5: Administration and Organization

5.1 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution. (For exceptions, see SACSCOC policy *Core Requirement 5.1: Documenting an Alternative Approach.*)
(Chief executive officer) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution.

The president serves as the chief executive officer and is evaluated and elected on an annual basis by affirmative vote of a majority of the board members. The president holds office without fixed term and at the pleasure of the board. [See Section 11, Rules and Regulations \[01\]](#).

[Section 12 \[01\]](#) of the Rules and Regulations details the authority, duties, and responsibilities of the president, including that the president is answerable to the board and has discretionary powers broad enough to effectively administer the university within policies and guidelines established by the board:

- Develop and maintain excellence and efficiency within the university;
- Exercise discretionary powers broad enough to effectively administer the university within the policies and guidelines as set forth by the Board of Regents, as well as powers as may be, from time to time, delegated by the board;
- Make recommendations to the board on university matters requiring board approval;
- Implement all board action items affecting the university;
- Interpret the board's policies to the faculty and staff and interpret the university's programs and needs to the board;
- Represent and interpret the university's programs, needs, and interests to the public;
- Recommend appropriate operating budgets and supervise expenditures under approved budgets;
- Nominate to the board the appointment and reappointment of all members of the faculty, administrative officers, and professional staff and recommend such individuals for promotion, retention, or dismissal
- Develop and maintain efficient personnel programs for all employees, including faculty and administrative officers;
- Ensure efficient management of business affairs and physical property and recommend additions and alterations to the physical plant;
- Assume active leadership in developing private fund support for the university;
- Suspend without pay and immediately remove from the university or assign to other duties with pay any employee, and suspend and immediately remove from the university



any student who: (1) poses a continuing danger to persons or property; (2) disrupts the orderly operation of the university; (3) endangers the education of students; or (4) has been convicted by a trial court of any felony or a crime of moral turpitude;

- Have the ultimate responsibility for the proper administration of all university contracts, agreements, or purchases delegated to the president under the board's policy; and
- Accept grants and contracts and enter into agreements involving the furnishing of educational services with the various agencies of the federal and state governments, foundations, and private corporations, and assume authorization to advance funds as necessary to finance federal grants and contracts which are on a reimbursement basis provided the university will be reimbursed by the agencies for any cost resulting from such grants or contract.

These duties are also detailed in the official university [job description \[02\]](#).

The president, like all other positions at the university, is subject to university [policy 11.19, Outside Employment \[03\]](#), which stipulates that “proper performance of the employee’s university assignment is paramount and outside work will assume a position secondary to university duties.” Further, the outside employment should not be identified with the university and must be performed outside the hours in which the employee is compensated by the university. The president's primary responsibility is to the institution.

Evidentiary Documents
 [01] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf
 [02] President's Job Description.pdf
 [03] Policy 11.19, Outside Employment.pdf



5.2.a The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the following:

The institution's educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services.
(*CEO control*)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University has a chief executive officer who has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the university's educational, administrative, and fiscal programs and services.

The president serves as the chief executive officer. [Section 12 \[01\]](#) of the Board of Regents Rules and Regulations details the authority, duties, and responsibilities of the president, which include:

- developing and maintaining excellence and efficiency within the university;
- approving faculty and staff appointments;
- effectively administering the university within the policies and guidelines set by the board;
- implementing all board items affecting the university;
- developing and maintaining efficient personnel programs;
- recommending appropriate operating budgets and supervising expenditures under approved budgets;
- ensuring efficient management of business affairs and physical property; and
- administrating all contracts, agreements, and purchases.

The president oversees key academic officers and decision makers, including the provost and vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for finance and administration, the vice president for university affairs, the vice president for university advancement, the chief information officer, the executive director of enrollment management, the director of athletics, and the chief diversity officer. See the [Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions of the President's Cabinet \[02\]](#). The organizational chart is publicly available on SFA's Human Resources webpage.



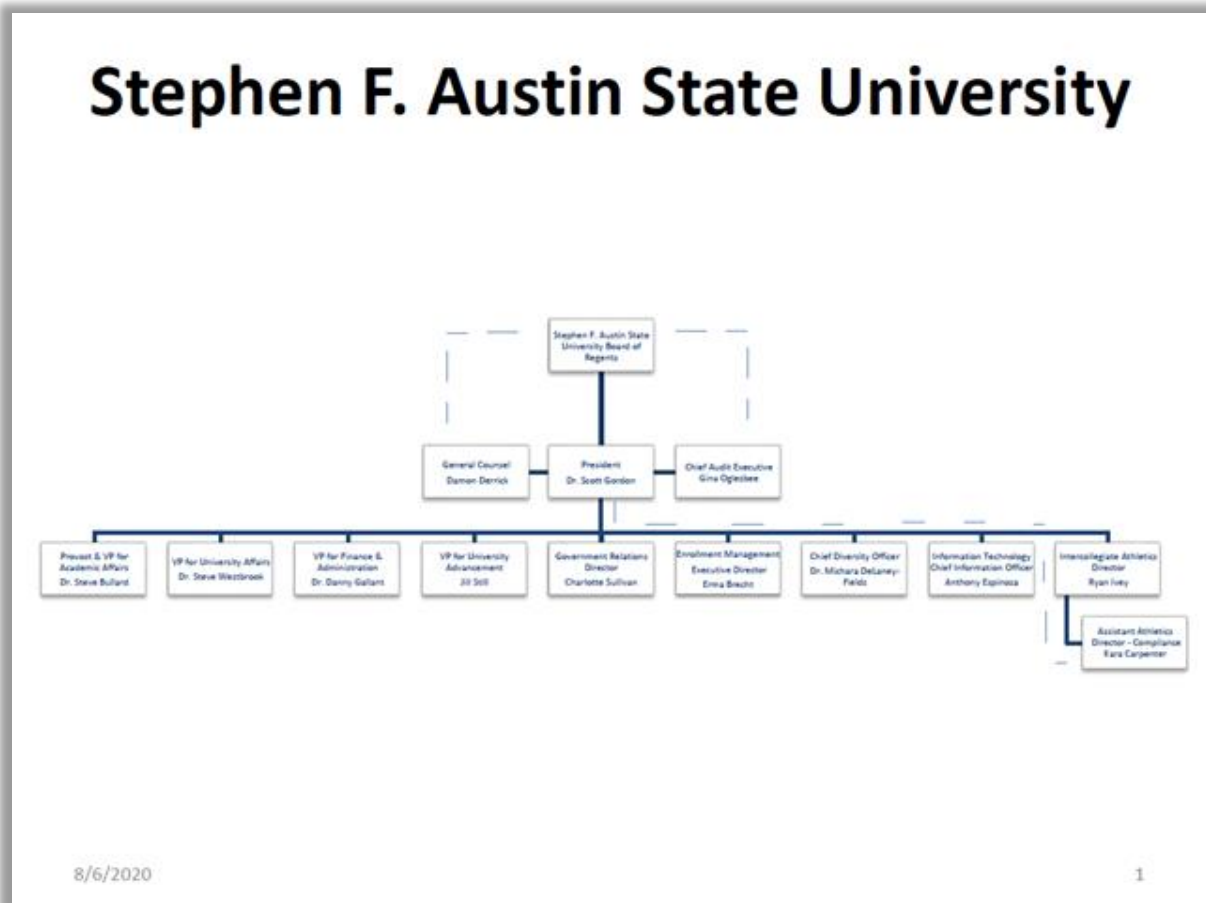


Figure 1- 5.2.a. – SFASU Organizational Chart

The following policies indicate a sample of the responsibility and authority vested in the president:

[Policy 1.8, Selection of Positions Reporting to the President and Head Coaches \[03\]](#)

The president is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that the president should inform the chair of the Board of Regents in the event of a vacancy in the positions of vice president, athletic director, and head coaches.

[Policy 2.4, Authority to Act in the Absence of the President \[04\]](#)

The president is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides the order in which the president’s administrative team may handle “administrative situations in accordance with the recognized operating procedures of the university” in his/her absence. Additionally, “no unusual or major decision embodying significant commitments on behalf of the university will be made without consulting the president.”

[Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination \[05\]](#)

The president is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides the process by which the university will investigate and take action, if warranted, on complaints of discrimination. Under the policy, the president or designee is “responsible for overseeing



this policy and procedures and for ensuring compliance with EEO laws.” Any appeal by the discrimination review board is presented to the president as the final arbiter.

[Policy 3.13, Expenditure Authority for Financial Transactions \[06\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that the president may “designate individuals to approve payments on banks and financial institutions and expenditures paid through the Uniform State Accounting System (USAS). Only individuals who are properly designated by the president are allowed to approve payments of the university’s expenditures.”

[Policy 4.9, Selection of Academic Deans \[07\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that appointment of an academic dean is “by the president and requires approval of the Board of Regents.”

[Policy 5.4, Credit and Contact Hours \[08\]](#)

The president and his immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, are responsible for implementation of this policy.

[Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[09\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that “new courses and new, modified, or deleted undergraduate and graduate programs and changes in mode of delivery will then be considered for approval by the university president.”

[Policy 6.8, Commencement \[10\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that “selection of and arrangements for a speaker are the responsibility of the president.”





[Policy 7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty \[11\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that the “provost and vice president for academic affairs will submit a recommendation on each candidate’s promotion to the president” and “the president will review all materials and recommendations and make a recommendation to the Board of Regents.”

[Policy 7.29, Tenure and Continued Employment \[12\]](#)

The president’s immediate report, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for implementation of this policy, which provides that the “provost and vice president for academic affairs will submit the complete portfolio and a recommendation to the president and notify the candidate of the recommendation” and “the president will review the complete portfolio and recommendations and any other evidence deemed pertinent as a basis for a recommendation to the Board of Regents.” In the event of a termination or non-renewal of a contract, “a written statement of specific charges will be prepared by the president or the president’s designee.” A hearing committee is appointed and its “findings, recommendations, and the basis for them will be communicated in writing to the faculty member and the president” and “when it is the president’s final judgment to recommend dismissal, the recommendation, a verbatim written record of the hearing, and the report of the hearing committee will be presented to the Board of Regents.”

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Org Charts and Job Descriptions.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 1.8, Selection of Positions Reporting to the President and Head Coaches.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 2.4, Authority to Act in the Absence of the President.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 3.13, Expenditure Authority for Financial Transactions.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 4.9, Selection of Academic Deans.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 5.4, Credit and Contact Hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 6.8, Commencement.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Policy 7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-time Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 7.29, Tenure and Continued Employment.pdf](#)



5.2.b The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the following:

The institution's intercollegiate athletics program.
(*Control of intercollegiate athletics*)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

The chief executive officer (CEO) of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over the university's intercollegiate athletics program.

The director of athletics reports directly to the president, who is the CEO. See the director of athletics' [job description \[01\]](#). The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics' [Policies and Procedures Manual \[02\]](#) provides that “the president has direct oversight of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.” Recommended policy revisions are submitted, through the president, to the Board of Regents on an annual basis. See [Board Order 18.31, Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 22-24, 2018 \[03\]](#); Board Order 17-41, Minutes of the [Board of Regents, July 23-25, 2017 \[04\]](#).

Reporting directly to the president, the director of athletics is “responsible for the overall management of the intercollegiate athletics program within the policies and guidelines established by the Stephen F. Austin State University Board of Regents, the President of the University, the Southland Conference, and the NCAA.” See the director of athletics' [job description \[01\]](#). Compliance is specifically included as an essential job function—“ensures compliance with university, NCAA, and SLC rules and regulations, including financial transactions, academic eligibility, code of conduct, etc.” In addition to the director of athletics, the senior associate athletic director for compliance is responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable rules and regulations and has a reporting relationship to the president. [Organizational Chart \[5\]](#).

On May 20, 2020, the NCAA released a Negotiated Resolution arising from the erroneous certification of academic eligibility for 82 student-athletes in nine sports over a six-year period. The NCAA and university agreed upon a finding of lack of institutional control, Level I-Mitigated. The university was first made aware of a potential issue regarding the consideration of degree applicability in the academic certification process as a result of its 2014 NCAA Academic Performance Plan [data review \[06\]](#); however, any changes made at that time, if any, failed to detect or prevent the violations found in the [Negotiated Resolution \[07\]](#). In June 2018, the university hired a new director of athletics. Soon thereafter, the then director of compliance and director of academics for athletics departed. The recently hired assistant athletic director for compliance, along with an intern in her office, discovered the issues and, concerned there was a potential systemic issue regarding academic certification, promptly contacted NCAA



enforcement staff. The assistant athletic director for compliance, outside counsel, and NCAA enforcement staff worked diligently over the following months investigating the issue and recertifying student athletes. In the Negotiated Resolution, the NCAA noted:

Typically, enforcement cases involving eligibility certification and progress-toward-degree violations are difficult to investigate and process largely because of an institution's inability to provide the enforcement staff with the needed information to determine the scope and origins of the violations. In this case, the initial violations were detected and reported by the institution, and throughout the case the athletics director, the compliance director, and others at the institution devoted substantial time and resources to assist the enforcement staff, discover critical information, and recertify student-athletes in a timely manner. This case serves as a model for other institutions when faced with multiple progress-toward-degree violations.

In September 2019, the university hired a new university president. Upon learning of this case, the president authorized the hiring of an assistant university registrar/athletics certification officer who assumed primary certification responsibilities and responsibility for verifying student data for athletes. Additionally, the president overhauled the [intercollegiate athletics council \[08\]](#), designed to serve in an advisory capacity in concert with the director of athletics, to “recommend policy, monitor compliance, and promote both a strong and supportive academic climate for student athletes.” See the [Policies and Procedures Manual \[02\]](#). The athletic council’s primary responsibility “is to ensure student athletes have the opportunity to reach their academic potential and to protect the academic integrity...as it relates to intercollegiate athletics.”

This overhaul resulted in the council strengthening its bylaws; forming [subcommittees \[09\]](#) that include academic progress, integrity, and compliance; and adding additional members from various campus constituent groups. Additionally, the university put into effect the following corrective actions:

- Notified academic advisors of their responsibility for tracking eligibility of assigned student athletes and educated them on this responsibility;
- Restructured the academic certification process for [continuing eligibility \[10\]](#);
- Created a “Determination of Eligibility” [form \[11\]](#) for each type of transfer to guide staff;
- Enhanced rules [education \[12\]](#) for all athletic staff members; and
- Hired a second compliance office staff member to focus on rules education.

See [Appendix, Negotiation Resolution \[07\]](#).

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics operates in a similar manner as all other departments on campus; it is subject to the same policies and procedures. Fiscal matters — including budgets, purchase orders, check requests, and expense reimbursements — are processed through the Controller’s Office. Employee-related matters are subject to the policies and procedures of the Department of Human Resources. Fund-raising activities are coordinated with the Office of



Development. All accounts and activities are subject to internal audits by Department of Audit Services. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is subject to the same fiscal and administrative policies and procedures as all other departments on campus. The department of athletics is, however, subject to additional review through an annual agreed upon procedures audit conducted by an external accounting firm, which is conducted in compliance with applicable NCAA bylaws. Each audit is submitted to the president for review. See [2016, NCAA Report \[13\]](#), [2017 NCAA Report \[14\]](#), and [2018 NCAA Report \[15\]](#).

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics also publishes a [Student-Athlete Handbook \[16\]](#), which details university and department policies and procedures relevant to student-athletes. This includes NCAA and Southland Conference policies and bylaws concerning eligibility and conduct of student athletes.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Director of Athletics Job Description.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Athletics Policy Manual 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 22-24, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 23-25, 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] NCAA Letters.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Negotiated Resolution.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Minutes from IAC February 2020 Meeting.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] IAC Committees Spring 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Certification Process 2.0.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Determination of Eligibility form.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Enhanced rules education.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] SFA NCAA AUP 2016 Final Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] SFA NCAA AUP 2017 Final Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] SFA NCAA AUP 2018 Final Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] SFA Student Handbook.pdf](#)

5.2.c The chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate control over, the following:

The institution's fund-raising activities.
(*Control of fund-raising activities*)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

The chief executive officer (CEO) of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over the institution's fund-raising activities.

Control and Oversight of Fundraising Activities

The president of SFA, Dr. Scott Gordon, serves as the institution's CEO and has ultimate control over all areas of the institution, including fund-raising activities. The president's responsibility and authority for fund-raising activities are delineated in the [Board Rules and Regulations, Section 12 \[01\]](#), directly and indirectly in the following excerpt:

"The president shall assume active leadership in developing private fund support for the university."

The Office of Development, under the leadership of the vice president for university advancement, is the clearinghouse for fund-raising activities of the university and has the president's delegated authority, as outlined in the institutional [organizational chart \[02\]](#). The vice president is a member of the president's cabinet and regularly meets with the president on issues related to university development and fund-raising, as detailed further in the [job description \[03\]](#). See [Cabinet Meeting Minutes \[04\]](#).

Under the direction of the university president, the development staff is responsible for conducting activities that support the mission of the institution and are in compliance with the university's gift policies, including [Policy 3.17, Gifts, Loans, Endowments, and Bequests \[06\]](#), and [Policy 3.16, Gift Reporting \[08\]](#), and according to the same fiscal and administrative policies and procedures that apply to the other divisions of the university. All fiscal records are available for review on-site. The Board of Regents reviews and approves all naming opportunities for buildings and other facilities per [Policy 1.5, Naming Guidelines \[05\]](#), and use of gifts totaling \$500,000 or more per [Policy 3.17, Gifts, Loans, Endowments, and Bequests \[06\]](#). See Report to the Board of Regents, [January 30-31, 2017 \[07\]](#).

Since September 2019, Dr. Gordon has participated in 87 donor engagements, fundraising meetings, and community events. Many of the community events are in participation with organizations such as Booster Club, Rotary Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. These organizations allow a high level of networking with community donors and



supporters. (All events scheduled with donors, prospective donors, and alumni were cancelled early March and throughout spring 2020 due to COVID-19.) Additionally, Dr. Gordon meets with the vice president for university advancement bi-weekly and as needed. See [President's Calendar Items Email \[09\]](#).

Fundraising Activities in Support of SFA's Mission

The mission of the institution states:

Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

In support of this mission, the Office of Development solicits funds from SFA alumni, friends, and parents of current SFA students. Donors can choose to support an academic, student affairs, or athletics program; create an endowment fund; support a naming opportunity; or fund a scholarship. See [Give to SFA website \[10\]](#).

Funds given to an academic program help provide educational opportunities for current and future Lumberjacks, as well as enhance the learning environment provided by the dedicated faculty and staff. For example, the Mast Student Roundtable academic program, through experiential learning, allows students to make real world and real time decisions in the U.S. investment market. See the Nelson Rusche College of Business [website \[11\]](#).

Investment Roundtable

Mast Student Investment Roundtable

The Mast Student Investment Roundtable provides finance students with hands-on experience in managing an equity portfolio. One of only a few such programs in the country available to undergraduates, the program affords SFA business majors the opportunity to obtain real-world experience in the field of investments by managing over \$670,000 of real money provided by the SFA Alumni Association and the SFA Foundation. Student Investment Roundtable members analyze and select stocks, make investment decisions, manage the portfolio and present their results according to industry standards.

Figure 1 – 5.2.c. – Mast Student Investment Roundtable



The Department of Student Affairs supports the mission of Stephen F. Austin State University with the development of programs and services geared toward enhancing student learning, involvement, retention, and civic responsibility. This is accomplished by providing a slate of programs and services designed to engage students in many phases of their development and interests, including entertainment programming, leadership development, social awareness, and global understanding. Naming opportunities, such as the Ed and Gwen Cole Student Success Center, which provides first year students with assistance in transitioning to college, is just one example of the many fundraising activities that supports the programs and services offered by student affairs. See [Naming Opportunities website \[12\]](#).

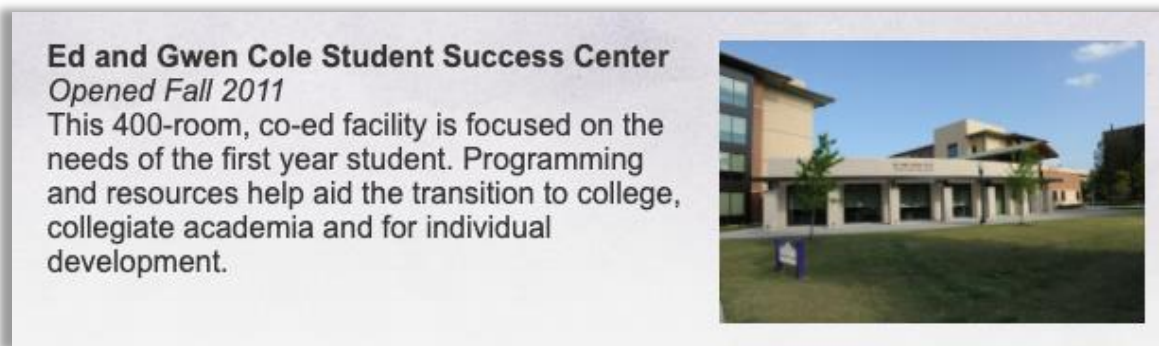


Figure 2 – 5.2.c. – Ed and Gwen Cole Student Success Center.

In addition to supporting academic programs and student affairs, donors can fund student activities that support research, creative work, and transformative learning experiences. The Office of Development’s crowdfunding web page, for example, raises funds for various programs, including our engineering students’ robotics competition, which provides a transformative learning experience. See the [Crowdfunding website \[13\]](#).

Furthermore, gifts to SFA Athletics support the scholarships that allow student athletes to compete in their chosen sports, while providing resources that will help them develop leadership skills to apply to their academic paths and throughout their professional lives. In general, scholarships, whether for student-athletes or other students, enable the university to attract and provide educational opportunities to many talented and deserving individuals, thereby supporting SFA's mission of providing opportunities for its

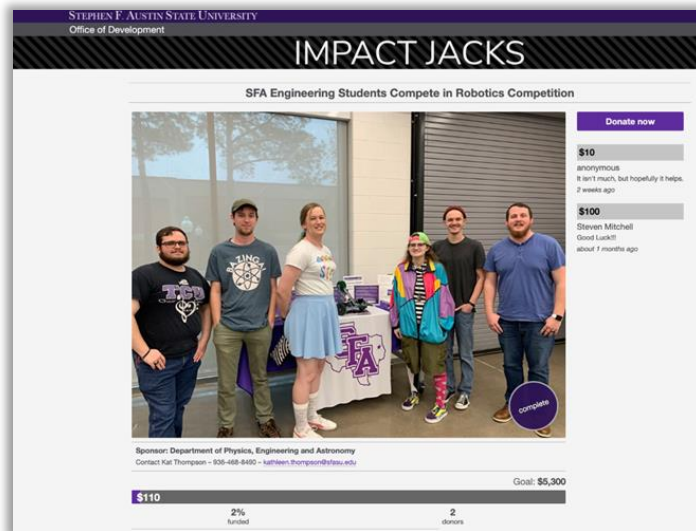


Figure 3 – 5.2.c. –SFA Engineering Students Crowdfunding

students to “prepare for the challenges of living in a global community.” See [Give to SFA Athletics webpage \[14\]](#).

Along with the support given directly to programs and students, fundraising activities support the mission of the university in providing recognition of our faculty for excellence in teaching and research. In 1994, SFA’s Foundation Board of Trustees established an award to be presented to an outstanding faculty member each year in recognition of innovation and/or excellence in the area of teaching. A list of recipients is published on the Office of Development’s [website \[15\]](#).

A comprehensive list of funded scholarships, naming opportunities, and programs is available on the Office of Development’s [website \[16\]](#), as well.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] VP University Advancement Job Description.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Cabinet Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 1.5, Naming Guidelines.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 3.17, Gifts, Loans, Endowments and Bequests.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Report to the Board January 30-31, 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 3.16, Gift Reporting.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] President's Involvement with Fundraising Activities.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Give to SFA - Office of Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Investment Roundtable.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Naming Opportunities.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Crowdfunding Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Give To SFA Athletics.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Faculty Achievement Award.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Honoring Donors.pdf](#)

5.3.a For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs:

(a) The legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity.

(Institution-related entities)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The legal authority and operating control of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) are clearly defined with respect to all entities organized separately from SFA and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the university or any of its programs.

There are three independent foundations with 501(c)(3) status related to SFA: (1) the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation; (2) the Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association; and (3) the Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation. Each has a formal agreement with the university that outlines the relationship, liabilities, and expectations of the arrangement as described in the standard 5.3.

Under State Law, [Texas Government Code, Subtitle F, Chapter 2255 \[01\]](#), the institution must follow specific rules governing the relationship between the donor or organization and the agency and its employees. This includes all aspects of conduct of the agency and its employees in the relationship.

In addition, university [policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors \[02\]](#) states:

Pursuant to Chapter 2255 of the Texas Government Code, the university will recognize only those private support organizations that meet the requirements of this policy as being formed and designated to further the purposes and duties of the university. Any organization or donor (whether existing as a corporation or as an unincorporated association) that is formed to further the purposes and duties of the university must enter into a written agreement with the university, approved by the Board of Regents. If the board declines to enter into such an agreement, the private support organization or donor is deemed not to further the purposes and duties of the university, and the board expressly forbids the use of the name, property, or employees of the university in any actions or activities on the part of the private support organization or donor.

The legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to the entity:



1. *Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation*

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the university and the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation specifically addresses legal authority and operating control. The University Governance section of the MOU states that the “Board of Regents of the University is responsible for overseeing the mission, leadership, and operations of the University, the Board of Regents is responsible for setting priorities and long-term plans for the University, the Board of Regents is responsible for the performance and oversight of all aspects of University operations, and the Board of Regents is ultimately responsible for the employment, compensation, and evaluation of all University employees, including the President.” See [Memorandum of Understanding \[03\]](#).






2. *Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association, Inc.*

The Memorandum of Understanding between the university and the Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association specifically provides that “the Alumni Association shall retain its status as a separate and independent organization. The Association will at all times conduct itself in such manner as to preserve its independent non-profit 501(c)(3) status under the applicable laws and regulations.” See [Memorandum of Agreement between SFA and the Alumni Association \[04\]](#).

3. *Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation*

The Agreement between the university and the Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation specifically provides that “the Board of Regents of the University is the governing body of the university.” See [Agreement \[05\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2255 Private Donors or Organizations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA & University Foundation MOU.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SFA & Alumni Association MOA.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA & Real Estate Foundation MOA.pdf](#)



5.3.b For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs:

(b) The relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising from that relationship are clearly described in a formal, written manner.
(Institution-related entities)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) describes the relationship of any entity organized separately from it for the purpose of supporting the university or its programs, as well as any liability arising from such relationships, in a formal, written manner.

There are three independent foundations with 501(c)(3) status related to SFA: (1) the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation; (2) the Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association; and (3) the Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation. Each has a formal agreement with the university that outlines the relationship, liabilities, and expectations of the arrangement as described in the standard 5.3.

Under State Law, [Texas Government Code, Subtitle F, Chapter 2255 \[01\]](#), the institution must follow specific rules governing the relationship between the donor or organization and the agency and its employees. This includes all aspects of conduct of the agency and its employees in the relationship.

In addition, university [policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors \[02\]](#), states:

Pursuant to Chapter 2255 of the Texas Government Code, the university will recognize only those private support organizations that meet the requirements of this policy as being formed and designated to further the purposes and duties of the university. Any organization or donor (whether existing as a corporation or as an unincorporated association) that is formed to further the purposes and duties of the university must enter into a written agreement with the university, approved by the Board of Regents. If the board declines to enter into such an agreement, the private support organization or donor is deemed not to further the purposes and duties of the university, and the board expressly forbids the use of the name, property, or employees of the university in any actions or activities on the part of the private support organization or donor.

The relationship of the above entities to the institution and the extent of any liability arising from that relationship are clearly described in a formal, written manner, as follows:



1. *Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation*

The Memorandum of Understanding specifically provides that the “Foundation is a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created to procure, manage, distribute, and steward resources to support the various missions of the University.” See [Memorandum of Understanding \[03\]](#).






2. *Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association, Inc.*

The Memorandum of Understanding specifically provides, "The Association's Board of Directors and employees will comply with University policies including staffing, management, and University property, unless the action, activity, or property is wholly independent and unrelated to the University." See [Memorandum of Understanding \[04\]](#).

3. *Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation*

The Agreement specifically provides that the Foundation is authorized to receive, hold, manage, and control property--whether real, personal, or mixed; or acquired by the Foundation by donation gift, grant, devise, bequest, purchase, or other means--which benefits the University; and to transfer or use all or any part of the corpus or income for the benefit of Stephen F. Austin State University in accordance with the general or specific purposes stipulated by the donors, grantors, or testators, or, in the absence of such stipulations, for such uses as may be determined by the foundation’s Board of Trustees. See [Agreement \[05\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2255 Private Donors or Organizations.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA & University Foundation MOU.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SFA & Alumni Association MOA.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA & Real Estate Foundation MOA.pdf](#)

5.3.c For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs:

(c) The institution demonstrates that (1) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (2) the fund-raising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner, which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution.

(Institution-related entities)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures that (1) the chief executive officer (CEO) controls any fund-raising activities of any entity organized separately from the university primarily for the purpose of supporting it or its programs, and that (2) the fund-raising activities of those entities are defined in a formal, written manner assuring they further its mission.

There are three independent foundations with 501(c)(3) status related to Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA): (1) the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation; (2) the Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association; and (3) the Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation. Each has a formal agreement with the university that outlines the relationship, liabilities, and expectations of the arrangement as described in the standard 5.3.

Under State Law, [Texas Government Code, Subtitle F, Chapter 2255 \[01\]](#), the institution must follow specific rules governing the relationship between the donor or organization and the agency and its employees. This includes all aspects of conduct of the agency and its employees in the relationship.

In addition, university [policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors \[02\]](#) states:

Pursuant to Chapter 2255 of the Texas Government Code, the university will recognize only those private support organizations that meet the requirements of this policy as being formed and designated to further the purposes and duties of the university. Any organization or donor (whether existing as a corporation or as an unincorporated association) that is formed to further the purposes and duties of the university must enter into a written agreement with the university, approved by the Board of Regents. If the board declines to enter into such an agreement, the private support organization or donor is deemed not to further the purposes and duties of the university, and the board expressly forbids the use of the name, property, or employees of the university in any actions or activities on the part of the private support organization or donor.



SFA's president, who is the university's CEO, controls the fund raising activities of the three independent foundations related to it, or those fund-raising activities are defined in a formal, written manner assuring they further SFA's mission, as follows:

1. *Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation*

The Memorandum of Understanding specifically provides that the Foundation “will adhere to University gift-management and acceptance policies” and “[a]ll university community members will coordinate all fund-raising initiatives including major gift solicitations with the Office of Development.” Additionally, the MOU states, “the University President will work in conjunction with the Foundation Executive Director to identify priority needs of the University for the purpose of soliciting prospects for private gifts.” See [Memorandum of Understanding \[03\]](#).

2. *Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association, Inc.*

The Memorandum of Understanding specifically provides, “The Association will have activities, events, membership dues, affinity programs, and similar opportunities to raise funds for the operations of the Association. The Association will retain control over these funds unless they are designated for scholarships or University operations. The Association and University should conduct their fundraising and other activities in a manner that is consistent with and supportive of the total fundraising efforts of both parties. The Association and University agree to work in a closely coordinated and cooperative manner to adopt and pursue strategies designed to promote efficiency and to maximize effective contacts with potential benefactors and to eliminate duplications of effort and expense in fund-raising activities. In its fund-raising activities on behalf of the University, the Association should be guided by the policy and practice set forth in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the University. To the extent applicable, the University may request information from the Association regarding the administration and investment of funds received by the Association that are for the benefit of the University.” See [Memorandum of Understanding \[04\]](#).

3. *Stephen F. Austin State University Real Estate Foundation*

The Agreement specifically provides that the Foundation is a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization existing for the sole purpose of supporting the mission of the university. The Vice President for University Advancement of the University shall serve as the Executive Director of the Foundation. The coordination of the Foundation’s activities shall be through the Vice President for University Advancement/Executive Director reporting to the President of the University. See [Agreement \[05\]](#).

Within the colleges, there are also private support groups, such as the Friends of the Visual Arts or the Nelson Rusche College of Business Advisory Board. These groups serve as advisory boards and support special events and minor fund-raising activities. While helpful to the goals of each college, none of these groups rise to a level of being an institution-related foundation with a



formal tax-exempt status. The funds of these groups are managed directly by the university with input from the unincorporated organizations.

For each of the above mentioned entities formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the university or its programs:

- (a) SFA's legal authority and operating control is clearly defined with respect to that entity.
- (b) The relationship of that entity to SFA and the extent of any liability arising from that relationship are clearly described in a formal, written manner.
- (c) SFA demonstrates that the president, serving as the chief executive officer, controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or the fundraising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further SFA's mission.

Evidentiary Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [01] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2255 Private Donors or Organizations.pdf [02] Policy 3.25, Private Support Organizations or Donors.pdf [03] SFA & University Foundation MOU.pdf [04] SFA & Alumni Association MOA.pdf [05] SFA & Real Estate Foundation MOA.pdf



5.4 The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution.
(*Qualified administrative/academic officers*) [**Off-site/On-Site Review**]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The administrative and academic officers of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) possess the appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the university in an effective manner, and the university regularly evaluates them. The university designates administrative and academic officers as the president, the vice presidents, the chief information officer (CIO), the executive director of enrollment management, the intercollegiate athletics director, and the academic deans. See the [Organization Charts for Stephen F. Austin State University \[01\]](#). As the president is the university's chief executive officer (CEO), this position is discussed in the standard dedicated to the evaluation and selection of the CEO ([4.2.c](#)). The vice presidents, the CIO, the executive director of enrollment management, the intercollegiate athletics director, the chief diversity officer, and the academic deans are discussed here.

Executive-Level Administrative Officers: The President's Cabinet

SFA's executive-level officers below the level of the president are distinguished by the fact that they serve on the president's cabinet. The cabinet consists of the provost and vice president of academic affairs, the vice president for university affairs, the vice president for finance and administration, the vice president for university advancement, the chief information officer, the executive director of enrollment management, the director of athletics, and the chief diversity officer. The cabinet assists the president in strategic planning and comprises a conciliar body for the discussion of key decisions that must be made at the highest level of the institution reporting to the governing board. These are the individuals listed on the level immediately below the president on the university's [organization chart \[01\]](#).

Experience and Qualifications

University [policy 12.2, Staff Compensation and Classification \[02\]](#), provides that the Office of Human Resources (HR) will develop and maintain job descriptions for every type of position at SFA, including the minimum education level, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to fulfill all duties of a given position adequately. Job descriptions are available from HR by request as indicated on the [Human Resources website \[03\]](#).

SFA only hires qualified individuals for executive-level leadership positions and expects alignment between their credentials and the qualifications and experience outlined in the corresponding job descriptions. The job descriptions of these positions and up-to-date resumes of each individual currently occupying them can be found in the table below.



Name (Resume linked)	Position (Job description linked)
Dr. Steve Bullard	Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Steve Westbrook	Vice President of University Affairs
Dr. Danny Gallant	Vice President of Finance and Administration
Jill Still	Vice President of University Advancement
Anthony Espinoza	Chief Information Officer
Erma Brecht	Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Dr. Michara DeLaney-Fields	Chief Diversity Officer
Ryan Ivey	Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Table 1 – 5.4– Executive-Level Administrative Officers: The President’s Cabinet

The university’s governing board, the Board of Regents (BOR), exercises control over the selection of all executive-level administrative officers, as reflected in university [policy 1.8, Selection of Positions Reporting to the President and Head Coaches \[04\]](#); and [policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[05\]](#).

Evaluation

University [policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan \[06\]](#) requires “a timely and objective review” of all non-faculty exempt employees by their immediate supervisor, which includes all executive-level administrative officers. The most recent annual evaluations are included [here \[07\]](#), with the exception of Dr. DeLaney-Fields. Dr. DeLaney-Fields’ position is a new position, created in July 2020, and has not received an annual performance evaluation yet. It also limits merit pay to employees with a satisfactory or higher rating to ensure all job duties and functions are being effectively carried out. In addition, all executive-level administrative officers serve in at-will positions subject to immediate termination with BOR approval if necessary duties are not being met, pursuant to university [policy 11.2, At-Will Employment \[08\]](#). With these oversight mechanisms in place, SFA ensures for the regular and timely evaluation of all executive-level administrative officers.

Officers of Major Academic Units: College Deans

The [SFA organization chart for the Division of Academic Affairs \[1\]](#) identifies the six college deans as the leaders of the major academic units within the university. These are the deans of the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Fine Arts, the College of Forestry and Agriculture, the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, and the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

Experience and Qualifications

University [policy 4.9, Selection of Academic Deans \[09\]](#), governs the hiring of those positions. The provost convenes a search committee comprised of a dean from another college, as well as a



representative cross-section of academic unit heads and faculty. The search process is competitive and must yield a highly qualified individual who can foster “excellence in teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service” among the faculty of the respective college for which the dean is being hired. The job descriptions of these positions and up-to-date resumes of each individual currently occupying them can be found in the table below.











Name (Resume linked)	Position (Job description for deans)
Dr. Tim Bisping	Dean of the Nelson Rusche College of Business
Dr. Judy Abbott	Dean of the College of Education
Dr. A.C. “Buddy” Himes	Dean of the College of Fine Arts
Dr. Hans Williams	Dean of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture
Dr. Brian Murphy	Dean of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts
Dr. Kimberly Childs	Dean of the College of Sciences and Mathematics

Table 2 – 5.4 - Officers of Major Academic Units: College Deans

Evaluation

The provost [evaluates \[10\]](#) each college dean annually, per university [policy 4.8, Performance Review of Officers Reporting to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs \[11\]](#). In the second year of the tenure of a new dean and every three years afterwards, the annual review is augmented by written input solicited from the dean’s [peers \[12\]](#), a process carried out by the Office of Institutional Research, which maintains the anonymity of all respondents.

As evidenced in this response, SFA employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with the appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the university.

Evidentiary Documents
 [01] SFA Organization Charts.pdf
 [02] Policy 12.2, Staff Compensation and Classification.pdf
 [03] Compensation Classification Managers - Human Resources.pdf
 [04] Policy 1.8, Selection of Positions Reporting to the President and Head Coaches.pdf
 [05] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf
 [06] Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan.pdf
 [07] Performance Evaluations.pdf
 [08] Policy 11.2, At Will Employment.pdf
 [09] Policy 4.9, Selection of Academic Deans.pdf
 [10] Performance Evals for Deans Redacted.pdf



-  [\[11\] Policy 4.8, Performance Review of Officers Reporting to The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Example Dean Peer Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [CV Abbott.pdf](#)
-  [CV Bisping.pdf](#)
-  [CV Brecht.pdf](#)
-  [CV Bullard.pdf](#)
-  [CV Childs.pdf](#)
-  [CV DeLaney Fields.pdf](#)
-  [CV Espinosa.pdf](#)
-  [CV Gallant.pdf](#)
-  [CV Himes.pdf](#)
-  [CV Ivey.pdf](#)
-  [CV Murphy.pdf](#)
-  [CV Still.pdf](#)
-  [CV Westbrook.pdf](#)
-  [CV Williams.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Chief Information Officer.01.20.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Dean.03.15.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Dir Ath.08.15.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Exec Dir Enrollment Mgt.02.20.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Offcr Chief Diversity 07.20.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description Provost-VP.10.17.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description VP Finance & Admin.09.17.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description VP Univ Advancement.09.17.pdf](#)
-  [Position Description VP Univ Affrs.09.17.pdf](#)

5.5 The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of non-faculty personnel.
(Personnel appointment and evaluation)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of staff. All policies relating to employment are subject to the approval of the SFA Board of Regents as stated in [Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[01\]](#).

[Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format \[02\]](#), includes the process for proposal or revision of policies. At a minimum, policies are reviewed every three years. Policies are submitted for approval with a completed [Policy Summary Form \[03\]](#) to the coordinator of board affairs before each [board meeting \[04\]](#). All policies are reviewed by the general counsel. Following approval by the Board of Regents, policies are available in the online policy manual. A campus-wide [email \[05\]](#) is sent to highlight policy changes after each board meeting. These policies are found in section 11 of the University Policy Manual on the SFA [website \[06\]](#). The manual contains a comprehensive list of policies associated with appointment, employment, and evaluation, which is maintained for the benefit of both current staff and prospective employees.

Policies Pertaining to Appointment, Employment, & Evaluation

Appointment	Employment	Evaluation
11.1 Affirmative Action	11.2 At-Will Employment	11.15 Grievance and Appeals
11.8 Electronic Personnel Action Form	11.3 Authorization for the University President to Suspend Faculty and Staff	11.20 Performance Management Plan
11.9 Employee Affirmative Action/Recruitment Plan	11.4 Discipline and Discharge	11.21 Probationary Period of Employment
11.12 Employment of Persons with Criminal History	11.6 Drug and Alcohol Testing	
11.16 Nepotism	11.10 Employee Termination and Transfers	
11.17 New Employee Orientation	11.11 Employee Training	
11.21 Probationary Period of Employment	11.14 Fair Labor Standards	
11.25 Security-Sensitive Positions	11.15 Grievance and Appeals	
12.2 Staff Compensation and Classification	11.16 Nepotism	
	11.18 Organized Work Stoppage	



Appointment	Employment	Evaluation
	11.19 Outside Employment	
	11.21 Probationary Period of Employment	
	11.22 Reasonable Workplace Accommodation for Disabilities	
	11.23 Reduction in Force of Non-Academic Employees	
	11.24 Return to Work	
	11.26 Selective Service Registration	
	11.27 Telecommuting Arrangements for Staff Employees	
	11.28 Temporary Employment	
	11.29 Student Internship	
	11.30 Time Reporting for Non-Exempt Employees	
	11.32 Volunteer Workers	
	11.33 Workplace Accommodations for Lactation and Breastfeeding	
	12.2 Staff Compensation and Classification	

Table 1 – 5.5– Policies Pertaining to Appointment, Employment, & Evaluation

Appointment

Hiring departments post vacant positions within the applicant tracking system (PeopleAdmin is the current vendor). Human Resources maintains a bank of posting templates, which include each position’s description. Departments may request updates to job descriptions and posting templates prior to creating a posting. If the department proposes significant changes to a position, a [Job Analysis Questionnaire \[07\]](#) will be used to build the position description and posting template. From posting templates, hiring departments create postings that automatically route through to approvers within the applicable college and/or departments, the Budget Office, the appropriate university division’s vice president, and Human Resources.

Before a posting is released, Human Resources ensures that employees serving on a search committee are trained on the hiring process, best hiring practices, and laws and university policies that protect applicants and employees from discrimination. Search [committee training \[08\]](#) is required every two years for search committee members and may be taken online or in person by registering in the learning management system. Additionally, resources for individuals involved in the hiring process are located on the Human Resources [website \[09\]](#).



Departments are responsible for screening, interviewing, and selecting candidates to fill vacancies. Departments initiate a [hiring proposal \[10\]](#) within the applicant tracking system to begin the hiring process for a candidate. Appointment of full-time exempt administrative/professional staff, changes in position status of full-time administrative/professional (exempt) staff, and temporary staff services are subject to the approval of the SFA Board of Regents as stated in [Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[01\]](#). The Human Resources department provides new appointments and changes to the coordinator of board affairs before each board meeting in a [document \[11\]](#) that includes the employee name, position information, and salary amount. Approved new appointments and changes in appointment are included in the [board report \[04\]](#).

Employment

Once a position is [posted \[12\]](#) and a hiring proposal is submitted for a candidate, Human Resources conducts a background check and reviews the proposed salary offers to ensure they are between the minimum and midpoint of the position's salary grade per [Policy 12.2, Staff Compensation and Classification \[13\]](#). If salary offers are below the minimum, the department is contacted to ensure the salary amount reflects at least the minimum. If salary offers are above the midpoint of the salary grade, an exception salary review is conducted to determine what percentage over the midpoint is appropriate according to a candidate's education and experience beyond the minimum requirements of the position. Human Resources communicates approved salary offers to the department upon completion of the [salary exception review \[14\]](#). An [Electronic Personnel Action Form \[15\]](#) is originated, usually by the department, to begin the onboarding process for new employees. New employees are required to complete paperwork in our OnBoard system (administered by TalentEd), attend Benefits Orientation, and participate in a *Welcome Jacks!* session upon hire.

Contracted services such as Aramark hire their own positions. Terms and conditions regarding the employment of personnel are outlined in the [contract \[16\]](#) with the vendor.

Evaluation

The first 180 calendar days of employment are a probationary period for all non-academic employees, as stated in [Policy 11.21, Probationary Period of Employment \[17\]](#). Additionally, employees who apply for a posted, vacant position and who transfer to the new position will begin a new probationary period of 180 calendar days. Human Resources requests a [Probationary Employee Evaluation form \[18\]](#) from supervisors prior to the completion of the 180-day period. Supervisors will use the form to objectively indicate if employment should be continued or terminated before the 180-day period has expired. The evaluation form is returned to human resources and a copy retained in the department file. The employee can be notified immediately of the supervisor's decision if employment is to continue.

[Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan \[19\]](#), applies to all non-faculty employees (except for academic department chairs, deans, the library director, charter school teachers, and all coaches at Stephen F. Austin State University) who have completed their initial employment



probation prior to the beginning of the annual evaluation period. However, all categories listed as an exemption also have some form of evaluation system. Human Resources oversees the performance management plan to include development of applicable forms, retention of completed evaluation plans, and establishment of guidelines for evaluating employees' performance. See examples of completed [evaluation plans \[20\]](#). For categories of staff not listed as an exemption above, the form developed by Human Resources is used to evaluate performance. The form includes categories rated from "Unsatisfactory" to "Exemplary." Human Resources offers [Performance Management Training \[21\]](#) to managers to advise on best evaluation practices. Staff must be evaluated to be eligible for merit increases, and Human Resources maintains [documentation \[22\]](#) of employees who are ineligible for merit based on evaluation criteria.

During employment, an employee has the right to file a grievance per [Policy 11.15, Grievance and Appeals \[23\]](#). [Grievances \[24\]](#) may be filed regarding hours, working conditions, performance evaluations, or other similar matters as outlined in the policy.

As detailed in this response, SFA publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of non-faculty personnel.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy Summary Form 11.2, At-Will Employment.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Report to the Board April 17-18, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Newly Revised University Policies Campus-Wide Email.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Job Analysis Questionnaire.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Search Committee Training.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Advertising Filling Vacant Positions Managers.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Hiring Proposal Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Sample Regents Board Report April 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Posting - Director of Orientation Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 12.2, Staff Compensation and Classification.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Exception Salary Request.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] EPAF Preview.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] ARAMARK 2006-2021 \(Contract\).pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Policy 11.21, Probationary Period of Employment.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Probationary Employee Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan.pdf](#)

-  [\[20\] 2019 Performance Reviews.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Training Catalog.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Sample Evaluation Tracker.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Policy 11.15, Grievance and Appeals.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Redacted Grievance Example.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.1, Affirmative Action.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.10, Employee Terminations and Transfers.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.11, Employee Training.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.12, Employment of Persons with Criminal History.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.14, Fair Labor Standards.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.15, Grievance and Appeals.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.16, Nepotism.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.17, New Employee Orientation.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.18, Organized Work Stoppage.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.19, Outside Employment.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.2, At-Will Employment.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.21, Probationary Period of Employment.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.22, Reasonable Workplace Accommodation for Disabilities.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.23, Reduction in Force of Staff and Non-Tenure Track Employees.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.24, Return to Work.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.25, Security-Sensitive Positions.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.26, Selective Services Registration.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.27, Telecommuting Arrangements for Staff Employees.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.28, Temporary Employment.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.29, Student Internships.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.3, Authorization for the University President to Suspend Faculty and Staff.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.30, Time Reporting for Non-Exempt Employees.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.32, Volunteer Workers.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.33, Workplace Accommodations for Lactation and Breastfeeding.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.4, Discipline and Discharge.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.6, Drug and Alcohol Testing.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.85, Electronic Personnel Action Form.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 11.9, Employee Affirmative Action Recruitment Plan.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 12.2 Staff Compensation and Classification.pdf](#)

Section 6: Faculty

6.1 The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.
(*Full-time faculty*) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support its [mission \[01\]](#) of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work and service,” as well as the following SFA Envisioned strategic planning goals:

- [Overarching goal \[02\]](#): transformative experiences for SFA Students
- [Foundational goal \[03\]](#): meaningful and sustained enrollment growth
- [Supporting goals \[04\]](#): attracting and supporting high-quality faculty and staff, fostering academic and co-curricular innovation, redefining university culture, and increasing connections.

Faculty Workload Definitions and Expectations

SFA employs three broad categories of faculty: tenured/tenure-track, non-tenure track, and graduate teaching assistants. See SFA [Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[05\]](#). All tenured and tenure-track faculty are full-time faculty. Non-tenure track faculty may be full-time or part-time. The responsibilities of full-time faculty who are tenured/tenure-track include teaching, research/scholarship/creative works, and service contributions to the institution. The responsibilities of non-tenure track faculty include teaching in all cases, and, in some cases, may include research and/or service.

A faculty member with only an instructional appointment is expected to teach the standard course load of 24 Teaching Load Credits (TLC) for the combined fall and spring semesters. According to [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[06\]](#), the workload for full-time faculty who hold rank (i.e. tenured/tenure-track faculty) assumes the performance of teaching, research/scholarly/creative, and service activities. In all cases, university policy mandates that student instructional needs are the determining factor in arranging workload schedules.

The Faculty Workload Summary, which summarizes faculty workload for the university, as well as by college and academic unit, is publicly available in an online, interactive dashboard. As required by [Texas Education Code 51.402 \[07\]](#), the Board of Regents is provided a Faculty Workload Summary on an annual basis. This report, which summarizes faculty workload for the university, as well as by college and academic unit, is reviewed by the provost and vice president



for academic affairs and the Board of Regents as part of the process to determine the number of full-time faculty needed to achieve the mission of the institution.

Value	TLC	Headcount (All Appointments)	Instructional Appointments FTE
Total	16,298	1,736	1,166
Average	28	936	583

Table 1 – 6.1 – Policies Pertaining to Appointment, Employment, & Evaluation

A part-time faculty member is defined as one who holds less than a full-time academic workload and is not in a tenure-track position. See SFA [Policy 7.21, Part-time Faculty \[08\]](#). Part-time faculty are often needed by academic programs to support the mission of the institution and to enhance the learning experience. Many pre-professional programs, in particular, utilize adjunct faculty to teach classes or supervise students in field placements (such as internships or clinical practice) as a means of expanding the learning framework by incorporating the experiences of practitioners into the curriculum.

Graduate teaching assistants support the instructional process as described in SFA [Policy 6.12, Graduate Assistantships \[09\]](#), which states, “A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) works with students in a specific course or laboratory to provide support for the faculty member in charge, and, in some cases, to teach the course as the primary instructor, under the guidance of a faculty member.”

In Fall 2019, SFA employed 814 distinct individuals with instructional responsibilities. Over 71 percent of these faculty were full-time, providing a sufficient number of full-time faculty to support the mission and goals of the institution. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of instructional faculty by category.

Category	Full-time Headcount	Part-time Headcount	Graduate Teaching Assistant Headcount	% of Total Faculty as a Headcount
Tenured/Tenure-Track	386	0	0	47.4%
Non-Tenure Track	192	193	43	52.6%
Total	578 (71.0%)	193 (23.7%)	43 (5.3%)	100.0%

Table 2 – 6.1 – Profile of Instructional Faculty, Fall 2019



SFA recognizes the percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty as the primary metric for evaluation of the sufficient number of full-time faculty. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of semester credit hours taught by faculty type. Across all instructional modes, locations, and course levels, full-time faculty teach more than 88 percent of semester credit hours.

Faculty Type	Semester Credit Hours Taught	Percent of Total SCH
Full-Time	134,347	88.3%
Part-Time	16,546	10.9%
Graduate Teaching Assistant	1,269	0.8%

Table 3 – 6.1 – Percent of Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, Fall 2019

Although there is no uniform standard that signifies an adequate number of full-time faculty, SFA regularly compares itself to statewide norms. Student-faculty ratios are a principal consideration in the university's ability to provide transformative learning experiences for students. This widely-used measure is defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and is a primary consideration in the process of faculty position allocation. The THECB method of calculation for [student-faculty ratio \[10\]](#) is as follows: the number of full-time student equivalents (FTSEs) divided by the number of filled full-time equivalent faculty positions. For this measure, undergraduate FTSEs are calculated on 15 semester credit hours; master's FTSEs are calculated on 12 semester credit hours; and doctoral FTSEs are calculated on 9 semester credit hours. The most recent data provided through the THECB Higher Education Accountability System shows clearly that SFA's student FTE to faculty FTE ratio compares well with the statewide ratio and with the ratios of its peer institutions.



Institution	Student Faculty Ratio
Sul Ross State University	14
Texas A&M University-Texarkana	14
Texas A&M University-Central Texas	15
Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College	16
Texas Woman's University	16
Midwestern State University	17
Stephen F. Austin State University	17
Texas A&M University at Galveston	17
Texas A&M University-Kingsville	17
The University of Texas Permian Basin	17
University of Houston-Clear Lake	17
Texas A&M University-San Antonio	18
Texas Southern University	18
University of Houston-Downtown	18
The University of Texas at Austin	19
The University of Texas at Tyler	19
Lamar University	20
Tarleton State University	20
West Texas A&M University	20
Prairie View A&M University	21
The University of Texas at El Paso	21
University of Houston-Victoria	21
University of North Texas at Dallas	21
Angelo State University	22
Statewide	22
Texas Tech University	22
The University of Texas at Dallas	22
Texas A&M University	23
Texas A&M University-Commerce	23
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	23
Sam Houston State University	24
The University of Texas at Arlington	24
University of Houston	24
The University of Texas at San Antonio	25
University of North Texas	25
Texas A&M International University	27
Texas State University	27
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	27

Table 4 – 6.1 – Student-Faculty Ratio, FY2018 (Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability System



SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” affects the number and type of faculty employed by emphasizing the balance between teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. See SFA [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[06\]](#). The total number and type of SFA’s full-time faculty is adequate, as confirmed by the volume of faculty activities completed. Faculty activities are recorded in an online data collection system and are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The Faculty Activity Summary (Figure 5) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [[11](#), [12](#), [13](#)].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	769
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	214
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	355
Presentations (Invited)	325
Presentations (Accepted)	924
SFA Service	2,873
Professional/Public Service	956

Table 5 – 6.1 – Faculty Activity Summary, 2019

Organizational Structure of Academic Functions

The organizational structure of the academic functions of SFA includes the provost and vice president for academic affairs, the academic college deans, and the academic unit heads. The provost and vice president for academic affairs determines the allocation of positions based upon the recommendations of the deans, balanced against overall university needs for academic integrity and quality in all programs. See SFA [Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[05\]](#). Faculty distribution by college is addressed in Standard [6.2.b](#) Program Faculty.

College deans ensure adherence to SFA policies at the college level. Deans are responsible for overseeing the hiring and evaluation of faculty; supervising graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; and facilitating planning and development of new programs. See the [Dean's Job Description \[14\]](#).

The role of the academic unit head is also integral to ensuring the quality, integrity, and adequacy of faculty appointments. According to SFA [Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation \[15\]](#), the role of the unit head includes providing “leadership in the establishment of a visionary direction and the maintenance of standards for the academic unit, consistent with college and university missions.” The department chair determines faculty workload, ensures that adequate faculty are appointed to meet student enrollment needs, and monitors student-faculty ratios. One of the primary considerations of the unit head is to review the academic credentials of faculty under consideration for appointment, as outlined by SFA [policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications \[16\]](#). This university policy guides the selection, development, and retention of competent faculty at all academic levels and sets minimum




















standards of academic preparation for faculty teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Traditional Faculty Functions Delivered by Other Means

At SFA, traditional faculty functions are usually not performed in nontraditional ways. An exception is the increasing use of open educational resources (OERs) for teaching. Through the strategic planning process, and specifically through the [supporting goal \[17\]](#) of “fostering academic and co-curricular innovation,” SFA faculty continue to facilitate advancements in this area. One example of these advancements is seen in the work of the Instructional Materials Affordability Team. At the [recommendation \[18\]](#) of this team, the traditional faculty function of decision-making related to instructional materials has been transformed. SFA is now committed to pursuing effective low-cost options for providing instructional materials for students, with emphasis given to a shift towards OER adoption, adaptation, and creation by faculty.

As a result of these policies, procedures, and practices, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support its mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.”

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Overarching Goal.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Foundational Goal.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Supporting Goals.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Texas Education Code 51.402.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 7.21, Part-time Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 6.12, Graduate Assistantships.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Student Faculty Ratio Formula.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Forestry - Schalk FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Business - Phelps FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Sciences and Mathematics - Beauregard FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Dean job description.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Academic & Co-Curricular Innovation.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] OER Paper.pdf](#)

6.2.a For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.
(*Faculty qualifications*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Mission Influence

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) employs qualified faculty supporting each educational program in order to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. The mission of SFA emphasizes a dedication to “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.” The university employs faculty who exemplify this mission and provide the best student learning experiences for students. Continuous evaluation processes practiced at SFA validate and record appropriate faculty qualifications for each course instructed.

Academic unit heads initiate the recommendations of all instructional faculty, which are then reviewed by the college dean and provost prior to final approval. As required in University [Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[01\]](#) and [7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[02\]](#), all appointments to the instructional faculty are made by the Board of Regents on the recommendation of the provost and vice president of academic affairs and the president.

Competencies & Qualifications

The selection, development, and retention of qualified faculty at all academic levels is a priority in providing students an education of the highest quality. University [Policy 7.12, Faculty Search \[03\]](#), provides general guidance to deans, academic unit heads, and faculty search committees regarding the necessity to identify well-qualified faculty and to consider equal opportunity and affirmative action guidelines. The faculty members who provide instruction for SFA’s six colleges are qualified by degree acquisition, unique professional and practice skills, and life experience. The SACSCOC Faculty Credential Guidelines [\[04\]](#) [\[05\]](#) provided the outline used to frame policy 7.12, which guides the faculty search process, and SFA makes this framework available to all faculty and staff on the university’s website as illustrated in the screenshot below from the Office of Institutional Research website.



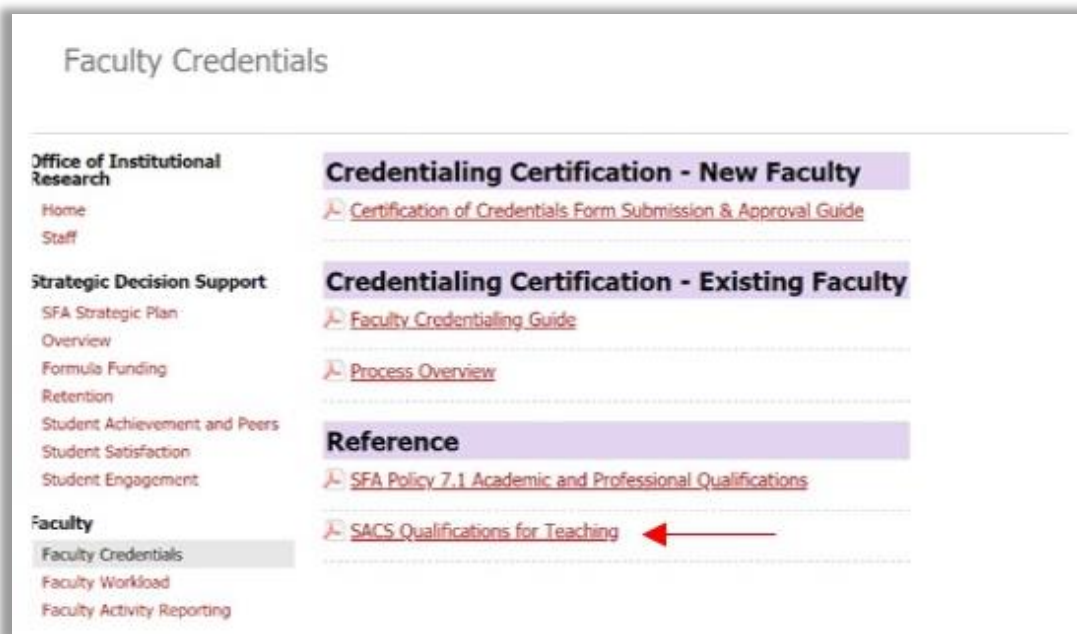


Figure 1 – 6.2.a – Faculty Credential Information from Office of Institutional Research website

The position description for each faculty position contains the minimum criteria and standards that must be met and documented. As required in SFA [Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications \[06\]](#), each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching credit-bearing courses leading toward a baccalaureate degree, other than activity courses, must typically complete at least 18 graduate semester hours in the content discipline and, at a minimum, hold a master's degree. Also in accordance with SFA Policy 7.1, graduate teaching assistants who have primary responsibility for teaching and grading a credit-bearing course or lab are directly supervised by a faculty experienced in the content discipline and normally complete 18 or more graduate discipline hours instead of the master's degree requirement. Outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the content discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. Exceptional credentials are verified with appropriate documentation, and [justifications \[07\]](#) must be provided to the provost's office by the academic unit. Examples of [typical qualifications \[08\]](#) and [exceptional qualifications \[09\]](#) are presented for review by instructor and course.

Additionally, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) evaluates the credentials of all faculty who intend to teach graduate courses and ensures adherence to the university's teaching qualifications guidelines. Only upon approval by the ORGS may faculty be granted graduate faculty status and recorded in the SFA administrative software system (Banner). Programming in [Banner \[10\]](#) limits graduate level course section assignment to only faculty with graduate faculty status.

Each faculty member teaching courses at the master's degree level must hold a terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, in the content or related discipline. A master's degree in the content discipline coupled with a doctoral degree in a related discipline is considered appropriate in exceptional cases. Outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the



content discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic qualifications. The academic unit must justify and [document \[07\]](#) such cases to the Office of the Provost.

All faculty members teaching courses at the doctoral degree level must hold a terminal degree in the content or related discipline. In unusual cases, graduate faculty may be utilized who have demonstrated exceptional scholarly or creative activity, or professional experience, but who may not possess the required academic credentials. As with the other teaching levels, exceptional cases must be justified and [documented \[07\]](#) by the academic unit to the Office of the Provost.

Documentation and Justification of Faculty Qualifications

For each new faculty member hired to teach credit-bearing courses at SFA, the academic unit completes the [Certification of Credentials template online \[11\]](#). The [Certification of Credentials form \[12\]](#) is routed through a multilevel approval process. Both the academic unit head and the unit head's dean must review and approve the new faculty member's credentials and qualifications for teaching specific courses in that discipline. When the Certification of Credentials form is approved at all levels, the academic unit is informed and asked to provide official copies of all qualifying documents to the appropriate office depending upon the faculty member's rank and tenure status.

To fulfill SFA's mission of "excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service," SFA faculty must provide documentation of competence in these areas. Appropriate documentation for faculty appointments includes official transcripts; letters of recommendation; and, if applicable for demonstrating competence, official documentation of professional and work experience, technical and performance competency, records of publications, and certifications or other verified qualifications pertinent to the appointment. All documentation must be kept current and on file as outlined in University [Policy 4.6, File Maintenance for Faculty Personnel Files \[13\]](#). Official university files for tenure and tenure-track faculty are maintained in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Official transcript records for part-time faculty, lecturers, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, and graduate teaching assistants are kept in the office of the appropriate academic dean.

Additionally, when new faculty members' teaching qualifications are approved via the Certification of Credentials form, the faculty members' teaching qualifications are recorded in an online [data collection system \[14\]](#). This system also houses faculty activities and scheduled teaching. Faculty members' courses are linked in the system to the appropriate teaching qualifications. Faculty members and academic units are responsible for maintaining the data in this [system \[15\]](#) to keep faculty members' information current, and each semester the Office of Institutional Research manually correlates courses with their appropriate teaching qualifications.

Continuous Evaluation

In order to ensure all courses at SFA continue to be taught by qualified faculty with current knowledge and up-to-date credentials, faculty qualifications are continuously and regularly



evaluated at multiple levels following the schedule shown in the SFASU Faculty Credentialing Process.

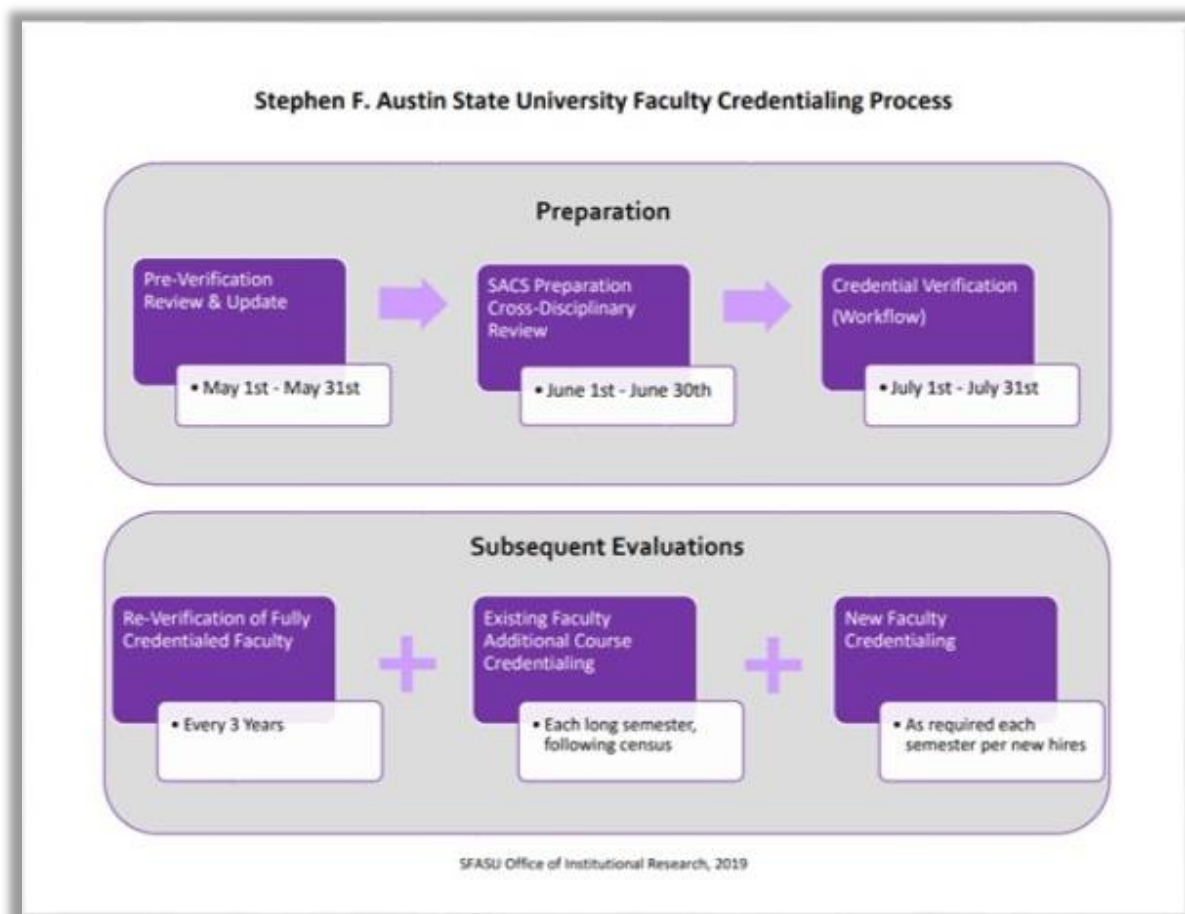


Figure 2 – 6.2.a. – SFASU Faculty Credentialing Process

Pre-Verification Review and Update

The first step of cyclical review of faculty credentials and teaching qualifications is carried out during the semesterly update of the [Course Credentialing Review \[16\]](#) report, during which Office of Institutional Research staff link faculty members’ courses with their corresponding teaching qualifications. To facilitate later review of faculty credentials, the Course Credentialing Review presents each faculty member’s courses next to their appropriate teaching qualifications (Table 1).

Course	Qualification Reason	Credential	Other Experience
GOL 101 Fundamentals of Earth Science (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PhD, Geology. Case Western Reserve University.	
GOL 131 Introductory Geology (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PhD, Geology. Case Western Reserve University.	
GOL 471 Local Field Trip (1 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PhD, Geology. Case Western Reserve University.	

Table 1 – 6.2.a. – Course Credentialing Review report screenshot

Course	Qualification Reason	Credential	Other Experience
ELE 441 Student Teach in Ele School (6 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	MED, Educational Leadership, Stephen F Austin St University.	
SED 442 Std Teach SED Learn Community (6 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	MED, Educational Leadership, Stephen F Austin St University.	
SED 541 PBIC Intern/First Semester (2 cr.)	MISSING QUALIFICATION		
SED 542 Field Intern/Second Semester (1 cr.)	MISSING QUALIFICATION		

Table 2 – 6.2.a – Course Credentialing Review report screenshot with Missing Qualifications

If a course has not been linked to a specific credential or qualification, the report indicates that there is a “Missing Qualification” in red letters (Table 2). If questions regarding the suitability of qualifications relative to faculty member's scheduled teaching arise, the Office of Institutional Research contacts the faculty member’s academic unit for reconciliation.

Once the Office of Institutional Research has reconciled all courses and qualifications in the report, the Course Credentialing Review can be distributed for further inspection among academic divisions for the Cross-Discipline Review.

Cross-Disciplinary Review

The Cross-Disciplinary Review of faculty credentials and teaching qualifications occurs triennially. During this process, the updated Course Credentialing Review is subdivided by college and/or academic unit and distributed to [reviewers \[17\]](#) whose home departments are in other colleges/disciplines. Figure 5 shows an example of how reviewers in different academic disciplines divide Course Credentialing Review reports to facilitate the review of teaching qualifications.

Credentials in each department were reviewed by one department chair in the College of Sciences and Mathematics and by the associate dean, Deborah Pace (DP).

- Business Communications and Legal Studies – Dr. Tammy Harris (TH)
- Economics and Finance – Dr. Michael Janusa (MAJ)
- Accounting – Dr. Lesa Beverly (LB)
- Management and Marketing – Dr. Wesley Brown (WB)

Figure 3 – 6.2.a. – Cross-Disciplinary Reviewers

These cross-disciplinary reviewers provide objective feedback on the suitability of their colleagues’ teaching credentials to their teaching disciplines and/or specific courses. Feedback on qualifications is noted on the report and returned to Institutional Research for reconciliation (Figure 6).



Course Credentialing Review
September 1, 2018 - December 31, 2019

Name: Wenjing Li
College: Business
Rank: Assistant Professor

Department: Management & Marketing
Tenure Status: Tenure-Track

Course	Qualification Reason	Credential	Other Experience
MKT 351 Principles of Marketing (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Business Administration. University of Kentucky.	✓
MKT 355 Consumer Behavior (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Business Administration. University of Kentucky.	✓
MKT 454 Business to Business Marketing (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Business Administration. University of Kentucky.	✓
MKT 456 Sales Management (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Business Administration. University of Kentucky.	✓

*Support Areas
of Emphasis?*

*Marketing?
(Articles in press)*

Figure 4 – 6.2.a – Cross Disciplinary Review report with Markup

This process ensures that all faculty qualifications support SFA’s mission of “dedication to excellence in teaching” and provides reasonable and acceptable documentation and justifications for all credit-bearing courses.

Final Review

Upon completion of the Cross-Disciplinary Review and reconciliation of all qualification notes in the online data collection system, faculty qualifications undergo a Final Review. An updated and finalized version of the Course Credentialing Review is provided to each college to be reviewed and approved by each of the college’s academic unit heads, the college’s dean, and the provost. Academic unit heads, deans, and the provost certify this final review by signing and dating a Verification of Credential Review form, and the [report \[18\]](#) is returned to Institutional Research for archiving. Figure 7 provides an example of a faculty member’s credentials in the process of the Cross-Disciplinary Review, and Figure 8 shows the same faculty member’s most up-to-date credentials in the Final Review. Figure 9 provides a copy of the Verification of Credential Review form for this faculty member’s academic unit certified by the academic unit head, dean, and provost.

Course Credentialing Review
January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2019

Name: Carrie Delane Kennedy Lightsey
College: Liberal/Applied Arts
Rank: Associate Professor

Department: Languages, Cultures, and Communication
Tenure Status: Tenured

Course	Qualification Reason	Credential	Other Experience
COM 111 Public Speaking (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 170 Interpersonal Com I Honors (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 305 Intro. to Comm. Theory (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 310 Comm. Research Methods (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 390 Communication Internship (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 470 Adv Interpersonal Comm (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	
COM 495 Special Prob in Communication (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies. West Virginia University.	

Areas of emphasis in Ph.D.?

Figure 5 – 6.2.a. – Cross Disciplinary Review initial report – work copy

Course Credentialing Review
September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

Name: Carrie Delane Kennedy Lightsey
College: Liberal/Applied Arts
Rank: Associate Professor

Department: Languages, Cultures, and Communication
Tenure Status: Tenured

Course	Qualification Reason	Credential	Other Experience
COM 111 Public Speaking (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies (Supporting Areas of Emphasis: Communication in Instruction). West Virginia University.	
COM 170 Interpersonal Communication I (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies (Supporting Areas of Emphasis: Communication in Instruction). West Virginia University.	
COM 305 Intro. to Comm. Theory (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies (Supporting Areas of Emphasis: Communication in Instruction). West Virginia University.	
COM 495 Special Prob in Communication (3 cr.)	Degree in Discipline	PHD, Communication Studies (Supporting Areas of Emphasis: Communication in Instruction). West Virginia University.	

Figure 6 – 6.2.a. – Cross Disciplinary Review updated report – Final review copy



Triennial Verification of Faculty Credentials Approval
Stephen F. Austin State University
2019 Edition
(Sept 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019)

Verification of Credential Review: Languages, Cultures, and Communication, College of Liberal and Applied Arts
Teaching Qualifications for the Faculty of the Academic Unit listed above have been reviewed and approved by the following:

Academic Unit Head
Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/27/19
Print Name: Jeanne Paul-Ureña

Dean
Signature: [Signature] Date: 9-30-19
Print Name: MARK SANDERS

Provost
Signature: [Signature] Date: 1/3/20
Print Name: MARC GUIDRY

Office of Institutional Research
September 2019

Figure 7 – 6.2.a. – Triennial Verification of Faculty Credentials Approval form, signed

Evidence

[A faculty roster \[19\]](#) containing all SFA faculty credentials and scheduled teaching for fall 2019 and spring 2020 is presented for review. SFA elects to present all faculty and opts not to use the “Faculty from Prior Review” form. Faculty member degrees and graduate coursework (when appropriate) are provided in the third column of the Faculty Roster Form. The types of teaching qualifications applied, along with any additional credentials or comments, are provided in the fourth column. Credentials and comments provided in Column 4 may apply to one or more specific courses listed in Column 2. Therefore, some faculty members who teach multiple courses with varying subject matter may have more than one type of teaching qualification listed in Column 4 (e.g. “Degree in Discipline,” “Degree in Related Discipline,” “18 Graduate Credit Hours in Discipline,” or “Other Qualification”).

Rosters are sorted in alphabetical order by primary instructional unit. Course descriptions are available for reference and are linked as PDF documents in each primary instructional unit roster. To access course descriptions, click the “Course Descriptions” link listed in parentheses after the unit name.

Additionally, syllabi are available for reference with those course titles that may not sufficiently describe the course content (e.g. special topics courses). Syllabi are linked as PDF documents in






















the roster in Column 2 (“Courses Taught”) and show up as blue hyperlinks attached to the course prefix and course numbers, when appropriate.

When outstanding professional experience and contributions to the content discipline most appropriately represent the faculty member qualifications to teach one or more assigned courses (in Column 2), additional notes are listed in Column 4. Examples of Column 4 professional experience and contributions are intellectual publications; licensures and certifications; or academic, government, military and professional positions. Faculty curricula vitae are hyperlinked in Column 4 for individuals whose teaching qualifications are best summarized by their work and education history as a whole. To access the select faculty member’s curriculum vitae, click the blue links under the “Document” heading titled “[Faculty Name] Curriculum Vitae.”

Using the above guidelines and processes, SFA justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members for each educational program.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 7.12, Faculty Search.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SACS faculty-credentials guidelines as of 4-21-2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SACS Qualifications for Teaching.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Ashabranner Form Response.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Typical Qualification Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Exceptional Qualification Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Banner Graduate Status Programming.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Certificate of Credentials Form Blank.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Certificate of Credentials Form Example.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 4.6, File Maintenance for Faculty Personnel Files.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Digital Measures - Data Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Digital Measures -Teaching Qualifications.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Course Credentialing Review Example.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Binder Review Edit Logs.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Final Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Faculty Roster and Appendices.pdf](#)



6.2.b For each of its educational programs, the institution employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review.

(Program faculty) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Program Faculty

For each of its educational programs, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review, and to support its [mission \[01\]](#) of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.”

Definition of Academic Programs

SFA academic programs are defined as the inventoried degree programs officially approved through the Board of Regents and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The official [degree program inventory \[02\]](#) is publicly available on the THECB website. Academic units with faculty teaching courses for multiple disciplines may collectively contribute to support a number of individual academic degree programs. The [Institutional Summary \[03\]](#) also lists the university’s academic degree programs.

Faculty Workload Definitions and Expectations

SFA employs three broad categories of faculty: tenured/tenure-track, non-tenure track, and graduate teaching assistants. See [Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[04\]](#). All tenured and tenure-track faculty are full-time faculty. Non-tenure track faculty may be full-time or part-time and may be lecturers or adjuncts. The responsibilities of full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty include teaching, research/scholarship/creative works, and service contributions to the institution. The responsibilities of non-tenured faculty always include teaching and may, for some lecturers, include research and/or service. Adjuncts do not have research or service expectations. Further discussion of the differences between these types of faculty is included in Standard [6.3](#).

A faculty member with only an instructional appointment is expected to teach the standard course load of 24 Teaching Load Credits (TLC) for the combined fall and spring semesters. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). According to Policy 7.13, the workload for full-time faculty assumes the performance of teaching, research/scholarly/creative, and service activities. The distribution of effort among these three categories is reviewed on an annual basis by the



academic unit head with each full-time faculty member. See [Policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty \[06\]](#).

Full-time faculty may teach a course overload, at the invitation of the academic unit head. SFA [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#) states that the instruction of an overload “may qualify a faculty member for additional compensation if the overload is equivalent to at least 0.25 FTE during a semester.” In all cases, university policy mandates that student instructional needs are the determining factor in arranging workload schedules. As required by [Texas Education Code 51.402 \[07\]](#), the Board of Regents is provided a Faculty Workload Summary on an annual basis. This report, which summarizes faculty workload for the university, as well as by college and academic unit, is reviewed by the provost and vice president for academic affairs and the Board of Regents as part of the process to determine the number of full-time faculty needed to achieve the mission of the institution. An excerpt of this summary is provided in Table 1.

Value	SCH	TLC	Headcount (All Appointments)	Instructional Appointments FTE
Total	290,942	16,298	1,736	1,166
Average	499	28	936	583

Table 1 – 6.2.b. – Faculty Workload Summary, Academic Year 2019

A part-time faculty member is defined as one who holds less than a full-time academic workload and is not in a tenure-track position. See [Policy 7.21, Part-time Faculty \[08\]](#). Academic programs often need part-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to enhance the learning experience. Many pre-professional programs, in particular, utilize adjunct faculty to teach classes or supervise students in field placements (such as internships or clinical practice) as a means of expanding the learning framework by incorporating the experiences of practitioners into the curriculum.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA’s) support the instructional process as described in SFA [Policy 6.12, Graduate Assistantships \[09\]](#), which states, “A Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) works with students in a specific course or laboratory to provide support for the faculty member in charge, and, in some cases, to teach the course as the primary instructor, under the guidance of a faculty member.”

Part-time Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistant Involvement and Pedagogy

Faculty [onboarding \[10\]](#) is coordinated and monitored by the Department of Human Resources, with training resources contributed by the Ralph W. Steen Library and the Center for Teaching and Learning. New faculty members, including part-time faculty and graduate assistants, are expected to complete several required [trainings \[11\]](#). These trainings may also be accessed online for a refresher at any time.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at SFA serves faculty of all ranks at all locations. The CTL is a “hub” for professional development activities; it provides resources, support, and



inspiration for the educator development and advancement of faculty. The CTL targets both adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants in its communications and includes them in all offerings related to pedagogy.

The CTL offers workshops on topics ranging from pedagogy and learning science to the use of Brightspace, SFA’s learning management software. Conversations about best teaching practices are stimulated through communities like [Reading Circles \[12\]](#), programs like the [Open Classroom Initiative \[13\]](#), and events like [Teaching Showcase \[14\]](#). CTL staff also engage in one-on-one conversations with part-time faculty and graduate assistants via [consultations \[15\]](#) and [classroom observations \[16\]](#). Additional examples of faculty development and pedagogical offerings are listed in the spring 2020 [calendar \[17\]](#) of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

GTA’s who have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and for assigning final grades must be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the content discipline, and be evaluated periodically within the academic unit. See [Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications \[18\]](#). GTA’s who teach freshman composition must take a pedagogy course, Teaching First-Year Composition (ENGL 5380), taught by the coordinator of freshman writing before they begin teaching, and must be enrolled in a teaching practicum (ENGL 5181) the first time they teach. Furthermore, the [Handbook for Graduate Administrative, Teaching, and Research Assistants \[19\]](#) provides additional guidance to all GTA’s.

In fall 2019, SFA employed 814 distinct individuals with instructional responsibilities. Over 71 percent of these faculty were full-time, providing a sufficient number of full-time faculty to support the mission and goals of the institution. Table 2 provides a breakdown of instructional faculty by category.

Category	Full-time Headcount	Part-time Headcount	Graduate Teaching Assistant Headcount	% of Total Faculty as a Headcount
Tenured/Tenure-Track	386	0	0	47.4%
Non-Tenure Track	192	193	43	52.6%
Total	578 (71.0%)	193 (23.7%)	43 (5.3%)	100.0%

Table 2 – 6.2.b. – Profile of Instructional Faculty, Fall 2019

Mission Expectations Regarding Research, Scholarship, Creative Work, and Service

SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” affects the need for full-time faculty by emphasizing the balance between these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are recorded in an online data collection system and are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The Faculty Activity Summary (Table 3) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty



Activity Reports show the types of activities completed by faculty members. The distribution of effort among teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service is reviewed on an annual basis by academic program leadership for each full-time faculty member. See [Policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty \[06\]](#). Faculty Activity Report examples illustrate these efforts [[20](#), [21](#), [22](#)].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	769
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	214
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	355
Presentations (Invited)	325
Presentations (Accepted)	924
SFA Service	2,873
Professional/Public Service	956

Table 3 – 6.2.b. – Faculty Activity Summary, 2019

Organizational Structure of Academic Units

The [organizational structure \[23\]](#) of the academic functions of SFA includes the provost and vice president for academic affairs, the academic college deans, and the academic unit heads. The provost and vice president for academic affairs determines allocation of positions based on the recommendations of the deans, balanced against overall university needs for academic integrity and quality in all programs. See [Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[04\]](#).

College deans ensure adherence to SFA policies at the college level. [Deans \[24\]](#) are responsible for overseeing the hiring and evaluation of faculty; supervising graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; and facilitating planning and development of new programs.

The role of the academic unit head is also integral to ensuring the quality, integrity, and adequacy of faculty appointments. According to SFA [Policy 4.4 Academic Unit Head Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation \[25\]](#), the role of the unit head includes providing “leadership in the establishment of a visionary direction and the maintenance of standards for the academic unit, consistent with college and university missions.” The department chair determines faculty workload, ensures that adequate faculty are appointed to meet student enrollment needs, and monitors student-faculty ratios. One of the primary roles of the unit head is to review the academic credentials of faculty under consideration for appointment, as outlined by SFA [Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications \[18\]](#). This university policy guides the selection, development, and retention of competent faculty at all academic levels and sets minimum standards of academic preparation for faculty teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.



Traditional Faculty Functions Delivered by Other Means

With the exception of the use of open educational resources (OER's) in some classes, traditional faculty functions are delivered solely by SFA faculty at this time. Please see Standard [6.1](#) for further discussion of OER's. Outside sources are not utilized to develop curriculum for current academic degree programs.

Role of Full-Time Faculty in Program Oversight and Supervision

SFA assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the respective discipline. For each major and/or program for which SFA offers a degree, the respective dean assigns responsibility for coordination to either the department chair or to another full-time faculty program coordinator who assists the chair and/or dean in directing the respective program. In all cases, full-time, academically qualified faculty members are assigned this responsibility. More details regarding program oversight and supervision are available in Standard [6.2c](#), Program Coordination.

Full-Time Faculty by Academic Program

SFA ensures adequacy of faculty for programs through new program development procedures, Curriculum Committee review of all courses, periodic academic program review, and program accreditation. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in alignment with [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) Rule 5.45 \[26\]](#), requires all new program proposals to include evaluation of faculty adequacy, anticipated needs, and resource allocation. All undergraduate and graduate programs are required, per [TAC Rule 5.52 \[27\]](#), to undergo periodic program review, which includes a focus on adequacy of faculty. More details regarding academic program review are available in Standard [10.4](#), Academic Governance.

Baccalaureate Degree Programs by College and Academic Program, Fall 2019

SFA maintains data and contextual measures organized by college to document the university commitment to ensuring that each academic program provides an adequate number of full-time faculty in baccalaureate degree pursuits, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). The adequate number of full-time faculty for SFA undergraduate degree programs is provided by college in the figures and tables below. Because faculty typically support more than one academic program, the overall totals may exceed actual employment numbers. Each figure includes full-time faculty equivalent by faculty type (full-time, part-time, and graduate teaching assistant), percent of semester credit hours taught by faculty type, and faculty headcount by faculty type, as well as the average overload amount, average teaching load credits, and total semester credit hours generated by each college. See the [Definitions of Data Elements \[28\]](#). Although all data elements provide context, SFA recognizes the percentage of SCH taught by full-time faculty as the primary metric for evaluation of the sufficient number of full-time faculty.



This data is presented by both college and academic program and is publicly available online. Academic unit heads and deans, at both the program and college levels, review the data regularly to ensure an adequate number of full-time faculty for each academic program.

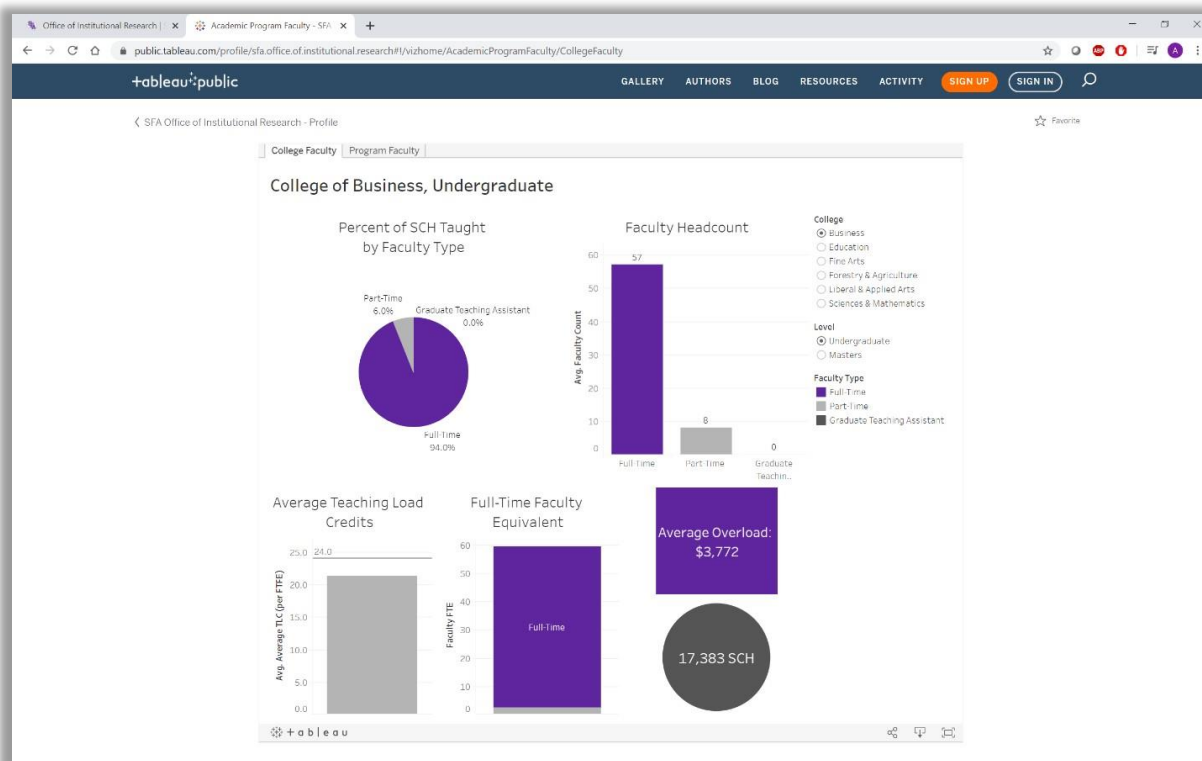


Figure 1 – 6.2.b. – Academic Program Faculty Dashboard Screenshot - Public Display Example

College of Business Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all instructional modes and locations, full-time faculty teach 94 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Business. Of the 65 faculty members in the College of Business, 57 are full-time faculty. The eight part-time faculty comprise 2.5 full-time faculty equivalents. In fall 2019, the College of Business generated 17,383 undergraduate semester credit hours.

In the College of Business, faculty average 21.3 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. This is lower than the institutional expectation of 24 Teaching Load Credits (TLC) for the combined fall and spring semesters, as outlined in SFA [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#), due to requirements of the Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the discipline-specific accreditor of the College of Business.

The data in Figure 2 are representative of all undergraduate academic programs within the College of Business. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:



- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the B.B.A. in Finance program;
- Full-time faculty teach 93.9 percent of semester credit hours in the B.B.A. in Accounting program;
- Full-time faculty teach 91.5 percent of semester credit hours in the B.B.A. in Management program.

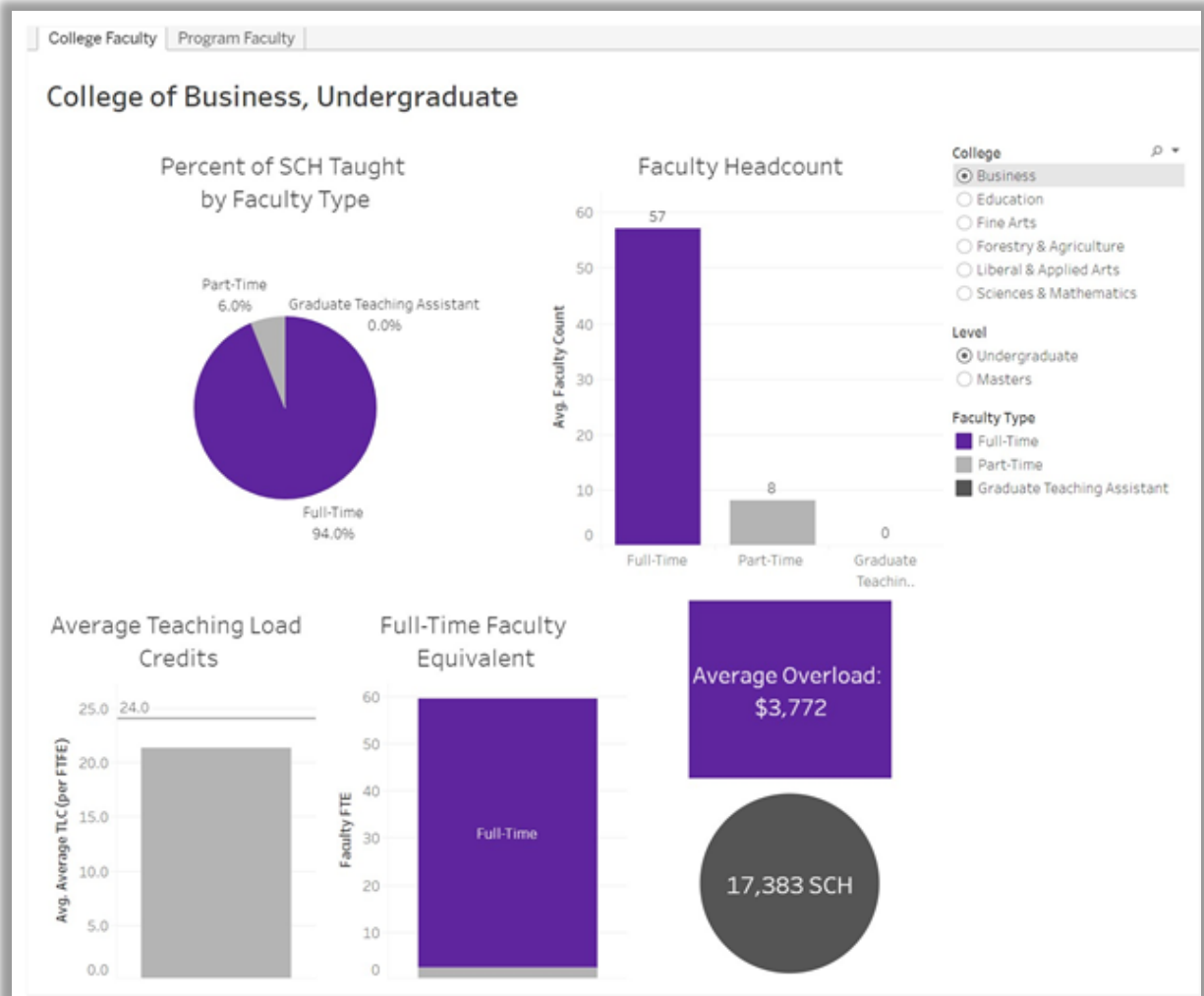


Figure 2 – 6.2.b. – College of Business

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Business \[29\]](#) is attached as further detail.

[Program Faculty, College of Business UG \[30\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Business promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for



academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Business Faculty Activity Summary (Table 4) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports show the types of activities completed by faculty members [31, 20, 32].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	6
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	42
Presentations (Invited)	10
Presentations (Accepted)	67
SFA Service	276
Professional/Public Service	91

Table 4 – 6.2.b. – College of Business Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Undergraduate Program, College of Business

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Business \[30\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 91.5 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Business employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Education Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 79 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Education are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 238 faculty members in the College of Education, 116 are full-time faculty. The 113 part-time faculty comprise 26.6 full-time faculty equivalents and the nine graduate teaching assistants comprise 4.5 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Education, faculty average 28.5 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. In fall 2019, the College of Education generated 28,255 undergraduate semester credit hours.

The data in Figure 3 are representative of the undergraduate academic programs within the College of Education. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 95.5 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Hospitality program;
- Full-time faculty teach 82.4 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.I.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies (Teacher Ed) program;
- Full-time faculty teach 67 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Health Science program. From 2011 to 2016, the program grew to one of the top five undergraduate majors at SFA and increased the number of degrees awarded annually by 224% (from 33 to 107). As indicated in SFA’s 2017 referral report, the rapid growth of the program left the faculty numbers below the desired level in fall 2016, with 48 percent of semester



credit hours taught by full-time faculty. From fall 2016 to fall 2019, the percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty increased by 19 percentage points to 67 percent.

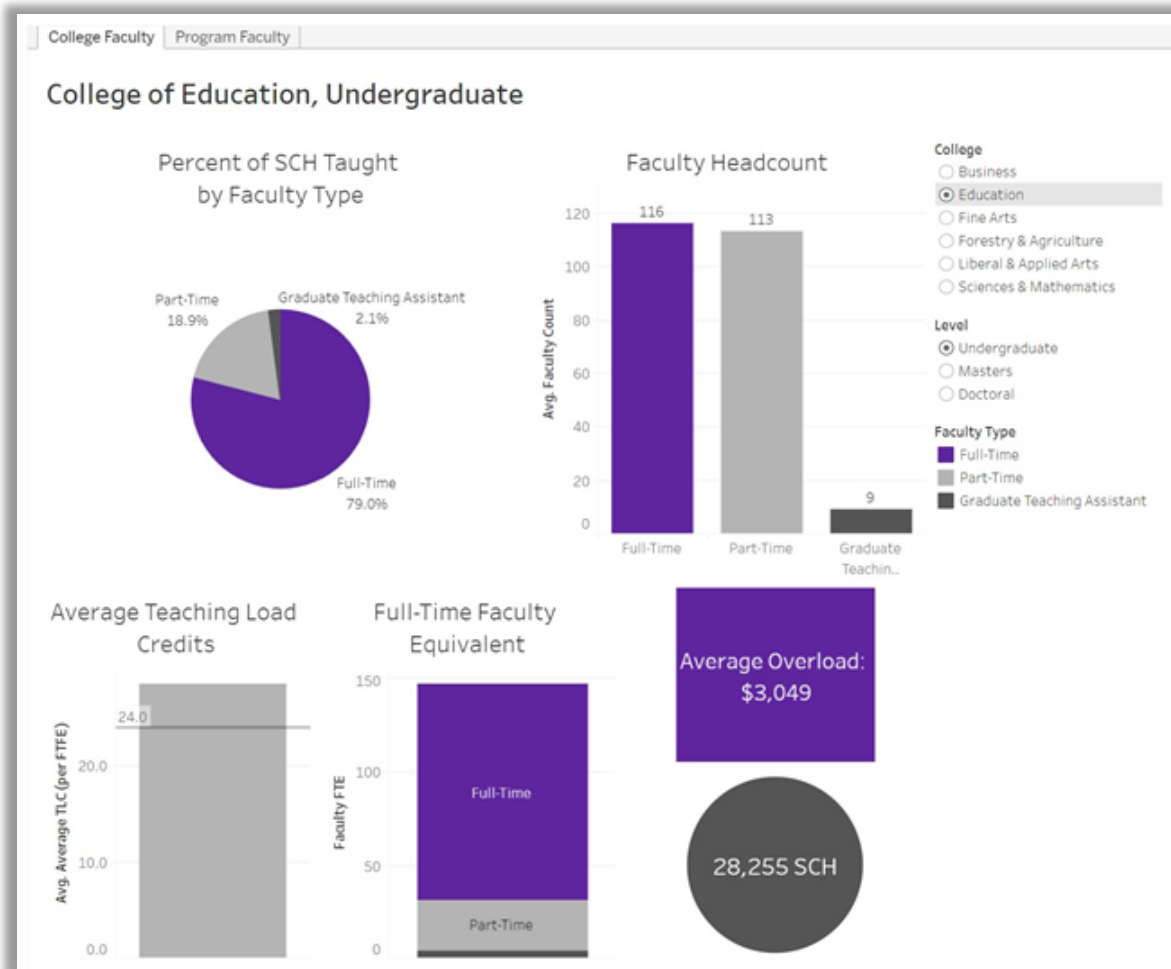


Figure 3 – 6.2.b. – College of Education, Undergraduate

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Education \[33\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Education UG \[34\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Education promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Education Faculty Activity Summary (Table 5) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual



Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [21, 35, 36].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	8
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	45
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	53
Presentations (Invited)	108
Presentations (Accepted)	268
SFA Service	777
Professional/Public Service	310

Table 5 – 6.2.b. – College of Education Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Education

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Education \[34\]](#) ranges from a high of 95.5 percent to a low of 67 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Education employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Fine Arts Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 83.4 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Fine Arts are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 115 faculty members in the College of Fine Arts, 76 are full-time faculty. The 34 part-time faculty comprise 11.7 full-time faculty equivalents and the five graduate teaching assistants comprise 1.3 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Fine Arts, faculty average 35.5 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The higher number of Teaching Load Credits for faculty in the College of Fine Arts can be attributed to the individualized instruction and private lesson sections offered by the School of Music. The College of Fine Arts generated 13,453 undergraduate semester credit hours.

The data in Figure 4 are representative of the undergraduate academic programs within the College of Fine Arts. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 88.6 percent of semester credit hours in the B.M. in Music program;
- Full-time faculty teach 86.9 percent of semester credit hours in the B.A. in Theatre program;



- Full-time faculty teach 73.2 percent of semester credit hours in the B.A. in Art History program.

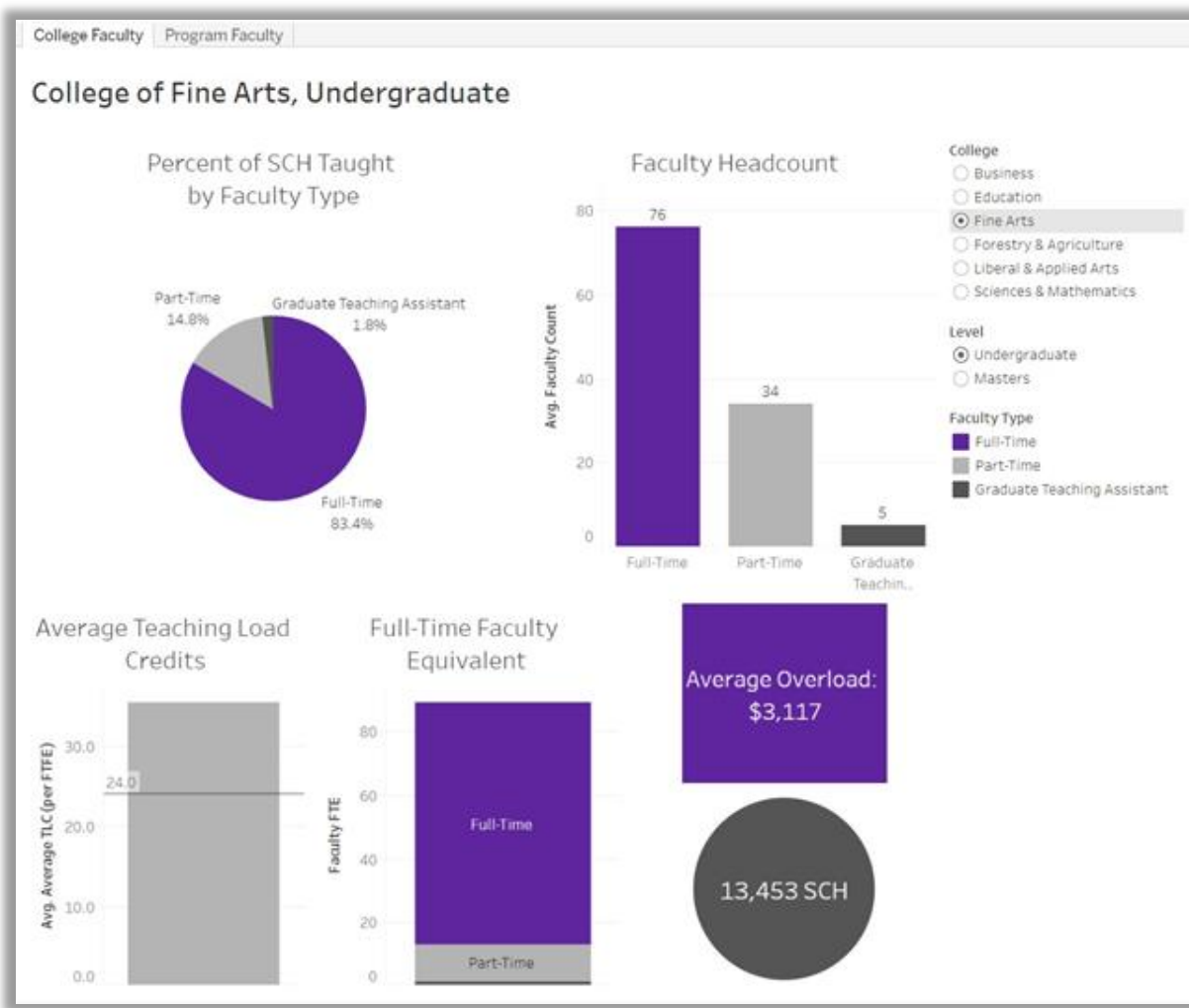


Figure 4 – 6.2.b. – College of Fine Arts, Undergraduate

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Fine Arts \[37\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Fine Arts UG \[38\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Fine Arts promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Fine Arts Faculty Activity Summary (Table 6) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual



Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members [39, 40, 41].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	728
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	12
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	18
Presentations (Invited)	27
Presentations (Accepted)	26
SFA Service	344
Professional/Public Service	103

Table 6 – 6.2.b. – College of Fine Arts Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Fine Arts

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Fine Arts \[38\]](#) ranges from a high of 88.6 percent to a low of 73.2 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Fine Arts employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Forestry and Agriculture Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 97.6 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Forestry and Agriculture are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 38 faculty members in the College of Forestry and Agriculture, 31 are full-time faculty. The seven part-time faculty comprise 1.4 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Forestry and Agriculture, faculty average 36 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Forestry and Agriculture generated 6,018 undergraduate semester credit hours.

The data in Figure 5 are representative of the undergraduate academic programs within the College of Forestry and Agriculture. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Environmental Science program;
- Full-time faculty teach 97.9 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.A.G. in General Agriculture program;



- Full-time faculty teach 97 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.F. in Forestry program.

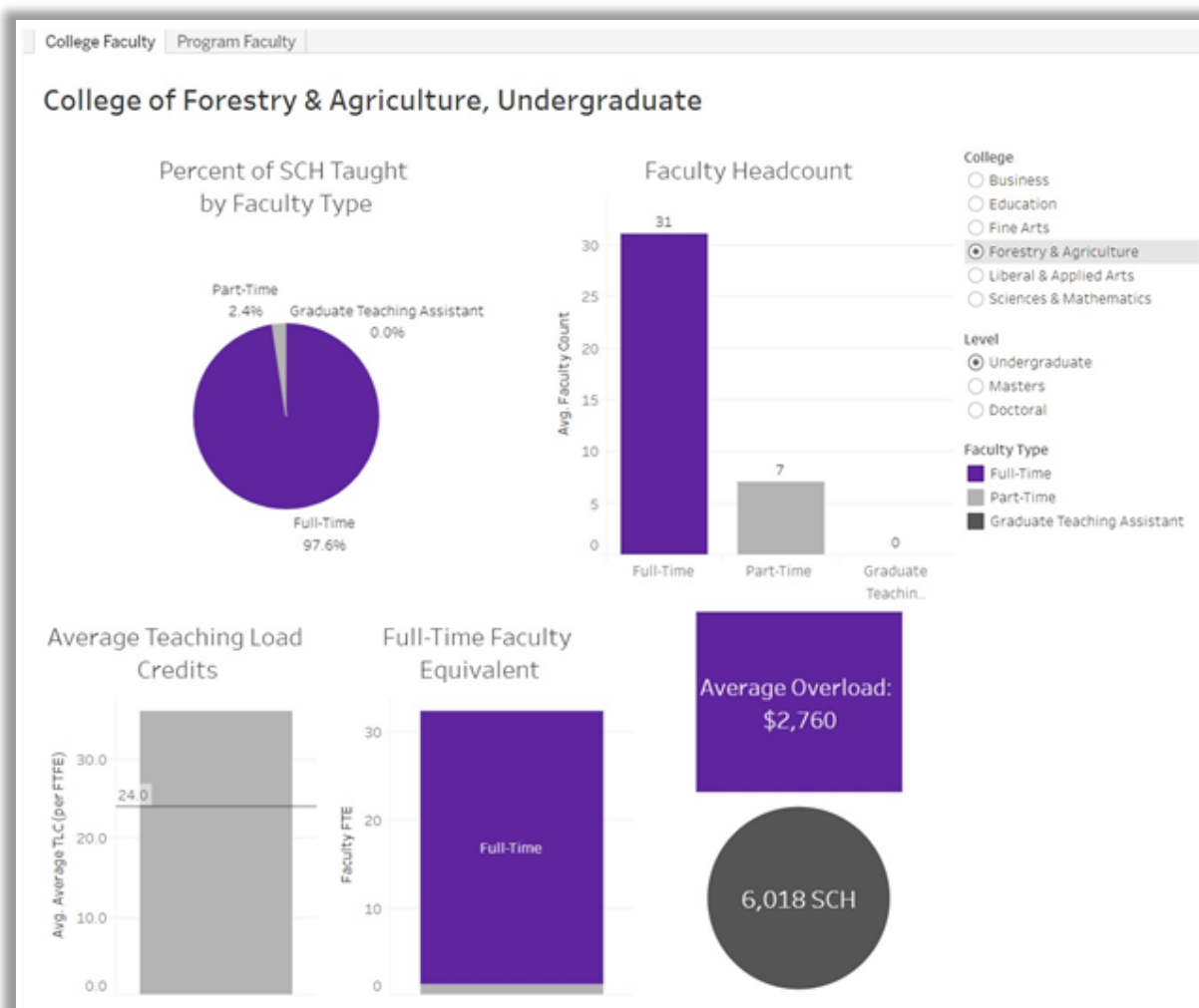


Figure 5– 6.2.b. – College of Forestry and Agriculture, Undergraduate

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Forestry and Agriculture \[42\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Forestry and Agriculture UG \[43\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Forestry and Agriculture promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Forestry and Agriculture Activity Summary (Table 7) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of



individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members [44, 45, 46].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	27
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	32
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	104
Presentations (Invited)	77
Presentations (Accepted)	200
SFA Service	648
Professional/Public Service	164

Table 7 – 6.2.b. – College of Forestry and Agriculture Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Forestry and Agriculture

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Forestry and Agriculture \[43\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 97 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Forestry and Agriculture employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Liberal and Applied Arts Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 85.5 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 236 faculty members in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, 163 are full-time faculty. The 67 part-time faculty comprise 20.7 full-time faculty equivalents, and the six graduate teaching assistants comprise three full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, faculty average 25.9 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. In fall 2019, the College of Liberal and Applied Arts generated 45,708 undergraduate semester credit hours.

The data in Figure 6 are representative of the undergraduate academic programs within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 94.9 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Psychology program;
- Full-time faculty teach 84.1 percent of semester credit hours in the B.A. in English program;
- Full-time faculty teach 63 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.W. in Social Work program.



The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE requires students to obtain practical experience prior to graduation and, to comply, part-time faculty with professional credentials (i.e., at least two years of social work-related experience) are hired to supervise fieldwork. It is important to reiterate that even part-time faculty, acting as official instructors-of-record, are usually under the direct supervision of full time faculty when engaged in field experience practica. In addition, a full-time faculty member serves as the Director of Field Instruction to oversee all field placements in the Social Work program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program.

The Division of Multidisciplinary Programs (MDP) offers three interdisciplinary degrees at the undergraduate level, as delineated below.

The Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (B.A.A.S.) degree involves supporting course discipline groups that vary by individual student. The degree program is comprised of a major (multiple supporting course discipline groups and/or academic credit), a minor, and the Texas Core Curriculum. The B.A.A.S. is unique in that it allows students to apply certain non-academic credit to the completion of a bachelor's degree. Credits earned through such avenues as community college vocational or technical programs, military training, and occupational licensure or certification may be evaluated by advisors for application toward the degree, providing a shorter route to completing a bachelor's degree than many traditional programs.

Students pursuing the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Multidisciplinary Studies (renamed the B.S. in General Studies effective Fall 2020) work with the program coordinator to design a degree plan consisting of three areas of study complementary of one another. Each area of study requires 18 semester credit hours, and students pursuing this degree are required to demonstrate how these areas can be logically, academically, and professionally integrated.

The third undergraduate interdisciplinary degree offered by MDP, the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies, offers students an opportunity to create individualized majors that draw courses from several SFA departments. The degree program is comprised of a major (two supporting course discipline groups and/or academic credit), a minor, the Texas Core Curriculum, and college requirements related to foreign language proficiency and humanities coursework.

Any academic program may contribute to one of these three unique degree programs; thus, the demonstration of adequate faculty resources is determined by viewing the information documented for any undergraduate academic degree program at SFA.



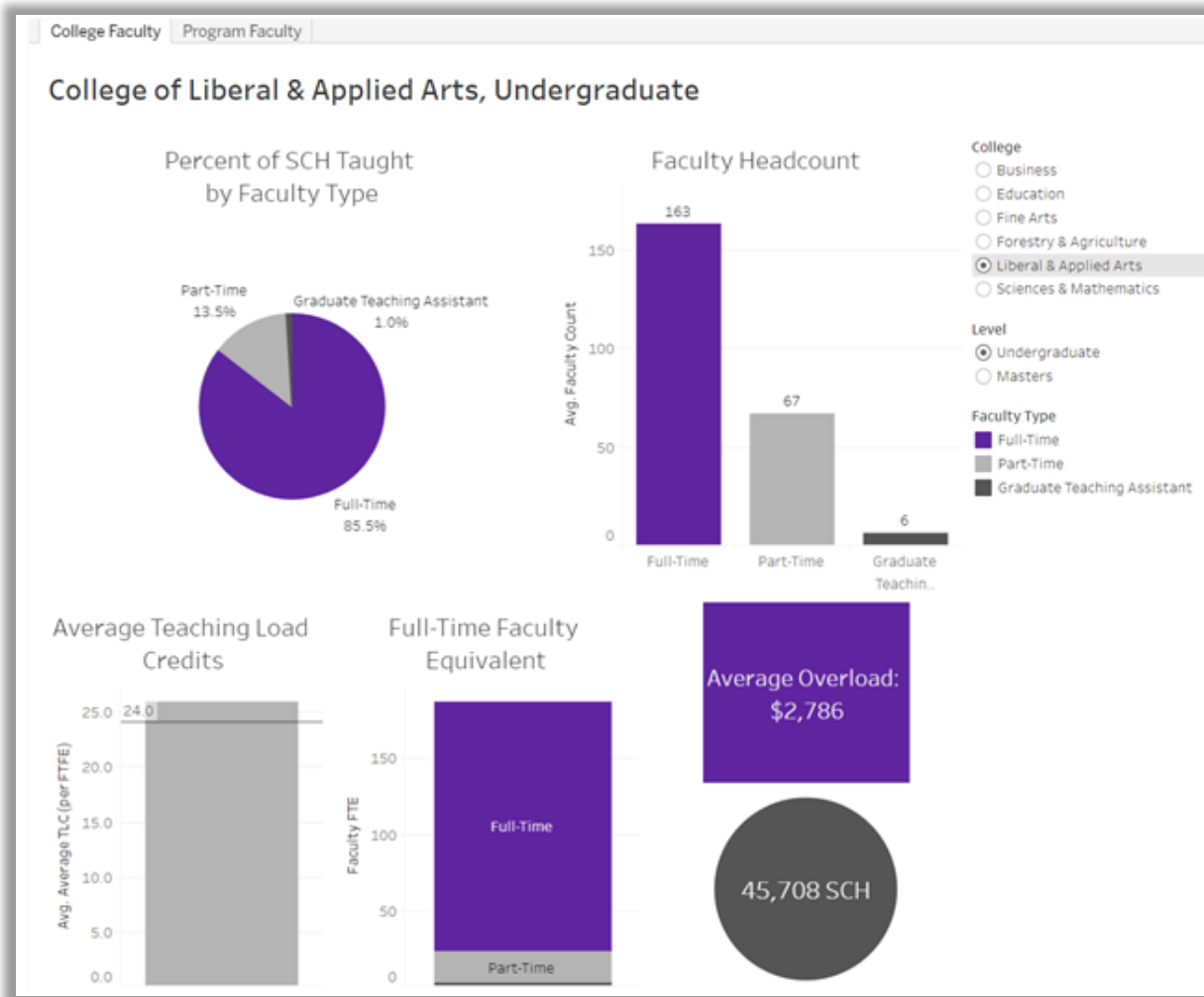


Figure 6 – 6.2.b. – College of Liberal and Applied Arts, Undergraduate

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Liberal and Applied Arts \[47\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Liberal and Applied Arts UG \[48\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Liberal and Applied Arts Activity Summary (Table 7) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members [\[49, 50, 51\]](#).



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	27
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	32
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	104
Presentations (Invited)	77
Presentations (Accepted)	200
SFA Service	648
Professional/Public Service	164

Table 8 – 6.2.b. – College of Liberal and Applied Arts Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Undergraduate Program, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Liberal and Applied Arts \[48\]](#) ranges from a high of 94.9 percent to a low of 63 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Liberal and Applied Arts employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Sciences and Mathematics Baccalaureate Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 99.1 percent of undergraduate semester credit hours within the College of Sciences and Mathematics are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 173 faculty members in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, 140 are full-time faculty. The 10 part-time faculty comprise 3.3 full-time faculty equivalents, and the 23 graduate teaching assistants comprise 11.5 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Sciences and Mathematics, faculty average 30 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Sciences and Mathematics generated 31,951 undergraduate semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 7 are representative of the undergraduate academic programs within the College of Sciences and Mathematics. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Physics program;
- Full-time faculty teach 98.6 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S. in Mathematics program;
- Full-time faculty teach 97.7 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.N. in Nursing program.



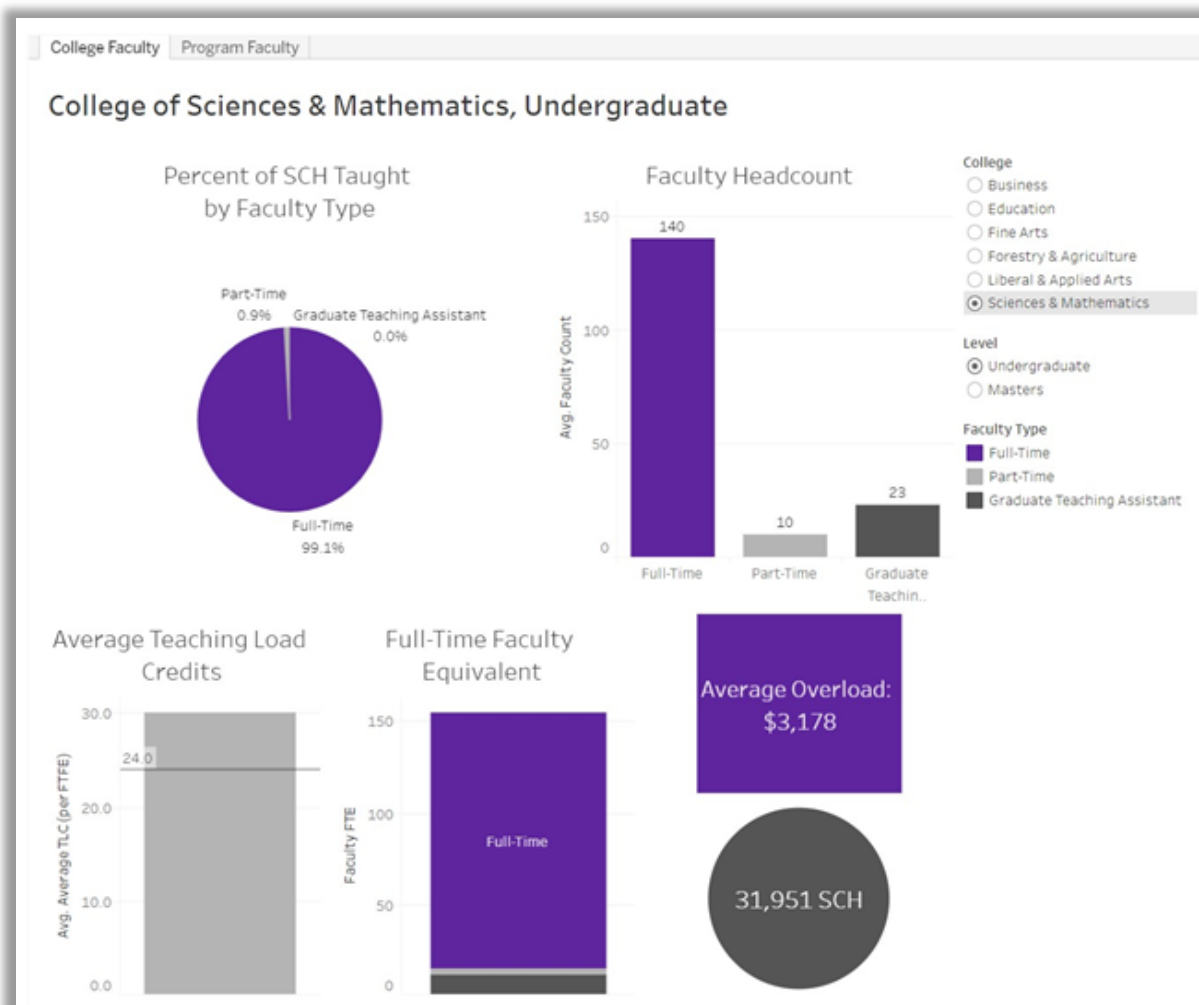


Figure 7 – 6.2.b. – College of Sciences and Mathematics, Undergraduate

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College Sciences and Mathematics \[52\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Sciences and Mathematics UG \[53\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College Sciences and Mathematics promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Sciences and Mathematics Activity Summary (Table 9) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [\[54, 55, 22\]](#).



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	5
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	52
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	68
Presentations (Invited)	63
Presentations (Accepted)	136
SFA Service	618
Professional/Public Service	182

Table 9 – 6.2.b. – College of Sciences and Mathematics Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Sciences and Mathematics

The percentage of undergraduate semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Sciences and Mathematics \[53\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 97.7 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Sciences and Mathematics employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

Master’s Degree Programs by College and Academic Program, Fall 2019

SFA maintains data and contextual measures organized by college to document the university commitment to ensuring that each academic program provides an adequate number of full-time faculty in master’s degree pursuits, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). The adequate number of full-time faculty for SFA master’s degree programs is provided by college in the figures and tables below. Because faculty typically support more than one academic program, the overall totals may exceed actual employment numbers. Each figure includes full-time faculty equivalent by faculty type (full-time, part-time, and graduate teaching assistant), percent of semester credit hours taught by faculty type, and faculty headcount by faculty type, as well as the average overload amount, average teaching load credits, and total semester credit hours generated by each college. See the [Definitions of Data Elements \[28\]](#). Although all data elements provide context, SFA recognizes the percentage of SCH taught by full-time faculty as the primary metric for evaluation of the sufficient number of full-time faculty.

This data is presented by both college and academic program and is publicly available online. The data is reviewed regularly by academic unit heads and deans at both the college and academic program level to ensure an adequate number of full-time faculty for each academic program.



College of Business Master's Degree Program Overview

Across all instructional modes and locations, 100 percent of masters-level semester credit hours within the College of Business are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 38 faculty members in the College of Business who are approved to teach graduate courses, 37 are full-time faculty. The one part-time faculty comprises 0.25 full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Business generated 1,068 master's-level semester credit hours.

In the College of Business, faculty average 21.3 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. This is lower than the institutional expectation of 24 Teaching Load Credits (TLC) for the combined fall and spring semesters, as outlined in SFA [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#) , due to requirements of the Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the discipline-specific accreditor of the College of Business.

The data in Figure 8 are representative of all master's academic programs within the College of Business. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.B.A. in Business Administration program;
- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.P.A. in Accounting program;
- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.P.A.C.Y. in Accounting program.



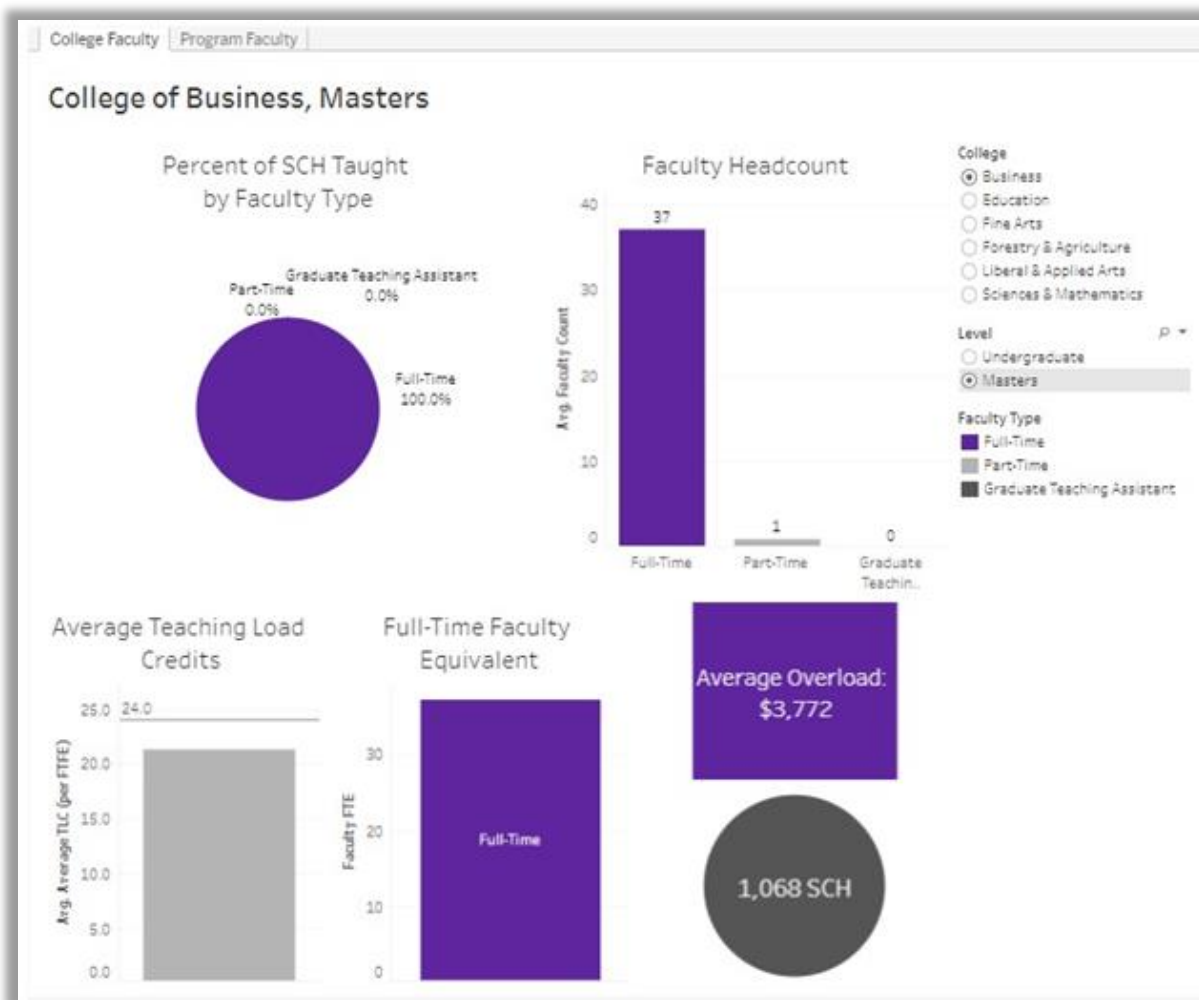


Figure 8 – 6.2.b. – College of Business, Master's

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Business \[56\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Business MA \[57\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Business promote SFA's mission of "excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service" by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Business Faculty Activity Summary (Figure 10) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [\[20, 31, 32\]](#)



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	6
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	42
Presentations (Invited)	10
Presentations (Accepted)	67
SFA Service	276
Professional/Public Service	91

Table 9 – 6.2.b. – College of Business Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Master’s Program, College of Business

The percentage of master’s level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Business \[57\]](#) is 100 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Business employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each master’s academic degree program.

College of Education Master’s Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 82.1 percent of master’s-level semester credit hours within the College of Education are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 157 faculty members in the College of Education who are approved to teach graduate courses, 102 are full-time faculty. The 113 part-time faculty comprise 11.9 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Education, faculty average 28.5 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Education generated 4,849 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 9 are representative of the master’s-level academic programs within the College of Education. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S. in Human Sciences program;
- Full-time faculty teach 84.3 percent of semester credit hours in the M.Ed. in Special Education program;
- Full-time faculty teach 66.2 percent of semester credit hours in the M.Ed. in Secondary Education program. The degree is designed for people who wish to qualify to teach at a community college, for high school teachers who wish to qualify to teach dual-credit courses on their campuses, or for those wanting to pursue a graduate degree for workplace or community education. This 36 hour program includes 18 core hours in secondary education and 18 hours in the student's chosen teaching field. In fall 2019, 100 percent of the program’s core courses were taught by full-time faculty members. A low (14:1) student to faculty ratio provides the opportunity for the high levels of interaction both inside and outside the classroom.



- Full-time faculty teach 66.2 percent of semester credit hours in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program. This 30-hour graduate program is designed for students who have earned an undergraduate degree but are not certified to teach. Students receive Texas teacher certification through a certification sequence, which includes a Post-Baccalaureate Initial Certification (PBIC) Internship or Student Teaching. In fall 2019, part-time faculty served as supervisors of these clinical teaching field experience courses only; full-time faculty taught all other courses in the M.A.T. program. Qualifications for Clinical Teaching Field Supervisors meet the standards outlined in Texas Administrative Code Chapter 228 Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs, as referenced in SFA [Policy 7.1 Academic and Professional Qualifications \[18\]](#). The program's low student to faculty ratio of 14 to 1 offers additional evidence of sufficient program faculty.
- Full-time faculty teach 66.2 percent of semester credit hours in the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program, which provides students with the knowledge and skills to better serve the needs of the diverse EC-12 student population in Texas. This 36 hour program includes 18 core hours in secondary education. Beyond the 18-hour core, students choose from three tracks (English as a Second Language/Bilingual, Online Teaching, and Gifted/Talented) in which to specialize. In fall 2019, 100 percent of the program's core courses were taught by full-time faculty members. A low (14:1) student to faculty ratio provides the opportunity for the high levels of interaction both inside and outside the classroom.
- Full-time faculty teach 66.2 percent of semester credit hours in the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program. The program is designed for those seeking principal certification and has over a 90% pass rate on the TExES, the principal certification exam. The M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program maintains a rigorous curriculum taught completely by highly-qualified professors with successful leadership experience. A scholar-practitioner approach incorporates theory and practice-based learning that focuses on research-based leadership practices, curriculum and instructional leadership, data-driven decision-making, special programs, law, and school and community leadership. Field experiences or internship hours are included in all coursework. The part-time faculty who support the program have professional experience in higher education administration and leadership, as well as principalship and superintendency in the K-12 setting. The professional experience of these part-time faculty provides necessary expertise to students pursuing the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership.



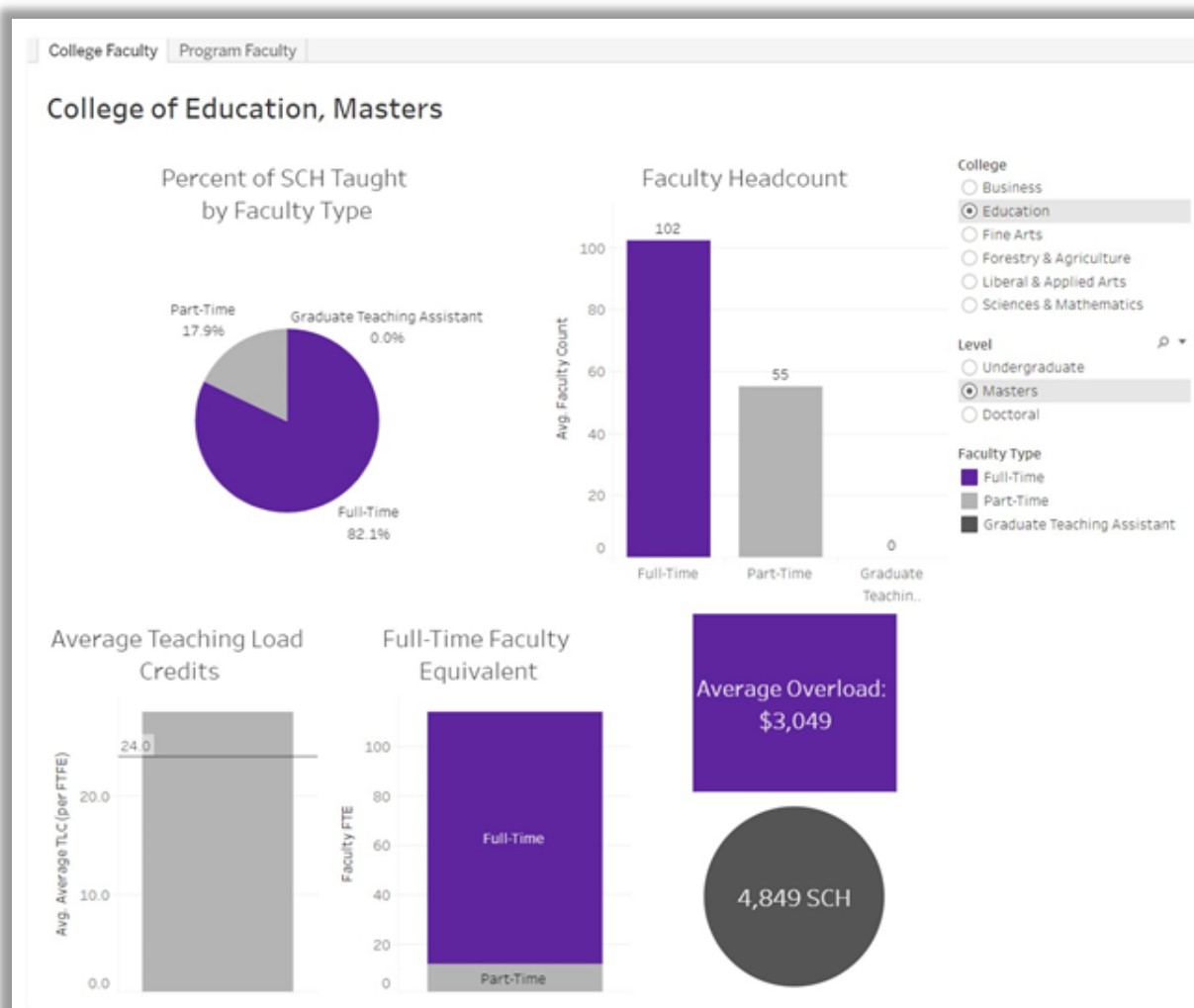


Figure 9 – 6.2.b. – College of Education, Master’s

Full-time faculty evaluation for each master’s academic program in the [College of Education \[58\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Education MA \[59\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Education promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Education Faculty Activity Summary (Table 11) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members [\[21, 35, 36\]](#).



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	8
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	45
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	53
Presentations (Invited)	108
Presentations (Accepted)	268
SFA Service	777
Professional/Public Service	310

Table 10 – 6.2.b. – College of Education Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Master’s Program, College of Education

The percentage of master’s-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Education \[59\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 66.2 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Education employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Fine Arts Master’s Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 86 percent of master’s-level semester credit hours within the College of Fine Arts are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 73 faculty members in the College of Fine Arts who are approved to teach graduate courses, 58 are full-time faculty. The 15 part-time faculty comprise 11.7 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Fine Arts, faculty average 35.5 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The higher number of Teaching Load Credits for faculty in the College of Fine Arts can be attributed to the individualized instruction and private lesson sections offered by the School of Music. The College of Fine Arts generated 473 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 10 are representative of the master’s-level academic programs within the College of Fine Arts. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 84.9 percent of semester credit hours in the M.F.A. in Art program;
- Full-time faculty teach 84.9 percent of semester credit hours in the M.A. in Art Education program; since this program shares instructional coursework similarities and faculty with the M.F.A. in Art, the percentage of SCH taught by full-time faculty is identical for the two degree programs;
- Full-time faculty teach 86.3 percent of semester credit hours in the M.M. in Music program.



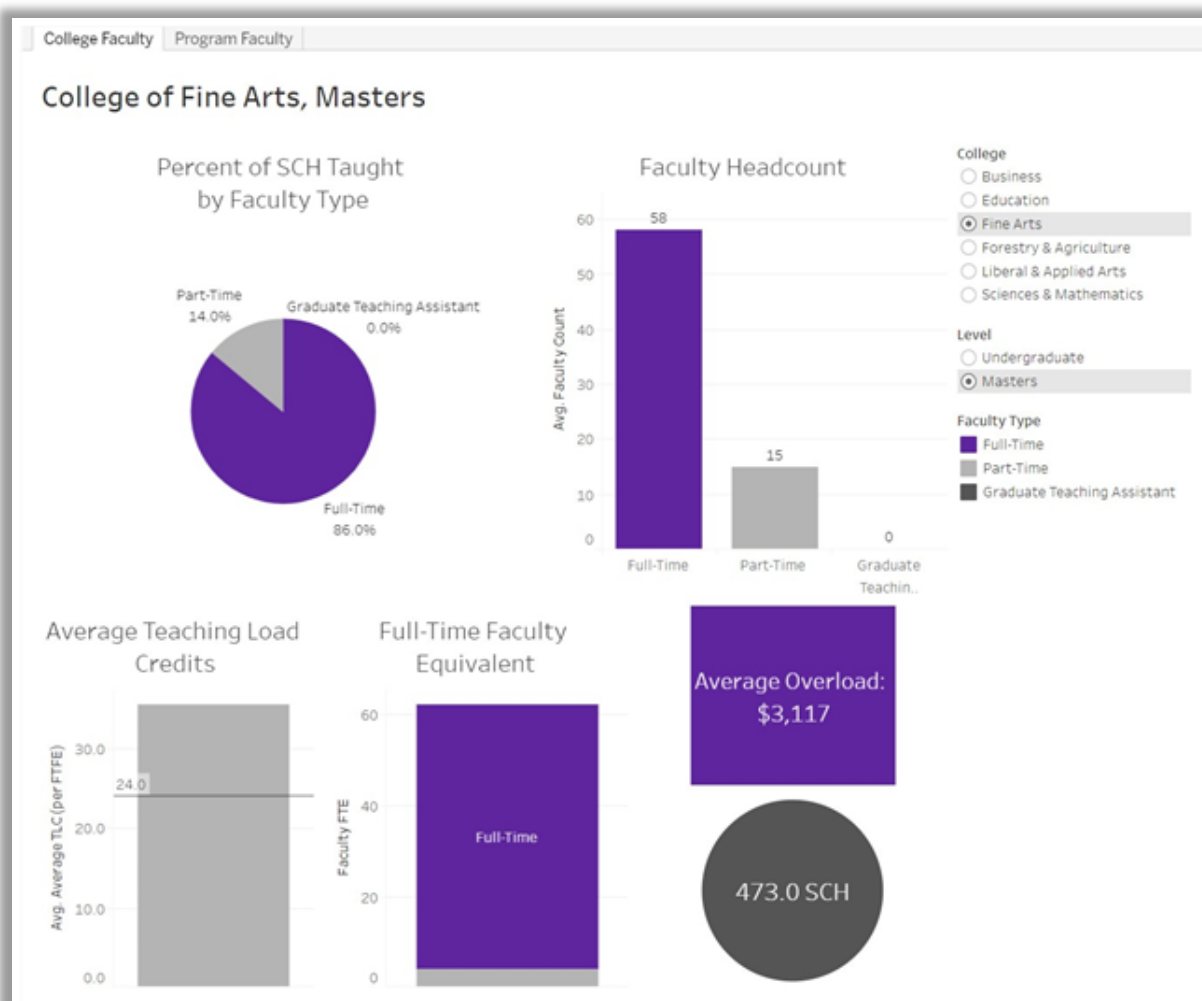


Figure 10 – 6.2.b. – College of Fine Arts, Master’s

Full-time faculty evaluation for each master’s-level academic program in the [College of Fine Arts \[60\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Fine Arts MA \[61\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Fine Arts promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Fine Arts Faculty Activity Summary (Table 12) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [[39](#), [40](#), [41](#)]



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	728
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	12
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	18
Presentations (Invited)	27
Presentations (Accepted)	26
SFA Service	344
Professional/Public Service	103

Table 11 – 6.2.b. – College of Fine Arts Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Fine Arts

The percentage of master’s-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Fine Arts \[61\]](#) ranges from a high of 86.3 percent to a low of 84.9 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Fine Arts employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each master’s-level academic degree program.

College of Forestry and Agriculture Master’s Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 88.9 percent of master’s-level semester credit hours within the College of Forestry and Agriculture are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 34 faculty members in the College of Forestry and Agriculture who are approved to teach graduate courses, 30 are full-time faculty. The four part-time faculty comprise 0.85 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Forestry and Agriculture, faculty average 36 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Forestry and Agriculture generated 380 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 11 are representative of the master’s academic programs within the College of Forestry and Agriculture. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S. in Agriculture program;
- Full-time faculty teach 90.8 percent of semester credit hours in the M.F. in Forestry;
- Full-time faculty teach 69 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S. in Environmental Science program. The 18 semester credit hours taught by a part-time faculty member were all in one section of ENV 510 Risk Assessment. The [part-time faculty member \[62\]](#) who taught this section is highly qualified to teach the course and provides unique expertise to students pursuing the M.S. in Environmental Science.



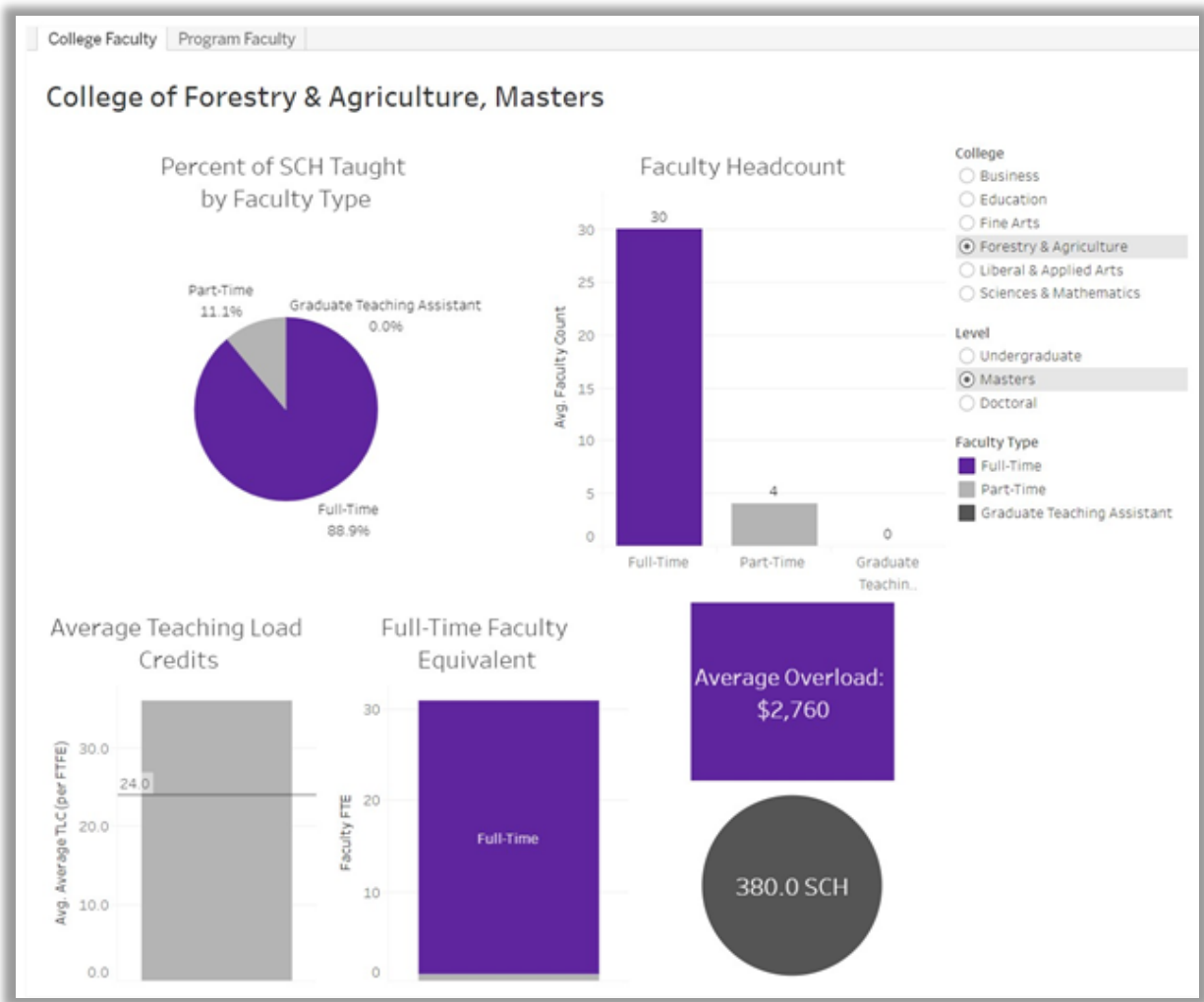


Figure 11 – 6.2.b. – College of Forestry and Agriculture, Master’s

Full-time faculty evaluation for each undergraduate academic program in the [College of Forestry and Agriculture \[63\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Forestry and Agriculture MA \[64\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Forestry and Agriculture promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Forestry and Agriculture Activity Summary (Table 13) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [44, 45, 46].



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	27
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	32
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	104
Presentations (Invited)	77
Presentations (Accepted)	200
SFA Service	648
Professional/Public Service	164

Table 12 – 6.2.b. – College of Forestry and Agriculture Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Master’s Program, College of Forestry and Agriculture

The percentage of master’s-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Forestry and Agriculture \[64\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 69 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Forestry and Agriculture employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Liberal and Applied Arts Master’s Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 71.2 percent of master’s-level semester credit hours within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 113 faculty members in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts who are approved to teach graduate level courses, 93 are full-time faculty. The 20 part-time faculty comprise 6.7 full-time faculty. In the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, faculty average 25.9 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Liberal and Applied Arts generated 2,053 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 12 are representative of the master’s academic programs within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.A. in English program.
- Full-time faculty teach 74.2 percent of semester credit hours in the M.A. in Mass Communication program.
- Full-time faculty teach 56.1 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S.W. in Social Work program. The Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE requires students to obtain practical experience prior to graduation and, to comply, part-time faculty with professional credentials (i.e., at least two years of social work-related experience) are hired to supervise fieldwork. It is important to reiterate that even part-time faculty, acting



as official instructors-of-record, are usually under the direct supervision of full time faculty when engaged in field experience internships. In addition, a full-time faculty member serves as the Director of Field Instruction to oversee all field placements in the Social Work program. The director is a full-time faculty member who devotes 75 percent time to the coordination and supervision of field instruction. Furthermore, the MSW Program Director is a full-time faculty member who devotes 50 percent time to work closely with students and the Director of Field Instruction to oversee the graduate program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program.

- The Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) degree is designed in such a manner that students with unique interests and multi-faceted career goals can incorporate several traditional academic disciplines into a single program of study. Individual programs, created by students in direct consultation with university faculty, typically include three different SFA academic program disciplines (each represented with between a minimum of six and a maximum of 15 semester credit hours). The demonstration of adequate faculty resources would be determined by viewing the information documented for any master's degree programs at SFA since that degree program may contribute to a M.I.S. degree for a particular student enrolled. Consequently, the M.I.S. degree is not displayed on the Academic Program Faculty dashboard. Adequate faculty resources are demonstrated within each SFA supporting course discipline groups.
- The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Publishing is a new academic program. The first course in this program was offered in fall 2019 with the single section generating three credit hours. The program currently employs one part-time faculty member who taught 100 percent of semester credit hours in fall 2019. The faculty member also serves as Director of Stephen F. Austin State University Press, which is housed in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts and broadens the University's mission of teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service by publishing works of cultural and scholarly significance. Additional full-time faculty assist in development of curriculum and support. As the program expands, additional course offerings and faculty will be added. This contextual information confirms that the M.A. in Publishing employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic degree program.



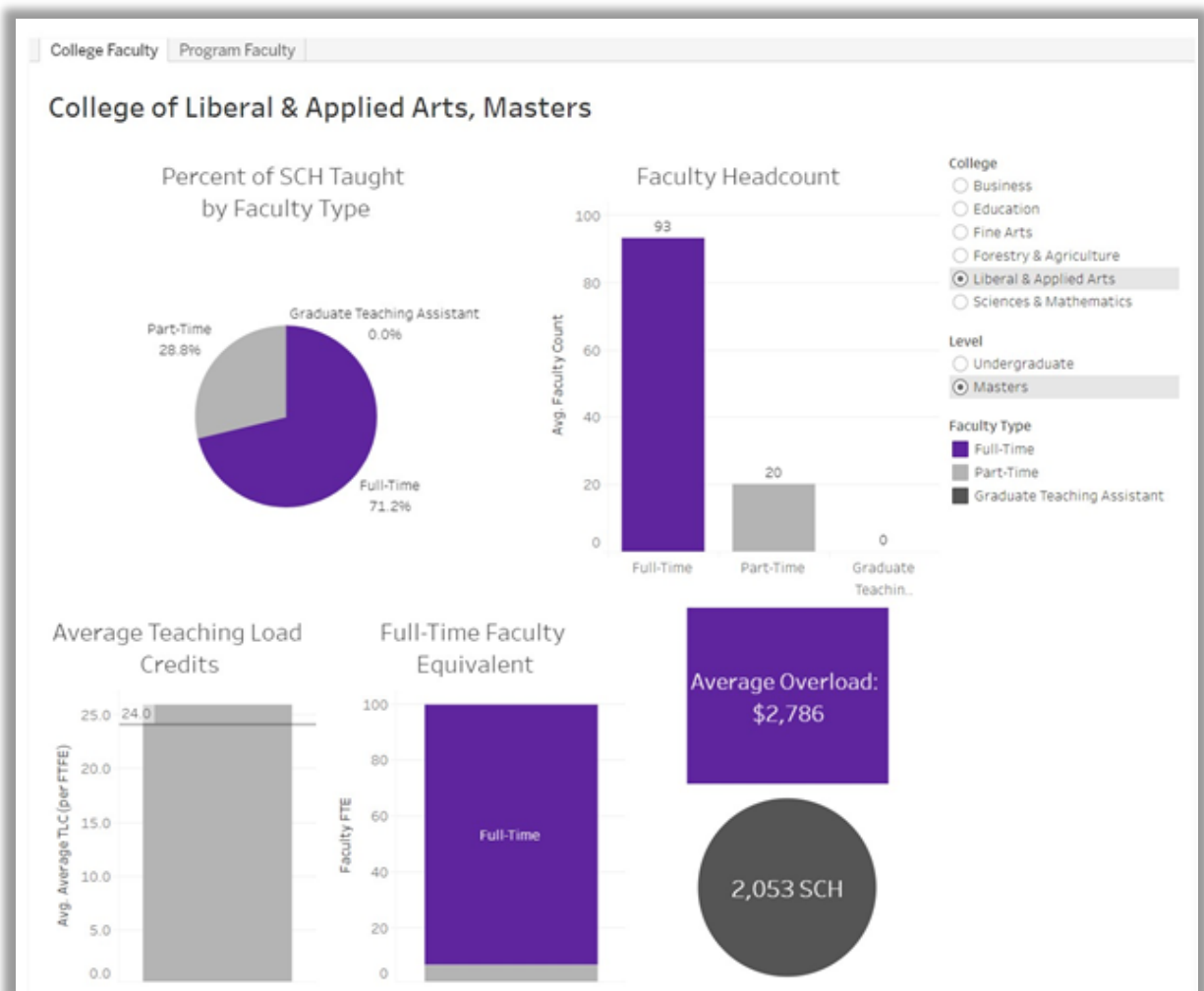


Figure 12 – 6.2.b. – College of Liberal and Applied Arts, Master's

Full-time faculty evaluation for each master's-level academic program in the [College of Liberal and Applied Arts \[65\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Liberal and Applied Arts MA \[66\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts promote SFA's mission of "excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service" by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Liberal and Applied Arts Activity Summary (Table 14) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members. [49, 50, 51].



Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	27
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	32
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	104
Presentations (Invited)	77
Presentations (Accepted)	200
SFA Service	648
Professional/Public Service	164

Table 13– 6.2.b. – College of Liberal and Applied Arts Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

The percentage of master’s-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Liberal and Applied Arts \[66\]](#) ranges from a high of 100 percent to a low of 56.1 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Liberal and Applied Arts employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

College of Sciences and Mathematics Master’s Degree Program Overview

Across all modes and locations, 100 percent of master’s-level semester credit hours within the College of Sciences and Mathematics are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 89 faculty members in the College of Sciences and Mathematics who are approved to teach graduate-level courses, 85 are full-time faculty. The four part-time faculty comprise 1.8 full-time faculty equivalents. In the College of Sciences and Mathematics, faculty average 30 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The College of Sciences and Mathematics generated 741 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019.

The data in Figure 13 are representative of the master’s academic programs within the College of Sciences and Mathematics. Examples of specific academic programs within the college are as follows:

- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S. in Biology program;
- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S. in Geology program;
- Full-time faculty teach 100 percent of semester credit hours in the M.S.N. in Family Nurse Practitioner program;
- The Master of Science in Natural Sciences at SFA is a 36-hour, interdisciplinary degree in sciences and mathematics offered through the College of Sciences and Mathematics.



Upon entering the program, graduate students are assigned to a graduate faculty committee to design a degree plan and oversee the specific program of study, including development and administration of pertinent culminating projects and examinations. The degree requires 18 credit hours from one of the following areas: Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Geology, Mathematics, Mathematics Education, or Science Education. A maximum of 12 graduate credit hours may be in an area external to the College of Sciences and Mathematics. Most students choose Chemistry, Physics, or Mathematics as their area of concentration. The demonstration of adequate faculty resources would be determined by viewing the information documented for any master's degree programs at SFA since that degree program may contribute to a M.S. in Natural Sciences degree for a particular student enrolled. Adequate faculty resources are demonstrated within each supporting course discipline group.

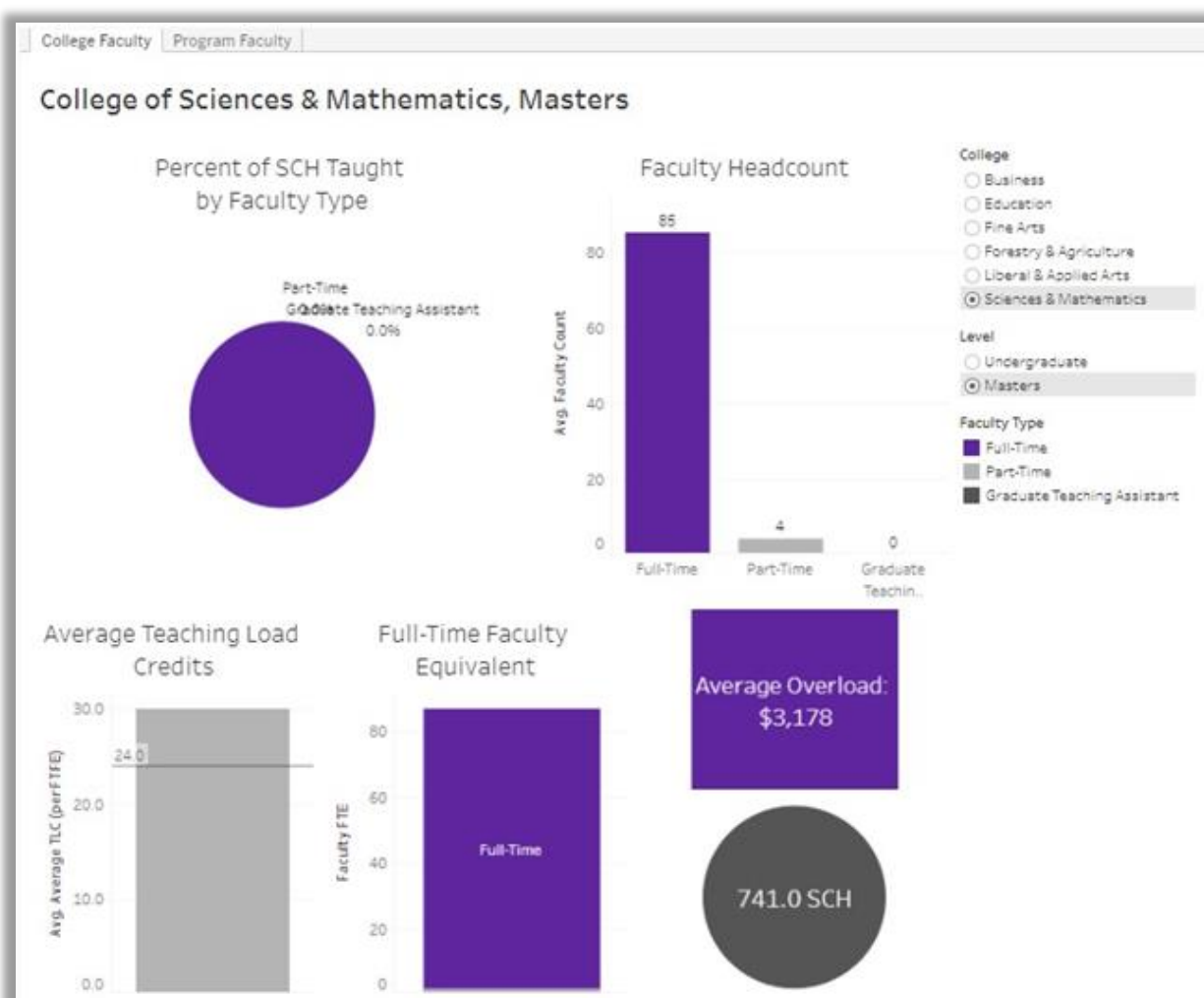


Figure 13– 6.2.b. – College of Sciences and Mathematics, Master's



Full-time faculty evaluation for each master’s academic program in the [College Sciences and Mathematics \[67\]](#) is included.

[Program Faculty, College of Sciences and Mathematics MA \[68\]](#)

In addition to instructional activities, faculty in the College Sciences and Mathematics promote SFA’s mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” by participating in these activities. See [Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload \[05\]](#). Faculty activities are regularly monitored by academic unit heads, college deans, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs, both annually and on an ad hoc basis. The College of Sciences and Mathematics Activity Summary (Table 15) demonstrates the volume of activities, and examples of individual Faculty Activity Reports demonstrate the types of activities completed by faculty members [[22](#), [54](#), [55](#)].

Activity	January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
Artistic and Professional Performances and Exhibits	5
Contracts, Grants and Sponsored Research (Funded)	52
Intellectual Contributions (Published)	68
Presentations (Invited)	63
Presentations (Accepted)	136
SFA Service	618
Professional/Public Service	182

Table 14 – 6.2.b. – College of Sciences and Mathematics Faculty Activity Summary

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Master’s Program, College of Sciences and Mathematics

The percentage of master’s-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations within the [College of Sciences and Mathematics \[68\]](#) is 100 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the College of Sciences and Mathematics employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

Doctoral Degree Programs by Academic Program, Fall 2019

SFA maintains data and contextual measures organized by college to document the university commitment to ensuring that each academic program provides an adequate number of full-time faculty in doctoral degree pursuits, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). The adequate number of full-time faculty for SFA doctoral degree programs is provided in Figures 30 through 32. Each figure includes full-time faculty



equivalent by faculty type (full-time, part-time, and graduate teaching assistant), percent of semester credit hours taught by faculty type, and faculty headcount by faculty type, as well as the average overload amount, average teaching load credits, and total semester credit hours generated by each doctoral program. See the [Definitions of Data Elements \[28\]](#). Although all data elements provide context, SFA recognizes the percentage of SCH taught by full-time faculty as the primary metric for evaluation of the sufficient number of full-time faculty. This data is reviewed regularly by academic unit heads and deans to ensure an adequate number of full-time faculty for each academic program.

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

The data in Figure 14 provide a visual representation of the following information. Across all modes and locations, 72.2 percent of semester credit hours within the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 27 faculty members supporting the program, 14 are full-time faculty. The 13 part-time faculty comprise 3.3 full-time faculty equivalents.

The part-time faculty who support the program have professional experience in higher education administration and leadership, as well as principalship and superintendency in the K-12 setting. The professional experience of these part-time faculty provides necessary expertise to doctoral candidates pursuing the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

The program's low student to faculty ratio of 8 to 1 offers additional evidence of sufficient program faculty. In the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program, faculty average 28.9 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The program generated 162 doctoral semester credit hours in fall 2019.



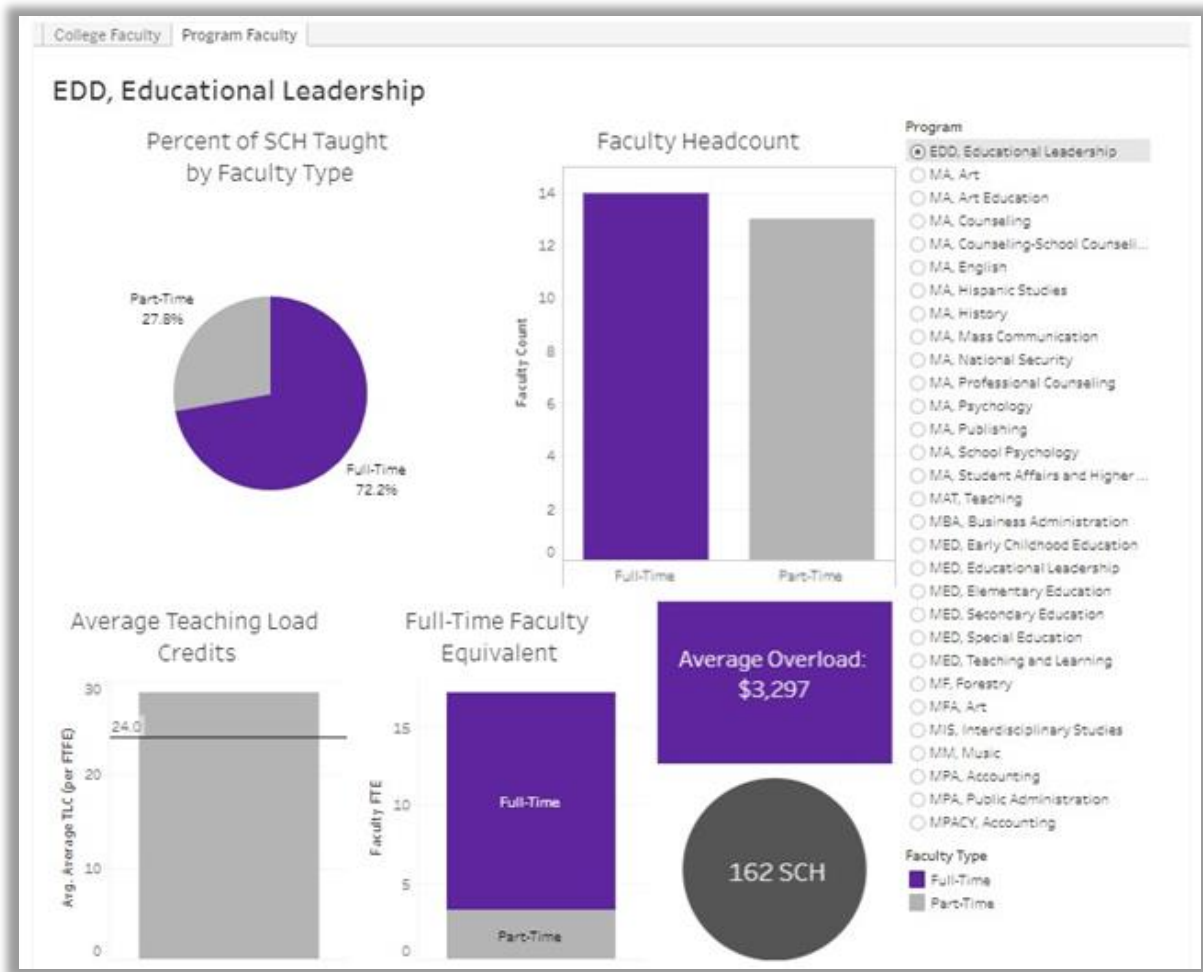


Figure 14– 6.2.b. – Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

Ph.D. in School Psychology

The data in Figure 15 provide a visual representation of the following information. The headcount of faculty supporting the Ph.D. in School Psychology includes part-time faculty. However, 100% of semester credit hours within the program are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 42 faculty members supporting the program, 28 are full-time faculty. The 14 part-time faculty comprise 3.3 full-time faculty equivalents and provide curricular influence and service in other administrative roles. In the Ph.D. in School Psychology program, faculty average 27.7 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The program generated 109 doctoral semester credit hours in fall 2019.



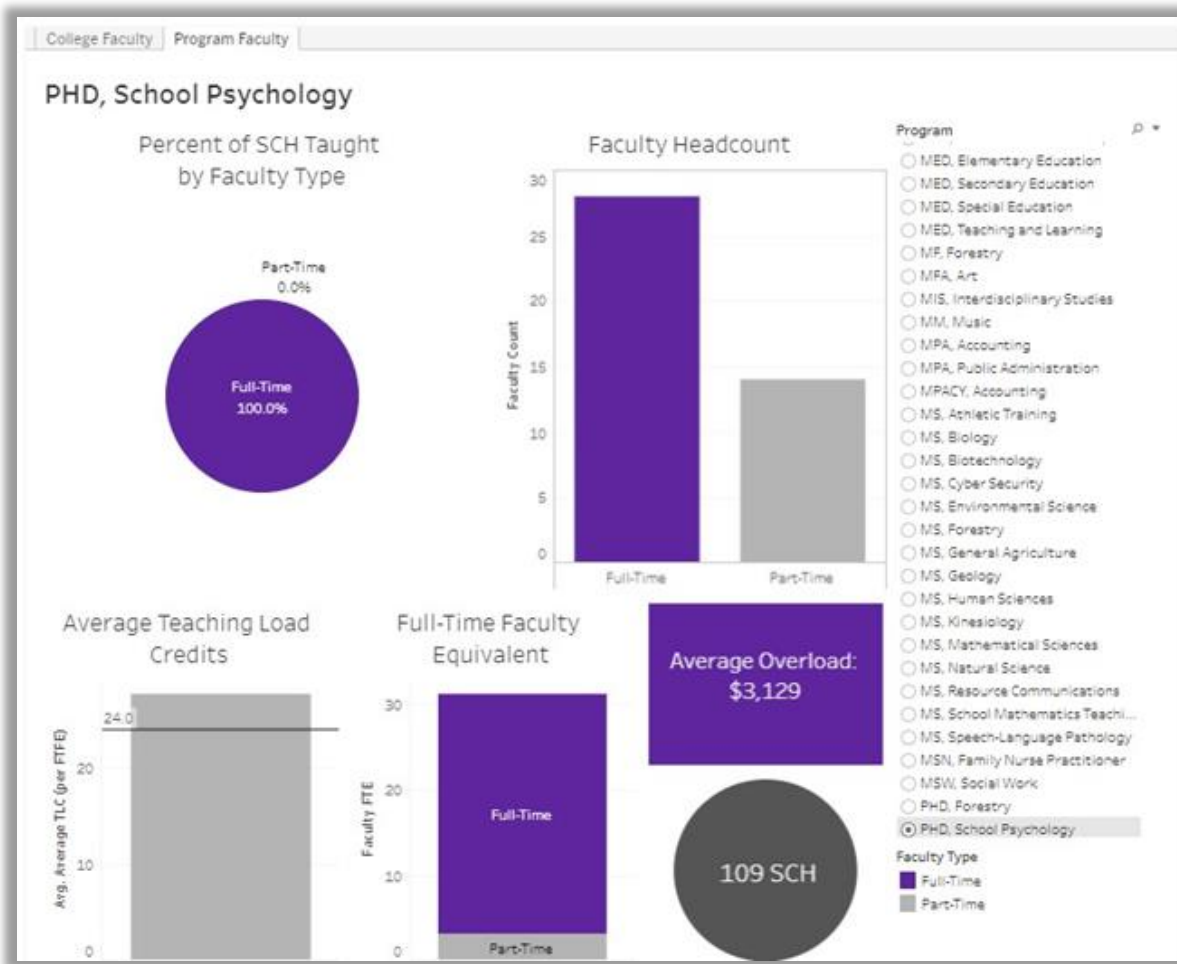


Figure 15 – 6.2.b. – Ph.D. in School Psychology

Ph.D. in Forestry

The data in Figure 16 provide a visual representation of the following information. Across all modes and locations, 86.4 percent of semester credit hours within the Ph.D. in Forestry program are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 18 faculty members supporting the program, 16 are full-time faculty. The two part-time faculty comprise 0.25 full-time faculty equivalents. In the Ph.D. in Forestry program, faculty average 35.1 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. The program generated 22 doctoral semester credit hours.



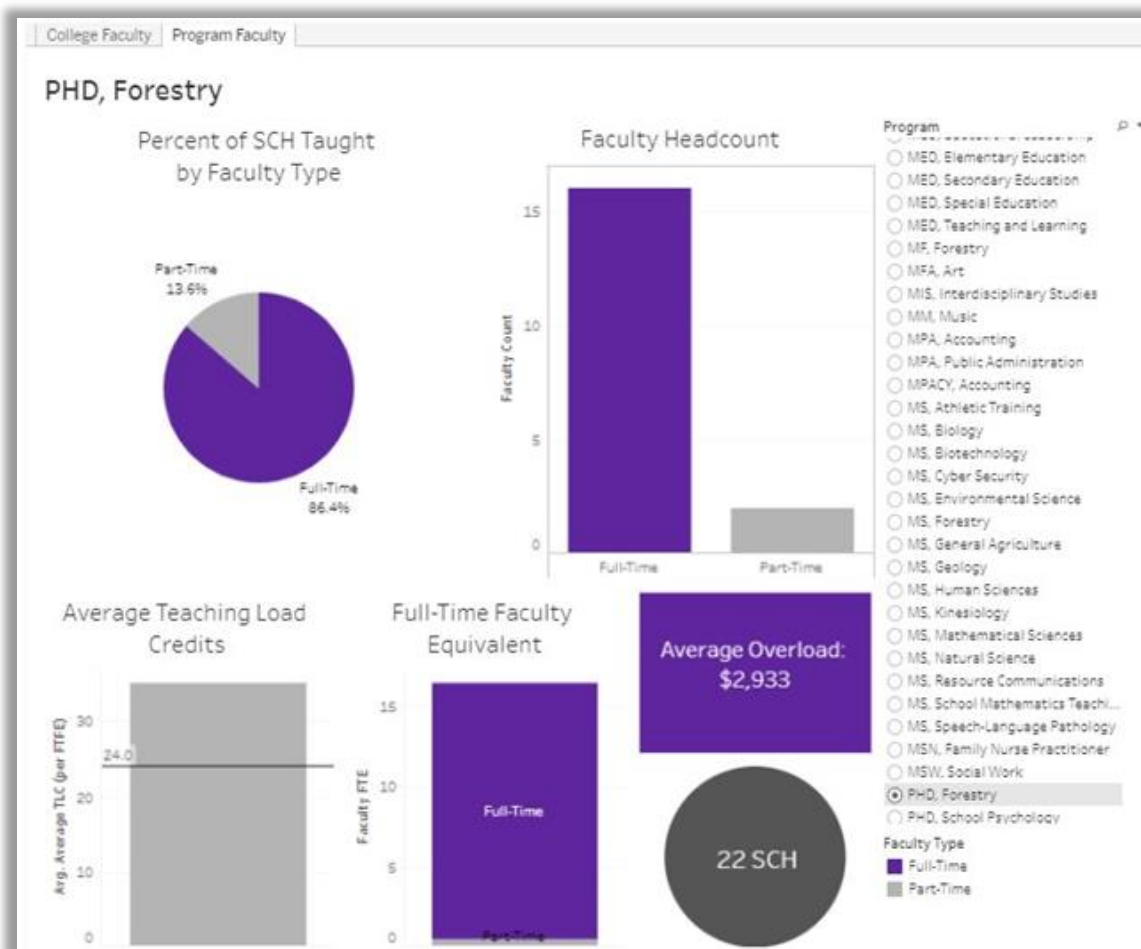


Figure 16 – 6.2.b. – Ph.D. in Forestry

[Program Faculty Table, Doctoral \[69\]](#)

Adequacy of Full-Time Faculty by Program, Doctoral Programs

The percentage of doctoral-level semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty across all instructional modes and locations ranges from 72.2 percent to 100 percent. Combined with THECB program proposal processes, ongoing academic program review, and significant faculty activity contributions, this primary metric confirms the three doctoral programs offered at SFA employ an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each individual academic degree program.

Academic Degree Programs with Distance Education or Off-site Delivery

Stephen F. Austin State University employs the same faculty for all types of instructional delivery modes, including online and off-site delivery. The faculty who are responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered via distance modality are the same faculty who ensure the quality and integrity of face-to-face academic programs. Although



full-time faculty share academic programming development and implementation throughout all instructional delivery modes, not all faculty teach an online or off-site course in any given semester. The following tables and contextual information document an adequate number of full-time faculty involvement with academic degree programs delivered off-site or via distance education during the most recently completed semester, fall 2019. (See Figures 34 through 38.)

Distance Education Program Faculty

SFA recognizes the percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty as the primary metric for evaluation of the sufficient number of full-time faculty. SFA distance education courses are largely instructed by full-time faculty (see Table 16), which documents that SFA maintains an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the university and to ensure the quality and integrity of distance education academic program offerings. Distance education calculations include all [modalities \[70\]](#) that are not face-to-face (online, hybrid, two-way interactive video, multiple or other electronic media, and hybrid/blended courses).

Faculty Teaching Distance Education Courses	Semester Credit Hours	Percentage of SCH
Full-Time	27,582	85.0%
Part-Time	4,811	14.8%
Graduate Teaching Assistant	60	0.2%

Table 15 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type

The SFA Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides abundant available resources to support and enhance distance instruction. The CTL offers year-round technical support, [online instructor certification \[71\]](#), [interactive video instructor certification \[72\]](#), distance course instructional design, and continuous professional development of distance education instruction, as well as faculty learning communities, online consortium opportunities, and teaching circles to enrich [distance education \[73\]](#) instruction.

The following data and contextual comments document the university commitment to ensuring that each distance education academic program provides adequate involvement of full-time faculty (see Tables 16 – 26). In this section of the narrative, the percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty includes only SCH generated via distance education courses within the college or academic unit by students enrolled in the college or academic unit’s distance education programs.

College of Business Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs

Within the College of Business, 88.2 percent of undergraduate semester credit generated by distance education academic programs are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 15 faculty members who provide instruction for undergraduate distance education programs within the college, 13 are full-time. Distance education programs within the College of Business generated 1,251 undergraduate semester credit hours. With both distance education undergraduate academic programs in the college reporting a very high percentage semester credit hours taught by full-



time faculty, the college has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education baccalaureate degree programs. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[74\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Business Communication and Corporate Education, B.B.A.	88.2%	11.8%	0.0%
General Business, B.B.A.	88.2%	11.8%	0.0%

Table 16 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Business

College of Education Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs

Within the College of Education, 87.9 percent of undergraduate semester credit generated by distance education academic programs are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 153 faculty members who provide instruction for undergraduate distance education programs within the college, 78 are full-time, 73 are part-time, and two are graduate teaching assistants. Distance education programs within the College of Education generated 1,251 undergraduate semester credit hours. With all distance education undergraduate academic programs in the college reporting a very high percentage semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty, the college has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education baccalaureate degree programs. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[74\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Human Sciences, B.S.	96.5%	3.5%	0.0%
Human Services, B.S.	82.1%	13.5%	4.4%
Interdisciplinary Studies, B.S.I.S.	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%

Table 17 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Education

College of Liberal and Applied Arts Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs

Within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, 84.8 percent of undergraduate semester credit generated by distance education academic programs are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 98 faculty members who provide instruction for undergraduate distance education programs within the college, 79 are full-time. Distance education programs within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts generated 3,458 undergraduate semester credit hours. With all distance education undergraduate academic programs in the college reporting a very high percentage semester credit



hours taught by full-time faculty, the college has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education baccalaureate degree programs. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[74\]](#) are also provided.

The College of Liberal and Applied Arts is home to three distance education baccalaureate programs that are interdisciplinary in nature. The Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (B.A.A.S.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Multidisciplinary Studies, and Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies programs are discussed in depth in an earlier section of this standard. Any academic program may contribute to one of these three unique degree programs; thus, the demonstration of adequate faculty resources is determined by viewing the information documented for any undergraduate academic degree program at SFA. Lastly, the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Medical Humanities are new distance education program within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. In the first term in which these programs were offered (fall 2019), no students were enrolled.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Criminal Justice, B.A.	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%
Criminal Justice, B.S.	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%
History, B.A.	69.7%	30.3%	0.0%
Mass Communication, B.A.	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%
Mass Communication, B.S.	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%
Psychology, B.A.	86.6%	13.4%	0.0%
Psychology, B.S.	86.6%	13.4%	0.0%
Sustainable Community Development, B.A.	81.8%	18.2%	0.0%

Table 18 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

College of Science and Mathematics Distance Education Baccalaureate Program

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) Post-RN program is the lone distance education baccalaureate program within the College of Sciences and Mathematics. This program is designed for the student who has current licensure as a registered nurse and wishes to obtain the baccalaureate degree. Within this program, 73.5 percent of semester credit generated are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 42 faculty members who provide instruction for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) Post-RN program, 36 are full-time. The program generated 185 undergraduate semester credit hours. With the lone distance education undergraduate academic program in the college reporting a very high percentage semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty, the College of Sciences and Mathematics has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance



education baccalaureate degree programs. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[74\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Nursing (Post-RN), B.S.N.	73.5%	26.5%	0.0%

Table 19 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Baccalaureate Programs Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Sciences and Mathematics

All distance education academic programs at the baccalaureate degree level have an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program.

College of Business Distance Education Master’s Program

The College of Business offers one distance education master’s degree program. Within the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) in General Business, 100 percent of semester credit hours generated by distance education courses are taught by full-time faculty. This primary metric confirms that the College of Business has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[75\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Business Administration, M.B.A.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 20 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Business

College of Education Distance Education Master’s Programs

Within the College of Education, 80.9 percent of undergraduate semester credit generated by distance education academic programs are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 141 faculty members who provide instruction for undergraduate distance education programs within the college, 87 are full-time and 54 are part-time. Distance education programs within the College of Education generated 2,984 master’s-level semester credit hours.

Contextual information is provided for the Administrative Education programs with lower percentages of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty.



- Full-time faculty teach 67.5 percent of the distance education semester credit hours in the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Leadership program. The program is designed for those seeking principal certification and has over a 90% pass rate on the TExES principal certification exam. The M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program maintains a rigorous curriculum taught completely by highly-qualified professors with successful leadership experience. A scholar-practitioner approach incorporates theory and practice-based learning that focuses on research-based leadership practices, curriculum and instructional leadership, data-driven decision-making, special programs, law, and school and community leadership. Field experiences or internship hours are included in all coursework. The part-time faculty who support the program have professional experience in higher education administration and leadership, as well as principalship and superintendency in the K-12 setting. The professional experience of these part-time faculty provides necessary expertise to students pursuing the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership.
- Full-time faculty teach 67.5 percent of semester credit hours in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program. This 30-hour graduate program is designed for students who have earned an undergraduate degree but are not certified to teach. Students receive Texas teacher certification through a certification sequence that includes a Post-Baccalaureate Initial Certification (PBIC) Internship or Student Teaching. In fall 2019, part-time faculty served as supervisors of these clinical teaching field experience courses only; full-time faculty taught all other courses in the M.A.T. program. Qualifications for Clinical Teaching Field Supervisors meet the standards outlined in Texas Administrative Code Chapter 228 Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs, as referenced in SFA [Policy 7.1 Academic and Professional Qualifications \[18\]](#). The program's low student to faculty ratio of 14:1 offers additional evidence of sufficient program faculty.
- Full-time faculty teach 67.5 percent of distance education semester credit hours in the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program, which provides students with the knowledge and skills to better serve the needs of the diverse EC-12 student population in Texas. This 36-hour program includes 18 core hours in secondary education. Beyond the 18-hour core, students choose from three tracks (English as a Second Language/Bilingual, Online Teaching, and Gifted/Talented) in which to specialize. In fall 2019, 100 percent of the program's core courses were taught by full-time faculty members. A low (14:1) student to faculty ratio provides the opportunity for the high levels of interaction both inside and outside the classroom.



Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Early Childhood Education, M.Ed.	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Educational Leadership, M.Ed.	67.5%	32.5%	0.0%
Elementary Education, M.Ed.	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Human Sciences, M.S.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Special Education, M.Ed.	88.7%	11.3%	0.0%
Teaching, M.A.T.	67.5%	32.5%	0.0%
Teaching and Learning, M.Ed.	67.5%	32.5%	0.0%

Table 21 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Education

When considered in full, the data above confirms that all distance education master’s academic programs in the college have an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree programs. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[75\]](#) are also provided.

College of Fine Arts Distance Education Master’s Program

The Master of Music program is the lone distance education master’s program within the College of Fine Arts. Within this program, 82 percent of distance education semester credit generated are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 45 faculty members who provide instruction for the Master of Music degree, 35 are full-time. The program generated 172 master’s-level semester credit hours in fall 2019. With the lone distance education master’s academic program in the college reporting a very high percentage semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty, the College of Fine Arts has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[75\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Music, M.M.	82.0%	18.0%	0.0%

Table 22 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Fine Arts



College of Forestry and Agriculture Distance Education Master’s Program

The percentage of credit hours taught by full-time faculty reported for the one distance education master’s degree program in the College of Forestry and Agriculture is 73.8 (see Table 8g). Of the 18 faculty members who provide instruction for the Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Resource Communications, 16 are full-time. The program generated 80 distance education semester credit hours in fall 2019. The College of Forestry and Agriculture has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[75\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Resource Communications, M.S.	73.8%	26.2%	0.0%

Table 23 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Forestry and Agriculture

College of Liberal and Applied Arts Distance Education Master’s Programs

Within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, 86.7 percent of master’s-level semester credit generated by distance education academic programs are taught by full-time faculty. Of the 33 faculty members who provide instruction for undergraduate distance education programs within the college, 31 are full-time and two are part-time. Distance education programs within the College of Liberal and Applied Arts generated 452 master’s-level semester credit hours. As each distance education master’s program in the college reports a high percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty, the College of Liberal and Applied Arts has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree programs.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
History, M.A.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mass Communication, M.A.	74.2%	25.8%	0.0%
National Security, M.A.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Administration, M.P.A.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 24 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

Not included in the figure above are the Master of Interdisciplinary Studies and Master of Arts in Publishing degrees. The Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (M.I.S.) degree is designed in such a



manner that students with unique interests and multi-faceted career goals can incorporate several traditional academic disciplines into a single program of study. The demonstration of adequate faculty resources would be determined by viewing the information documented for any master’s degree programs at SFA since that degree program may contribute to a M.I.S. degree for a particular student enrolled. Consequently, the M.I.S. degree is not displayed in the Figure above.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Publishing is a new academic program. The first course in this program was offered in fall 2019 with the single section generating three credit hours. During this first term, there were no students enrolled in the fully distance education option for this program. Therefore, the M.A. in Publishing degree is not displayed in the Figure above.

As each distance education master’s program in the college reports a high percentage of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty, the College of Liberal and Applied Arts has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree programs.

College of Sciences and Mathematics Distance Education Master’s Programs

The College of Sciences and Mathematics offers one distance education master’s degree program. Within the Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.) degree in Family Nurse Practitioner, 100 percent of semester credit hours generated by distance education courses are taught by full-time faculty. This primary metric confirms that the College of Sciences and Mathematics has an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program. Additional metrics regarding program [faculty evaluation \[75\]](#) are also provided.

Distance Education Academic Program	Full-Time Faculty	Part-Time Faculty	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Family Nurse Practitioner, M.S.N.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 25 – 6.2.b. – Distance Education Master’s Program Semester Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Type, College of Sciences and Mathematics

All distance education academic programs at the master’s degree level have an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the distance education master’s degree program.

Off-site Academic Degree Program Delivery

The following data and contextual comments document the university commitment to ensuring academic degree programs offered with off-site delivery components provide adequate [full-time faculty \[76\]](#).



Nacogdoches Site (Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing)

Most of the required courses for the Bachelor of Nursing (B.S.N.) degree program are offered at the off-site School of Nursing in Nacogdoches, TX. This site is located approximately three miles from SFA main campus. Full-time faculty teach 97.8 percent of semester credit hours in the B.S.N. in Nursing program. The data in Figure 17 provide a visual representation of adequacy of the program’s faculty.

Of the 42 faculty members who support the program, 36 are full-time faculty. The 6 part-time faculty comprise 3.5 full-time faculty equivalents. In the B.S.N in Nursing program, faculty average 25.4 Teaching Load Credits per full-time faculty equivalent. In fall 2019, the program generated 4,165 undergraduate semester credit hours. The data above confirms that the B.S.N. in Nursing program offered at the Nacogdoches Site (Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing) employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic degree program.

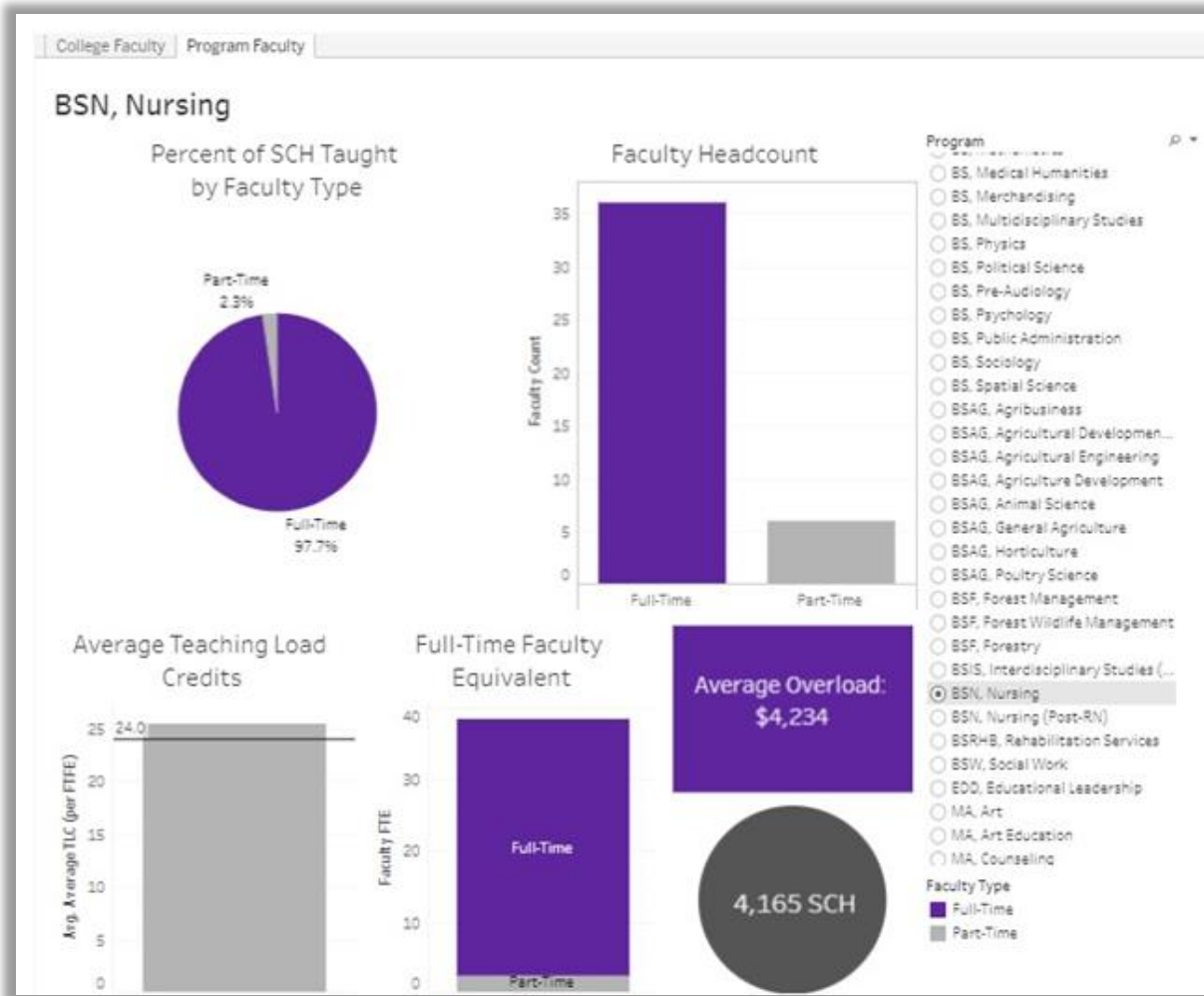


Figure 17 – 6.2.b. – Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing Off-Site Program Faculty



Tyler Junior College

The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) in Social Work degree program is available with a selection of off-site courses delivered at Tyler Junior College (TJC) through the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. [Full-time faculty \[76\]](#) teach 62.3 percent of semester credit hours delivered off-site at TJC.

The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE requires students to obtain practical experience prior to graduation and, to comply, part-time faculty with professional credentials (i.e., at least two years of social work-related experience) are hired to supervise fieldwork. Even when the official instructor-of-record, it is important to reiterate that part-time faculty are usually under the direct supervision of full time faculty when engaged in field experience practica. In addition, a full-time faculty member serves as the Director of Field Instruction to oversee all field placements in the Social Work program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program. When considered in full, the data above confirms that the B.S.W. in Social Work program offered at the Tyler Junior College employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic degree program.

Lone Star College-University Center Montgomery

The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) and Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) degree programs are available with a selection of off-site courses delivered at Lone Star College – University Center Montgomery through the College of Liberal and Applied Arts. While full-time faculty teach only 12 percent of semester credit hours delivered off-site at Lone Star College, the whole body of full-time faculty creates the curriculum and supports the instruction by part-time faculty. The number of full-time faculty contributing to support for all Social Work students is 14 (SACS Faculty Roster – link when complete). The data in Figure 18 provide a visualization of all faculty supporting the B.S.W. in Social Work program.



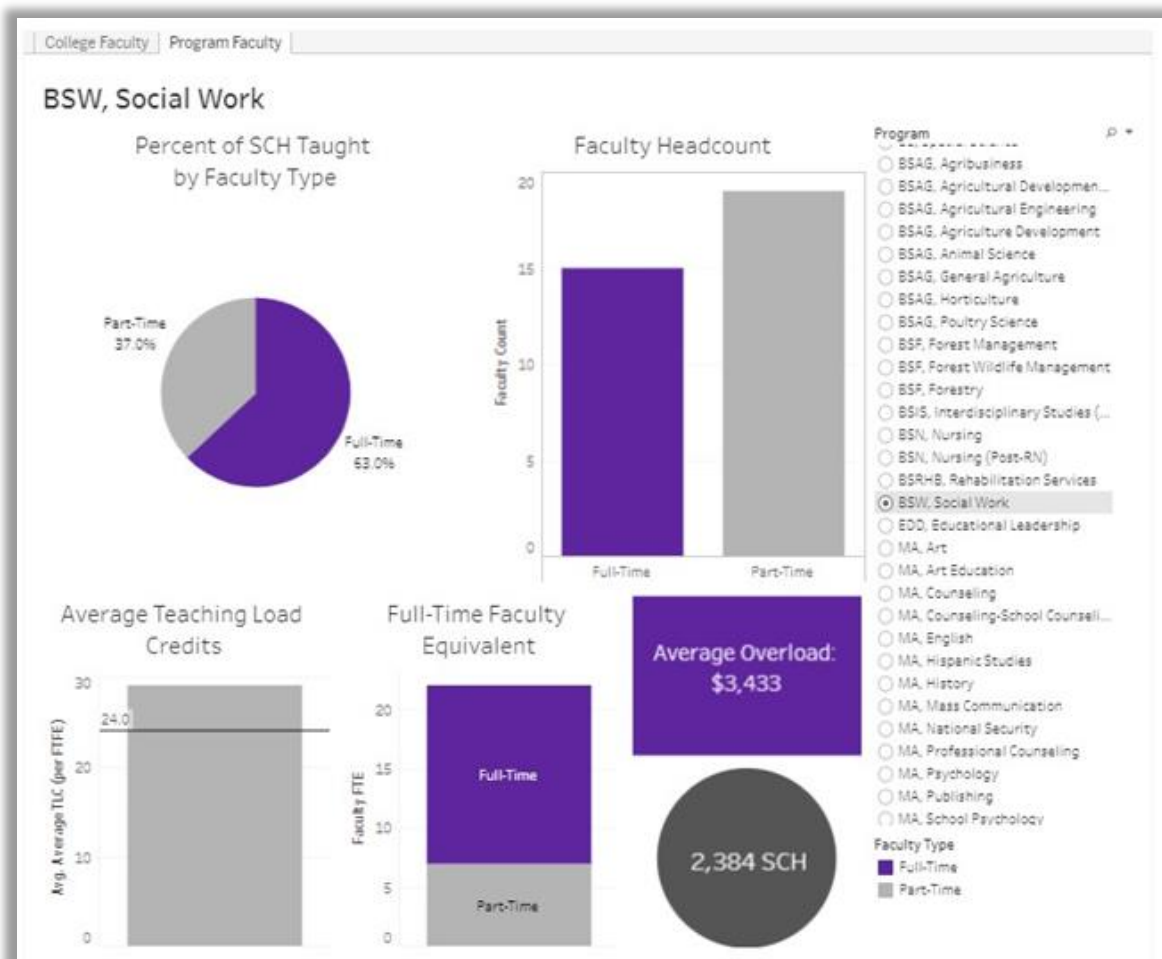


Figure 18 -- 6.2.b – Program Faculty, B.S.W. in Social Work

The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE requires students to obtain practical experience prior to graduation and, to comply, part-time faculty with professional credentials (i.e., at least two years of social work-related experience) are hired to supervise fieldwork. Three examples of the qualifications of part-time faculty who provide instruction at SFA’s Lone Star College site are included [77], [78], [79]. Even when the official instructor-of-record, it is important to reiterate that part-time faculty are usually under the direct supervision of full time faculty when engaged in field experience practica. In addition, a full-time faculty member serves as the Director of Field Instruction to oversee all field placements in the Social Work program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program. Adequacy of program faculty is also indicated by the low student-faculty ratio, dictated by the accrediting body. The student-faculty ratio of the B.S.W. in Social Work program offered at Lone Star College – University Center Montgomery is six to one.

The Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) program is also accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE requires master’s students to obtain practical experience prior to graduation and, to comply, part-time faculty with professional credentials (i.e., at least two years



of social work-related experience) are hired to supervise fieldwork. Even when the official instructor-of-record, it is important to reiterate that part-time faculty are usually under the direct supervision of full time faculty when engaged in field experience internships. In addition, a full-time faculty member serves as the Director of Field Instruction to oversee all field placements in the Social Work program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program. Furthermore, the M.S.W. Program Director is a full-time faculty member who devotes 50 percent time to work closely with students and the Director of Field Instruction to oversee the graduate program and ensure that the student experience supports the mission of the university and the program. The data in Figure 19 provide a visualization of all faculty supporting the M.S.W. in Social Work program.



Figure 19 – 6.2.b. – Program Faculty, M.S.W. in Social Work

When considered in full, the data provided confirms that the B.S.W. and M.S.W. in Social Work programs offered at the Lone Star College site employ an adequate number of [full-time faculty \[76\]](#) to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic degree programs.



The Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) in Sports Business is also available with a selection of off-site courses delivered at Lone Star College – University Center Montgomery through the College of Business. Courses in this program were first offered off-site in fall 2018. The program currently employs one full-time faculty member who teaches 100 percent of semester credit hours. As the program expands, additional faculty will be added. The primary metric of semester credit hours taught by full-time faculty confirms that the B.B.A. in Sports Business offered at the Lone Star College – University Center Montgomery employs an adequate number of [full-time faculty \[76\]](#) to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic degree program.

Local High Schools (Dual Credit)

SFA partners with several local high schools to offer courses at the dual credit level. Full academic programs are not offered at the following off-campus sites:






- Burkeville High School
- Center High School
- Cushing High School
- Garrison High School
- Kirbyville High School
- Longview High School
- Nacogdoches High School
- Newton High School
- Palestine High School
- Warren High School
- Wills Point High School

These off-campus dual credit sites deliver core courses and not complete programs. The courses delivered to these sites are less than 50 percent of any academic program. Therefore, full-time faculty guidelines are not applicable to these sites.






































Conclusion

In conclusion, the data presented in this section confirms that SFA employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review for each of its academic programs

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] THECB Degree Inventory Online Public Access.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Institutional Summary 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload.pdf](#)



-  [\[06\] Policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Texas Education Code 51.402.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 7.21, Part-time Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 6.12, Graduate Assistantships.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Adjunct Checklist Completion Report 4-24-2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Adjunct Faculty Orientation.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Reading Circles — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Open Classroom Initiative — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Teaching Showcase — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Individual Consult — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Classroom Observation — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] CTL Calendar, Spring 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Policy 7.1, Academic and Professional Qualifications.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Handbook for Graduate Administrative, Teaching, and Research Assistants.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Business- Hall FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Education - Black FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Sciences & Mathematics - Trotty FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] SFA Org Charts 2020-08-06.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Dean Job Description.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Texas Administrative Code Rule 5.45.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Texas Administrative Code Rule 5.52.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Definitions 6.2B.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] College of Business, Baccalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Program Faculty, College of Business UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Business- Phelps FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Business- McDermand FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] College of Education, Baccalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Program Faculty, College of Education UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Education - Bae FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Education - Drake FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] College of Fine Arts, Baccalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] Program Faculty, College of Fine Arts UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Fine Arts - Cox FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Fine Arts - Billew FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[41\] Fine Arts - Coe FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[42\] College of Forestry and Agriculture Bacalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)

-  [\[43\] Program Faculty, College of Forestry and Agriculture UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[44\] Forestry - Kulhavy FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[45\] Forestry - Schalk FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[46\] Forestry - Payne FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[47\] College of Liberal and Applied Arts Baccalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[48\] Program Faculty, College of Liberal and Applied Arts UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[49\] Liberal Arts - Forbes FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[50\] Liberal Arts - Bailey-Wallace FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[51\] Liberal Arts - Lameborshi FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[52\] College of Sciences and Mathematics Baccalaureate Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[53\] Program Faculty, College of Sciences and Mathematics UG.pdf](#)
-  [\[54\] Sciences and Mathematics - Frantzen FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[55\] Sciences and Mathematics - Bloxson FAR 1-1-19 to 12-31-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[56\] College of Business, Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[57\] Program Faculty, College of Business MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[58\] College of Education, Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[59\] Program Faculty, College of Education MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[60\] College of Fine Arts, Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[61\] Program Faculty, College of Fine Arts MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[62\] Rectenwald Qualifications.pdf](#)
-  [\[63\] College of Forestry and Agriculture Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[64\] Program Faculty, College of Forestry and Agriculture MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[65\] College of Liberal and Applied Arts Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[66\] Program Faculty, College of Liberal and Applied Arts MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[67\] College of Sciences and Mathematics Masters Academic Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[68\] Program Faculty, College of Sciences and Mathematics MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[69\] Program Faculty Table, Doctoral.pdf](#)
-  [\[70\] Instructional Methods from THECB Reporting Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[71\] Online Instructor Certification — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[72\] Interactive Video Certification \(ITV\) — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[73\] Distance Education — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[74\] Distance Program Faculty Evaluation Baccalaureate Programs updated 8-10-20.pdf](#)
-  [\[75\] Distance Program Faculty Evaluation, Master's Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[76\] Program Faculty Off-Site.pdf](#)
-  [\[77\] Lone Star Montgomery PT Social Work Faculty Credentials, Example 1.pdf](#)
-  [\[78\] Lone Star Montgomery PT Social Work Faculty Credentials, Example 2.pdf](#)
-  [\[79\] Lone Star Montgomery PT Social Work Faculty Credentials, Example 3.pdf](#)



6.2.c For each of its educational programs, the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.

(Program coordination) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) assigns responsibility for academic program coordination to persons academically qualified in the field. The responsibility for academic program coordination at SFA resides primarily with the chairs of departments and the directors of schools. According to university [policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head - Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation \[01\]](#), the specific duties of academic unit heads include, but are not limited to:

- Providing leadership in the establishment of a visionary direction and the maintenance of standards for the academic unit, consistent with college and university missions;
- Ensuring quality through evaluation, modification, and development of academic programs;
- Responding to the needs of students, faculty, administration, the public, and others;
- Managing and allocating fiscal and physical resources of the unit; and
- Establishing, maintaining, and communicating effective personnel management procedures and processes.

Academic unit heads routinely oversee the regular maintenance and updating of the curriculum for each academic program housed in the department by forming appropriate faculty committees from the relevant discipline, and manage the assessment of student learning outcomes with appropriate faculty involvement. These processes are further described in our responses to Standards [8.2.a](#) and [10.4](#).

In rare cases, a faculty member from outside an academic discipline may be asked to serve as an interim chair. However, in these cases, departmental faculty holding adequate qualifications retain responsibility for the development and supervision of the curriculum.

Responsibility for program coordination may be delegated to a program coordinator, who assists the chair in directing the respective program. SFA considers program coordinators academically qualified if they possess the same qualifications ascribed to a [department chair \[02\]](#) as stated in the academic unit head job description: (a) the terminal degree in the field or a closely related field, or (b) a combination of academic and professional experience sufficient to establish expertise within the field.

The following tables include the deans, chairs, and others assigned responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, in their respective departments.



The information is presented by college (see Tables 1 – 6). Curricula vitae can be accessed by clicking on the respective names in the tables.

Table 1 - Nelson Rusche College of Business			
<i>Academic Unit</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>CIP Code</i>	<i>Program Coordinator(s)</i>
College of Business	Business Administration, MBA	52.0201	Mitch Crocker
Business Communication & Legal Studies	General Business, BBA	52.0101	Marsha Bayless
	Business Communication & Corporate Education, BBA	52.0501	Ashley Hall
Economics & Finance	Economics, BA	45.0601	Mikhail Kouliavtsev
	Business Economics, BBA	52.0601	
	Finance, BBA	52.0801	
	Banking, BBA	52.0803	
Management and Marketing	Sports Business, BBA	52.0101	Jason Reese
	Management, BBA	52.0201	Matt Lindsey
	Human Resource Management, BBA	52.1001	Marcus Cox
	International Business, BBA	52.1101	Rob Culpepper
	Marketing, BBA	52.1401	Charlotte Allen
Accountancy	Accounting, BBA	52.0301	Kelly Noe
	Accounting, MPA		Nikki Shoemaker
	Accounting, MPACY		



Table 2 - College of Education			
<i>Academic Unit</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>CIP Code</i>	<i>Program Coordinator(s)</i>
Elementary Education ¹	Elementary Education, MED	13.1202	Erica Dillard ,
	Early Childhood Education, MED	13.1210	Mark Montgomery
	Interdisciplinary Studies, BSIS	30.999	Susan Casey Adam Akerson , Kimberly Welsh , Claudia Whitley , Michelle Williams
Human Services ²	Special Education, MED	13.1001	Paige Mask , Kathy Sheriff
	Student Affairs and Higher Education, MA	13.1102	Amanda Rudolph
	Counseling, MA*	42.2805	Wendy Killam
	Counseling-School Counseling, MA*		
	School Psychology, MA		
	School Psychology, PHD		Jillian Dawes
	Human Services, BS	44.0000	Robbie Steward
	Communication Science and Disorders, BS	51.0201	Lydia Richardson
	Deaf and Hard of Hearing, BS	51.0202	Lindsey Kennon
	Pre-Audiology, BS		
	Speech-Language Pathology, MS	51.0203	Lydia Richardson
	Professional Counseling, MA	51.1508	Wendy Killam
	Counseling-Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA*	51.1508	
	Counseling-Rehabilitation Counseling, MA*	51.2310	
Rehabilitation Services, BSRHB	51.5314	Luis Aguerrevere , Shannon Darst	
Kinesiology and Health Science	Kinesiology, BS	31.0505	Dustin Joubert
	Kinesiology, MS		James Rowe , Eric Jones
	Dance, BS	50.0301	Heather Samuelson
	Health Science, BS	51.0000	Derek Cegelka
	Athletic Training, MS	51.0913	Linda Bobo



Table 2 - College of Education (continued)			
Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)
Secondary Education and Educational Leadership ¹	Educational Leadership, MED	13.0401	Barbara Qualls
	Educational Leadership, EDD		Stacy Hendricks
	Secondary Education, MED	13.1205	Linda Black
	Teaching, MAT		Chrissy Cross
	Teaching and Learning, MED		
Human Sciences ³	Interior Design, BS	04.0501	Leisha Bridwell
	Family and Consumer Sciences, BS*	19.0101	Rachel Jumper
	Human Sciences, BS		
	Human Sciences, MS		Darla O'Dwyer
	Merchandising, BS	19.0203	Leisha Bridwell
	Foods and Nutrition, BS	19.0501	Darla O'Dwyer
	Child Development and Family Living, BS*	19.0701	Rachel Jumper
	Dietetics & Nutritional Sciences, BS	51.3101	Darla O'Dwyer
	Hospitality Administration, BS	52.0901	Sarah Drake
	Construction Management, BS (NEW in Fall 2019)	52.2001	Leisha Bridwell
	Fashion Merchandising, BS*	52.1902	
	Interior Merchandising, BS*	52.1909	
<p>* Phasing out or consolidation in-progress.</p> <p>1. Elementary Education and Secondary Education and Educational Leadership units are restructuring in Fall 2020 - new name Education Studies; some programs will also move to Human Services (and Educational Leadership).</p> <p>2. Human Services is changing names and restructuring in Fall 2020 to Human Services and Education Leadership; Counseling-Mental Health Counseling (MA) and Counseling-Rehabilitation Counseling (MA) ended in 2019</p> <p>3. Family and Consumer Sciences (BS) and Child Development and Family Living were phased out in 2019.</p>			



Table 3 – College of Fine Arts			
Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)
Art	Art Education, MA	13.1302	William Nieberding
	Art, BA	50.0701	Christopher Talbot
	Art, BFA		
	Art, MA		
	Art, MFA		Linda Post
	Art History, BA*	50.0703	Christopher Talbot
Theatre	Theatre, BA	50.0501	Rick Jones
	Theatre, BFA		
Music	Music, BM	50.0901	Gary Wurtz
	Music, MM		
*Phasing out or consolidation in progress			

Table 4 – College of Sciences and Mathematics			
Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)
College of Sciences and Mathematics	Natural Sciences, MS	30.0101	Debbie Pace
			Michele Harris
Physics, Engineering and Astronomy	Engineering Physics, BS	14.1201	Dan Bruton
	Physics, BS	40.0801	Matt Beauregard
Biology	Biology, BS	26.0101	Don Pratt
	Biology, MS		Matt Kwiatkowski
	Biotechnology, MS*	26.1201	Bea Clack
Chemistry and Biochemistry	Biochemistry, BS	26.0202	Michael Janusa
	Chemistry, BS	40.0501	
Computer Science	Computer Science, BS	11.0101	Debbie Dunn
	Computer Information Systems, BS		
	Information Technology, BA		
	Data Analytics, BS		
	Cyber Security, MS		
Geology	Geology, BS	40.0601	Liane Stevens
	Geology, MS		Kevin Stafford
Mathematics and Statistics	School Mathematics Teaching, MS	13.1311	Lesa Beverly
	Mathematics, BS	27.0101	
	Mathematical Sciences, MS	27.0503	
Nursing	Nursing, BSN	51.3801	Tamara Harris
	Nursing (Post RN), BSN		
	Family Nurse Practitioner, MSN	51.3805	
*Phasing out or consolidation in progress			



Table 5 - College of Liberal and Applied Arts			
<i>Academic Unit</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>CIP Code</i>	<i>Program Coordinator(s)</i>
Languages, Cultures, and Communication	International and Intercultural Communication, BA	09.0907	Jeana Paul-Ureña
	Modern Languages, BA	16.0101	Gabriela Miranda-Recinos
	Hispanic Studies, MA	16.0908	José Neftalí Recinos
	Communication Studies, BA	23.1304	Elizabeth Spradley
	Communication Studies, BS		
General Communication, MA ¹	09.0100	Jeana Paul-Ureña	
English & Creative Writing	English, BA	23.0101	Sue Whatley
	English, MA		Liz Tasker-Davis
	Creative Writing, BFA	23.1302	John McDermott
Anthropology, Geography and Sociology	Sustainable Community Development, BA	30.3301	Bill Forbes
	Geography, BS	45.0701	Darrel McDonald
	Sociology, BA	45.1101	Ray Darville
	Sociology, BS		
Government	Criminal Justice-Legal Assistant, BA*	22.0302	Milton Hill
	Criminal Justice-Corrections, BA*	43.0102	
	Criminal Justice, BA	43.0104	
	Criminal Justice, BS	43.0104	
	Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement, BA*	43.0107	
	Public Administration, BA	44.0401	Kwame Antwi-Boasiako
	Public Administration, BS		Cindy Davis
	Public Administration, MPA		
	Political Science, BA	45.1001	Julie Harrelson-Stephens
	Political Science, BS		
National Security, MA (NEW in Spring 2020)	45.0902		
History	History, BA	54.0101	Troy Davis
	History, MA		Court Carney



Table 5 - College of Liberal and Applied Arts			
Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)
Mass Communications	Mass Communication, BA	09.0102	John Hendricks
	Mass Communication, BS		
	Mass Communication, MA		
Psychology	Psychology, BA	42.0101	Scott Hutchens
	Psychology, BS		Kyle Conlon
	Psychology, MA		James Schaeffer
School of Social Work	Social Work, BSW	44.0701	Sam Copeland
	Social Work, MSW		Emmerentie Oliphant
Multidisciplinary Programs	Publishing, MA	09.1001	Joyce Johnston
	Liberal Studies, BA	24.0101	
	Medical Humanities, BA	24.0199	
	Medical Humanities, BS		
	Multidisciplinary Studies, BS	30.999	
	Interdisciplinary Studies, MIS		
	Applied Arts and Sciences, BAAS		
Philosophy, BA	38.0101	Anne Smith	
*Phasing out or consolidation in progress			
¹ Program closure in 2019			




Table 6 – Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture			
<i>Department</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>CIP Code</i>	<i>Program Coordinator</i>
Agriculture	General Agriculture, MS	01.0000	Michael Maurer
	General Agriculture, BSAG	01.0000	Joey Bray
	Agricultural Development, BSAG*	01.0000	
	Agribusiness, BSAG*	01.0102	
	Agricultural Engineering Technology, BSAG*	01.0201	
	Agricultural Development Production, BSAG*	01.0301	
	Animal Science, BSAG*	01.0901	
	Poultry Science, BSAG*	01.0907	
	Horticulture, BSAG*	01.1103	
Forestry	Forestry, BSF	03.0501	Matthew McBroom
	Forestry, MS		
	Forestry, MF		
	Forestry, PHD		
	Forest Management, BSF*	03.0506	
	Forest Wildlife Management, BSF*	03.0601	
	Resource Communications, MS	31.0301	
	Spatial Science, BS	45.0702	
Environmental Science	Environmental Science, BS	03.0104	Kenneth Farrish
	Environmental Science, MS		






*Phasing out or consolidation in progress

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves all SFA academic programs. The active list of [academic programs \[03\]](#) approved for delivery at SFA is included as a resource.

As detailed in this response, for each of its educational programs, SFA assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.

Evidentiary Documents
 [01] Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities Selection and Evaluation.pdf
 [02] Job Description of Chair or Director.pdf
 [03] SFA Degree Program List 20200813.pdf
 Adam Akerson.pdf
 Amanda Rudolph.pdf
 Anne Smith.pdf
 Ashley Hall.pdf
 Barbara Qualls.pdf



-  [Bea Clack.pdf](#)
-  [Bill Forbes.pdf](#)
-  [Billy Harris.pdf](#)
-  [Charlotte Allen.pdf](#)
-  [Chrissy Cross.pdf](#)
-  [Christopher Talbot .pdf](#)
-  [Cindy Davis.pdf](#)
-  [Claudia Whitley.pdf](#)
-  [Court Carney.pdf](#)
-  [Dan Bruton.pdf](#)
-  [Darla O'Dwyer.pdf](#)
-  [Darrel McDonald.pdf](#)
-  [Debbie Dunn.pdf](#)
-  [Debbie Pace.pdf](#)
-  [Derek Cegelka.pdf](#)
-  [Don Pratt.pdf](#)
-  [Dustin Joubert.pdf](#)
-  [Elizabeth Spradley.pdf](#)
-  [Emmerentie Oliphant.pdf](#)
-  [Eric Jones.pdf](#)
-  [Erica Dillard.pdf](#)
-  [Gabriela Miranda-Recinos.pdf](#)
-  [Gary Wurtz.pdf](#)
-  [Heather Samuelson.pdf](#)
-  [James Rowe.pdf](#)
-  [James Schaeffer.pdf](#)
-  [Jason Reese.pdf](#)
-  [Jeana Paul-Ureña.pdf](#)
-  [Jillian Dawes.pdf](#)
-  [Joey Bray.pdf](#)
-  [John Hendricks.pdf](#)
-  [John McDermott.pdf](#)
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-  [Joyce Johnston.pdf](#)
-  [Julie Harrelson-Stephens.pdf](#)
-  [Kathy Sheriff.pdf](#)
-  [Kelly Noe.pdf](#)



-  [Kenneth Farrish.pdf](#)
-  [Kevin Stafford.pdf](#)
-  [Kimberly Welsh-1.pdf](#)
-  [Kwame Antwi-Boasiako.pdf](#)
-  [Kyle Conlon.pdf](#)
-  [Leisha Bridwell.pdf](#)
-  [Lesa Beverly.pdf](#)
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-  [Troy Davis.pdf](#)
-  [Wendy Killam.pdf](#)
-  [William Nieberding.pdf](#)



6.3 The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status.

(Faculty appointment and evaluation)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has several policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members. The development, approval, and dissemination of these and other academic policies are discussed in Standard [10.1](#). The group of policies governing faculty appointment and evaluation begins with searches for qualified faculty members and progresses through every stage of a faculty member's career, including annual review, tenure, promotion, post-tenure review, and, if necessary, termination from the university. Tenured faculty members play an integral role in establishing the criteria for satisfactory or exceptional performance in the areas of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service, which apply to their annual review as well as tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review decisions. Both tenure-track and non-tenured faculty members are evaluated annually for their teaching and any other assigned duties by their academic unit head. They also undergo student evaluations of their courses on a regular basis. Faculty are given due process whenever decisions are made on their evaluation, continuation, promotion, and discontinuation at the university.

Faculty Searches

University [policy 7.12, Faculty Search \[01\]](#) outlines the procedures and responsibilities for the selection of tenure-track faculty. The academic unit head guides the search process, appointing a search committee of tenure-track faculty from the unit, who are responsible for developing a position description, advertising the position, screening candidates, and arranging candidate interviews. University [policy 7.30, Terminal Degrees \[02\]](#) prescribes that all position announcements for tenure-track positions will include the requirement of a terminal degree for appointment. All searches must be conducted without prejudice for internal or external candidates. The appointment of search committees may vary among academic units, but all search committees receive mandatory training from Human Resources to ensure adherence to all state and federal laws and protections regarding employee hires. The selection of a tenure-track faculty member is subject to approval by the appropriate college dean and the provost before a contract can be offered, per university [policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles \[03\]](#). All conditions of appointment must be included in the written contract at the time of appointment. [Examples \[04\]](#) of the selection process for tenure-track faculty are provided.

There is no explicit university policy addressing the search for non-tenured faculty (lecturers and adjuncts). However, university [policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head—Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation \[05\]](#) assigns personnel procedures and processes to the unit head, who oversees the search for and hire of all non-tenured faculty. University [policy 7.2 \[03\]](#) distinguishes



between three types of non-tenured appointments: senior lecturers, who are appointed to a full-time, nine-month position and must hold the terminal degree in their field; lecturers, who are also appointed to a full-time, nine-month position but are not required to hold a terminal degree; and adjuncts, who may be full- or part-time, who are appointed on a semesterly basis, and who are not required to hold a terminal degree. (Please see SFA's response to Standard [6.2.a](#) for further details on faculty qualifications.) As with tenure-track faculty, all conditions of appointment for non-tenured faculty must be included in the written contract at the time of appointment.

Tenure Process

Tenure, as governed by university [policy 7.29, Tenure and Continued Employment \[06\]](#), is awarded to tenure-track faculty who exhibit satisfactory or exceptional performance in teaching, research/scholarly/creative activities, and service, typically at the end of a six-year probationary period. The standards for these three areas are set by the tenure track faculty of the academic unit, subject to approval by the college dean and provost, while supervision of the tenure process is managed by the appropriate college dean's office. Each college may manage the process differently provided it abides by the basic tenets and timetable of policy 7.29.

The department tenure policy and guidelines in place at the time of hire are those used during the critical year for tenure. (The only exception would be if the academic unit develops new tenure guidelines after a faculty member is hired, and the faculty member opts to go up for tenure under the new guidelines.) Tenured faculty participate at both the academic unit and college levels in evaluating the candidate's qualifications and voting on the candidate's tenure. Candidates have two opportunities to correct any errors of fact in the recommendation stages—after the academic unit tenure committee and the unit head make their recommendation, and after the college tenure committee and the dean make their recommendation. After they leave the college, recommendations for or against a candidate's tenure are subject to approval by the provost, president, and Board of Regents, at which point the recommendations are considered final.

SFA's tenure policy contains provisions for non-reappointment of a probationary faculty member, either before the critical year, or after the review of the tenure portfolio during the critical year. In either case, there is an appeals process, as set out by policy 7.29. An [example \[07\]](#) of the tenure process is provided.

Promotion Process

Promotion for tenure-track faculty at SFA is a separate process from tenure, but the application processes for tenure and promotion can be undertaken at the same time, in which case they proceed along parallel tracks. As established by university [policy 7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty \[08\]](#), promotion is normally restricted to full-time faculty members who have earned the terminal degree in their field. The standards for promotion—which must take into account the three traditional areas of teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, and service—are established by the tenure-track faculty within the academic unit, subject to approval by the college dean and provost. The promotion guidelines in place at the time of hire are used, unless the application for promotion occurs in the seventh year of the faculty member's



employment or beyond, in which case the promotion guidelines in place at the time of application are used. The specific requirements and timeframe for promotion to different academic ranks are set forth in policy 7.4.

As with tenure, with promotion the candidate is evaluated first by a department committee and then by a college committee. In this case, each committee must be comprised of faculty who hold a higher rank than the candidate. And, as with tenure, with promotion the candidate may correct errors of fact in the recommendation at either the department or college stage. After they leave the college, recommendations for or against a candidate's promotion are subject to approval by the provost, president, and Board of Regents, at which point they are considered final. [Examples \[09\]](#) of promotion of tenure-track faculty are provided.

Faculty Grievances and Dismissal of Faculty

SFA has a formal grievance process for addressing disagreements regarding administrative decisions or other disputes involving faculty, other than dismissal or non-renewal, as outlined in [policy 7.25, Faculty Disagreements \[10\]](#). Grievances that do not involve conditions of employment are to be resolved at the department level with the chair; then, if necessary, with the college dean, the provost, and, finally, the president. Employment disputes are handled by a University Grievance Panel. An [example \[11\]](#) of a formal grievance is provided.

The rights and responsibilities of SFA's faculty are set forth in several places, including the [Faculty Handbook \[12\]](#) and the following policies: [7.13, Faculty Workload \[13\]](#); [7.18, Meeting and Conducting Classes \[14\]](#); [7.11, Faculty Code of Conduct \[15\]](#); [2.6, Ethics \[16\]](#); and [7.19, Misconduct in Scholarly or Creative Activities \[17\]](#). All tenure-track faculty must maintain a balance of teaching, research/scholarly/creative activities, and service, with teaching being the most important factor in determining workload schedules. Non-tenured faculty who are on a nine-month contract are devoted to teaching, but may receive reassigned time for research or service, depending on the academic unit's and/or college's needs. Full-time faculty members must maintain at least five office hours per week (face-to-face, online, or a combination thereof) (7.13). All faculty are expected to maintain high ethical standards in the performance of their official duties and follow all state ethics laws. Toward this end, they receive annual training on all provisions in the university's Ethics policy (2.6). Faculty are particularly responsible for following accepted practices of scholarship, including scrupulous acknowledgment of all collaborators and sources used in presentations and publications, as indicated in university policy [Misconduct in Scholarly or Creative Activities \(7.19\)](#). Failure to do so could result in a range of penalties up to and including termination from the university.

As provided for in university [policy 11.3, Authorization for the University President to Suspend Faculty and Staff \[18\]](#), the president is authorized to suspend with or without pay and immediately remove from the university, or assign other duties with pay, any faculty member who poses a continuing danger to persons or property, disrupts the orderly operation of the university, endangers the education of students, or has been convicted by a trial court of a felony or crime of moral turpitude. At the faculty member's request, a hearing will be set before the appropriate administrator or committee on the case as soon thereafter as possible. If a faculty



member is terminated, the department chair must follow all steps promulgated in university [policy 11.10, Employee Terminations and Transfers \[19\]](#), to ensure all appropriate actions have been taken to separate the employee from the university. An [example \[20\]](#) of these steps being followed is provided.

Evaluation of Faculty

All full-time faculty—tenure-track and contractual—are responsible for annually filling out an electronic [faculty activity report \(FAR\) \[21\]](#), an active record of their teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities, and service. This is in keeping with SFA’s mission as a “comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.” It is to be noted that the performance standards for all areas of evaluation are developed by the tenure-track and contractual faculty members within each academic unit. The FAR serves as the basis for their [annual administrative evaluation \[22\]](#) by their department chair, as detailed in university [policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty \[23\]](#). The FAR also serves as the basis for [merit pay \[24\]](#) consideration for all full-time faculty members, as stipulated in university policy Merit Pay (7.6). The FAR incorporates the end-of-course evaluations done by students assessing the effectiveness of their instruction (discussed in more detail below).

[Policy 7.22 \[23\]](#) also requires a comprehensive performance evaluation of all tenured faculty at least once every six years—a process known as [post-tenure review \[25\]](#). Post-tenure review triggers a plan for [assisted development \(PAD\) \[26\]](#) for any faculty member found deficient in the adopted standards of the unit. The purpose of the PAD is professional growth, personal reflection, and performance improvement. The PAD is formulated by a faculty committee in consultation with the faculty member under review and is signed by the faculty member as well as the department chair and college dean. It gives the faculty member twenty-four calendar months to remediate any performance deficiencies, with the possibility of being extended for an additional twelve months. The faculty member may either be restored to regular status upon successful completion of the PAD or terminated upon unsuccessful completion of the PAD.

Adjunct faculty members are also evaluated annually for their performance of assigned duties by their department chair, as provided by university [policy 7.5, Administrative Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty Performance \[27\]](#). [Examples \[28\]](#) are provided.





Finally, student evaluations of teaching are conducted for the courses of all faculty—tenure-track or non-tenured—during all terms, as required by university [policy 7.27, Student Evaluation of Instruction \[29\]](#). All [end-of-course evaluations \[30\]](#) are made available to students electronically via SFA’s learning management system, Bright Space, and are automatically incorporated into each faculty member’s FAR. They are also referenced in each faculty member’s annual evaluation in comparison to the mean evaluation scores for other faculty teaching in the academic unit. Student evaluations are used for improving instruction, mentoring faculty, and making personnel decisions, including tenure, promotion, and merit pay. The requirement for student evaluations of all teaching is consistent with SFA’s mission of engaging students “in a learner-centered environment.”



The university's end in formalizing the process for evaluating performance of its faculty is to ensure the establishment of practices within each academic unit consistent with the mission of the college and university, and to set guidelines for a comprehensive review process resulting in fair and equitable assessment of faculty in all academic divisions for the purposes of making key personnel decisions at all stages in their career. This process also works towards the achievement of the sixth goal in SFA's [vision statement \[31\]](#), which commits us to becoming an institution "well known for the high quality of our faculty."

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 7.12, Faculty Search.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 7.30 Terminal Degrees.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 7.2, Academic Appointments and Titles.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Tenure-track Selection Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities Selection and Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 7.29, Tenure and Continued Employment.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Example of Tenure Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Promotion Process Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 7.25, Faculty Disagreements.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Faculty - Handling of Grievance.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Faculty Handbook Survival Guide.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 7.18, Meeting and Conducting Classes.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policy 7.11, Faculty Code of Conduct.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 2.6, Ethics.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Policy 7.19, Misconduct in Scholarly or Creative Activities.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Policy 11.3, Authorization for the University President to Suspend Faculty and Staff.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Policy 11.10, Employee Terminations and Transfers.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Dismissal Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Faculty Evaluations with FAR examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Annual Evaluations.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Merit Pay Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Post Tenure Review Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Assisted Development Plans.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Policy 7.5, Administrative Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty Performance.pdf](#)

-  [\[28\] Adjunct Annual Evaluations.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Policy 7.27, Student Evaluation of Instruction.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] End of Course Evaluations.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Vision Statement SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)



6.4 The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.
(*Academic freedom*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) takes appropriate steps to ensure academic freedom is safeguarded and defended in policy and practice. Per SFA's [policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility \[01\]](#), the university defines academic freedom of faculty members in three contexts: as scholars affiliated with the university, as teachers in the classroom, and as private citizens:

1. Faculty have a legally protected right “to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction, and to voice and publish individual conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that they consider relevant.”
2. Faculty “are entitled to freedom in the classroom to discuss relevant topics.”
3. Faculty “must be free from institutional censorship or retribution when speaking, writing, or acting as a citizen of the nation, state, and community.”

Policy 7.3 makes clear that with academic freedom comes academic responsibility, as laid out in the policy:

4. Faculty must maintain competence in their fields of specialization and professional behavior. Evidence of this competence should be displayed in teaching, scholarship, and service, including on-campus and off-campus contexts.
5. Faculty should be judicious when using controversial material in the classroom and should introduce such material only if it has a clear relationship to the subject field.
6. Faculty should strive to communicate accurately and respectfully; however, faculty who make erroneous or critical statements may still be protected.
7. When speaking or acting as private persons, faculty must avoid creating the impression that they speak or act on behalf of the university.
8. Faculty statements are not protected free speech if they either substantially impede the performance of their daily duties or materially and substantially interfere with the regular operation of the institution.



Examples of implementation of policy 7.3 are not available because SFA has had no academic freedom grievances or publicized cases regarding academic freedom.





SFA's policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility is subject to review by the university's Policy Committee once every three years. For more details on the modification process for SFA's academic policies, please see our response to Standard [10.1](#).

Each fall semester, new faculty are provided with a copy of "[A Colleague's Survival Guide: Advice and SFA Faculty Handbook](#)" [02] as part of their orientation to faculty status at SFA. Part III of the section of the handbook, entitled "Faculty Facts and Responsibilities," is dedicated to academic freedom and addresses the balance between making free speech choices in scholarly contexts, including the classroom, and not injecting personal opinion into the classroom in ways that supersede professional obligations or put students at a disadvantage due to wielding power over them. It points faculty to policy 7.3.

The [New Faculty Orientation Agenda](#) [03] draws attention to the expectations for professional demeanor and points out the academic freedoms enjoyed by faculty. These include the practice of free speech choices regarding discussions and presentations of scholarly material in the classroom, as long as the topic clearly relates to the subject material being taught. Faculty are trained to recognize that they inherently have a power differential with students, and personal opinions should not be permitted to go beyond their professional obligations.

Should SFA faculty members feel their academic freedom has been violated, they would follow the procedures for seeking redress outlined in university [policy 11.15, Grievance and Appeals](#) [04].

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Faculty Handbook Survival Guide.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] New Faculty Orientation Agenda.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 11.15, Grievance and Appeals.pdf](#)

6.5 The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission.

(Faculty development)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with our institutional mission.

The university mission statement defines the institution as one “dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.” Professional development activities are those that enhance a faculty member’s teaching and research. To maintain this commitment, the university offers numerous opportunities for professional development through in-service trainings, internal grants, sabbaticals, research reassignments, conference travel funding, and awards for faculty research and teaching. Faculty members take advantage of development opportunities to leverage their effectiveness both in and outside of the classroom through their scholarly and service activities. Their participation in development activities is reported and evaluated in their annual reviews and assessments.

All faculty, including adjuncts (hired on a semesterly contract) have access to in-service trainings offered by the university’s [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\) \[01\]](#). These include faculty learning communities, teaching circles, pedagogical workshops and seminars, and online teaching certification and course development. All other types of professional development apply only to full-time permanent faculty.

New Faculty Orientation

Each fall semester and in appropriate spring semesters, the university presents a [New Faculty Orientation \[02\]](#). This two-day event introduces faculty to resources on and off campus for teaching, research, and services, as well as information about opportunities and events throughout the year that will promote their professional development as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. This event does not include information related to human resources (e.g. benefits, retirement, etc.), but focuses instead on introducing new faculty to each other, the institution at large, key administrators, and key resources (e.g. the grade entry system, learning management system, etc.). A committee of approximately a dozen key staff and faculty plan New Faculty Orientation events for new faculty within the first five years of their time at SFA.



Foundations of Teaching & Learning

In addition to attending New Faculty Orientation, all full-time faculty are required to attend [Foundations of Teaching & Learning \(FTL\) \[03\]](#), a semester-long professional development series, designed to expose faculty members to the basics of what constitutes good pedagogy in face-to-face and online learning environments. FTL is held each fall and in appropriate spring semesters. The series consists of several workshops, each with an online module and a face-to-face class session. The latter are held biweekly throughout the semester. The program provides new faculty with a series of activities and events designed to facilitate interactions and to help the newest members of the faculty become part of the SFA community while enhancing their professional success.

Topics covered in FTL include students as learners, learning theory, instructional planning, assessment, active learning and student engagement, planning and facilitating classroom discussions, and classroom management.

FTL is hosted by the Center for Teaching & Learning, which has as its mission to support the faculty and enhance teaching effectiveness, which in turn supports student learning. Sessions are led by the CTL's faculty consultant (a full-time, tenured, or tenure-track faculty member with training in pedagogy) and one of its learning experience designers. Though FTL is only required for new, full-time faculty, all faculty are welcome to attend.

Faculty Development Support

SFA provides encouragement and resources to faculty for life-long professional development in addition to encouraging skills directly focused on classroom and laboratory contact with students.

Throughout the year, the Center for Teaching & Learning hosts myriad development series and workshops on a variety of teaching- and learning-related topics. Such [development opportunities \[04\]](#) are announced via flyers to faculty mailboxes as well as through SFA Today and CTL's social media outlets. Sample series events include Reading Circles, Teaching Circles, and Faculty Learning Communities. Past topics have included mentored undergraduate research, active learning, collaborative learning, and more. Sample workshop topics include best practices for instructional video, reaching and teaching first-generation students, teaching Generation Z, universal design for learning, and more. Participation over the last 5 years in development opportunities is presented in Table 1 below.

	Total Sessions Offered	Total Attendance	Average Attendance
2018-2019	112	1042	9.30
2017-2018	133	1228	9.23
2016-2017	114	930	8.16
2015-2016	148	1088	7.35
2014-2015	100	313	3.13

Table 1 – 6.5 – Faculty CTL Participation



Additionally, CTL is responsible for providing educator development for all faculty seeking to teach online or via ITV. Both development opportunities are offered online at least twice a year. The [Online Instructor Certification Course \[05\]](#) includes content on crafting an online community of learners, teamwork, instructional design, instructional video, ADA compliance, and copyright and fair use. The [Interactive Video Certification Course \[06\]](#) includes content on using the university’s selected web conferencing technology platform, distance learning theory, connectedness, and cognitive load.

Faculty who teach in distance education programs and courses receive appropriate training. The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) also offers extensive professional development opportunities to faculty members, with a focus on effective teaching of distance education courses. OIT provides a complete range of professional development activities, including computer-based training, hands-on workshops, and special events for SFA faculty and instructional support staff seeking to enhance their students' learning experience. The office also offers several certificates based upon the successful completion of workshops geared toward the development of skills required to integrate technology successfully into the teaching and learning process.

Faculty Research Grants

Through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS), faculty are provided with technical assistance and [specialized training \[07\]](#) for developing grant and contract proposals. ORGS works directly with faculty both individually and in collaborative groups across campus to locate and apply for external funding for research projects and programmatic activities. The office offers workshops and trainings throughout the year to introduce faculty members to the art of grant writing for both internally and externally funded projects.

External Applications	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY 19
# of Apps Submitted	65	53	64	56
# awarded	45	32	34	36
% funded	69%	60%	53%	64%

Table 2 – 6.5 – External Grants

The university currently has 84 active external grant projects.

In addition to these externally funded projects, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) also funds mini-grants and faculty research grants. Internal grant funding includes the Research Enhancement Program, the Research Grant Development and Research Pilot Studies program, the Comprehensive Research Program, and university mini-grants. Table 3 below details the mini-grants and faculty research grants awarded by college for FY 2018 and 2019.



Internal Grants	FY18 – Budget \$209,343		FY19– Budget \$209,343	
	Minigrants	Faculty	Mini-grants	Faculty
Research Grants		Research Grants		
Business	\$6,250.00	\$0.00	\$6,500.00	\$0.00
Education	\$20,724.42	\$15,722.25	\$32,012.00	\$0.00
Fine Arts	\$2,250.00	\$19,629.00	\$9,340.00	\$18,211.00
Forestry & Ag	\$2,246.50	\$43,354.00	\$400.00	\$52,688.00
Liberal & Applied Arts	\$23,228.26	\$2,973.00	\$16,570.00	\$15,413.00
Library	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Science & Math	\$5,474.00	\$61,519.00	\$5,131.00	\$42,585.00
TOTAL	\$60,173.18	\$143,197.25	\$69,953.00	\$128,897.00

Table 3 – 6.5 – Minigrants

Research Conferences

Additionally, the institution provides an opportunity for faculty to showcase their research at the [Symposium on Arts & Research \(formerly known as the Bright Ideas Conference\) \[08\]](#). This one-day event provides faculty the opportunity to highlight their work to the campus community in a central space and engage in dialogue about the results of their research. Furthermore, the event recognizes and displays works by faculty who published articles in professional publications. Table 4 shows the participation in the most recent years for this event.

Symposium on Arts & Research (SOAR) - formerly Bright Ideas Conference (BIC) Participation				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
BIC	149	121		
SOAR			85	85

Table 4 – 6.5 – Research Conference Participation

The ORGS staff also coordinates the [Undergraduate Research Conference \[09\]](#). Six faculty members represent each college to guide the development of undergraduate research. Finally, ORGS supports the [Graduate Research Conference \[10\]](#). Thirty-four faculty guided graduate students for the FY2019 conference. These conferences celebrate academic achievements and scholarly excellence through a shared experience in research for faculty and students.

Faculty Development Leave

The Office of the Provost coordinates faculty development leaves at SFA. This opportunity for faculty development is detailed in university [policy 12.11, Administrative Leave \(Faculty and Staff\) \[11\]](#), which provides the guidelines for applications and awards related to additional study, research, and writing. Faculty development leaves may be awarded for one long semester at full base salary, or for two long semesters at half the base salary. Faculty development leaves have proven to be a successful means of enhancing instruction and research productivity among faculty.



Details for each college by department for 2018 and 2019 regarding the types of development activities and faculty participating are provided [here \[12\]](#).

Faculty Workload Research Reassignments

In addition to granting faculty development leaves, some colleges grant faculty workload research reassignments, which allow faculty members to reassign time ordinarily dedicated to teaching to their research activities.

Figure 1 indicates the number of intellectual contributions or research contributed by college for 2018 and 2020.

Intellectual Contributions/Research Summary Generated July 22, 2020 January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2020					
	2018	2019	2020	(blank)	Grand Total
Business					
Accounting	5	7	0	0	12(16)*
Business Communication & Legal Studies	14	8	8	1	31(48)*
Economics and Finance	6	11	6	0	23(27)*
Management & Marketing	18	23	3	2	46(52)*
Business Total	42	49	17	3	111(143)*
Education					
Elementary Education	32	22	4	4	62(68)*
Human Sciences	10	12	1	1	24(33)*
Human Services	29	16	1	8	54(59)*
Human Services & Educational Leadership	0	1	3	0	4
Kinesiology and Health Science	7	7	0	0	14(19)*
Secondary Education	45	13	5	0	63(76)*
Education Total	116	65	13	13	207(259)*
Fine Arts					
Art	2	2	0	0	4
Music	22	17	1	1	41
Theater	5	4	0	0	9
Fine Arts Total	29	23	1	1	54
Forestry/Agriculture					
Agriculture	9	3	0	0	12(15)*
Environmental Science	4	1	0	0	5
Forestry	45	35	4	4	88(172)*
Forestry/Agriculture Total	54	38	4	4	100(192)*
Liberal/Applied Arts					
Anthropology, Geography and Sociology	10	18	1	6	35(38)*
English and Creative Writing	13	9	1	2	25
Government	14	11	2	2	29(35)*
History	16	21	3	2	42(43)*
Languages, Cultures, and Communication	32	10	5	1	48(50)*
Mass Communication	5	4	0	0	9
Multi-Disciplinary Programs	12	4	0	1	17(26)*
Psychology	14	14	0	2	30(35)*
Social Work	10	11	4	2	27(43)*
University Library	5	2	3	2	12(16)*
Liberal/Applied Arts Total	129	98	19	20	266(320)*
Sciences/Mathematics					
Biology	7	10	2	0	19(23)*
Chemistry	8	15	2	0	25(27)*
Computer Science	1	2	0	0	3(5)*
Geology	13	11	9	0	33(45)*
Mathematics and Statistics	4	15	1	2	22(27)*
Nursing	2	3	1	1	7(11)*
Physics and Astronomy	6	7	1	0	14
Sciences/Mathematics Total	41	63	16	3	123(152)*
Unassigned College					
Unassigned Department	9	5	1	30	45(48)*
Unassigned College Total	9	5	1	30	45(48)*
Grand Total	403	321	69	69	862(1168)*

*The count in parentheses shows the count of publication contributors for the summary level, in contrast to the count of unique publications for the summary level. (Multiple authors contribute.)
Blank year notes in-progress or unfinished research contributions.

Figure 1 – 6.5 – Faculty Intellectual Contributions/Research Summary for 2018 and 2019.



Faculty Development Funds

Faculty development funds are allocated annually through the Office of the Provost to the academic units. These funds are distributed in support of a variety of faculty professional growth opportunities. The funds are typically used for travel to professional meetings, small research mini-grants, software for research and writing, and other items supporting faculty professional development. Table 5 displays the appropriation of these funds during fiscal years 2017 through 2019. Funding varies depending on the number of faculty who request funds in any given year and the scope of the request.

Academic Unit	Professional Development Funds			Avg. Allocation per Faculty FTE		
	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY2019	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Education	\$65,239	\$90,000	\$90,000	141.3	138.7	139
Forestry	\$15,445	\$21,000	\$21,000	24.8	23.3	26.1
Business	\$33,978	\$47,000	\$47,000	45.5	49.5	51.6
Fine Arts	\$36,141	\$50,000	\$50,000	81	81.2	84.7
Library	\$7,105	\$10,000	\$10,000	14	14	14
Science & Math	\$60,173	\$83,000	\$83,000	125.7	129.3	133.3
Liberal & Applied Arts *	\$75,988	\$105,000	\$105,000	150.3	157.5	160.5
Provost	\$14,827	\$20,000	\$20,000			
TOTAL	\$308,896	\$426,000	\$426,000	582.6	594	609

Table 5 – 6.5 – Fund Appropriation

Faculty Recognition and Awards

Endowed Professorships and Chairs

Exemplary levels of professional accomplishment are recognized by the university through the appointment of faculty to endowed professorships and chairs. These prestigious appointments are made through a competitive screening process that includes a close review of the accomplishments of the candidates. The Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture and the James I. Perkins College of Education have such awards.

Regents Scholar

A regents professor is named at the university each year as a means of high-profile faculty recognition. This award is guided by university [policy 7.24, Regents Scholar \[13\]](#), and is regarded as the highest honor the university may bestow upon a member of the faculty. Investiture ceremonies are held during the year to honor faculty demonstrating extraordinary accomplishment. A list of previous regents professors can be found on the Academic Affairs [website \[14\]](#).




Teaching Excellence Award

The [Teaching Excellence Award program \[15\]](#) has been a long-standing annual award established to provide recognition of outstanding accomplishment in instruction. The purpose of the award is to honor faculty members who are recommended by peers, administrators, and students as exemplary models of the highest level of effective teaching. These are individuals who demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter, deliver organized presentations, convey enthusiasm regarding teaching and learning, and display innovation in their instructional methodologies. In the spring semester, these faculty—one from each of the six colleges—are installed in the Teaching Excellence Hall of Honor within the college.

Based on the evidence provided and as detailed in this response, SFA provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with its mission.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Educator Development — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] New Faculty Orientation.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Foundations of Teaching & Learning Syllabus Fall 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] CTL educator development flyer.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Online Instructor Certification CTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Interactive Video Certification \(ITV\) CTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Training ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] SOAR Art Symposium 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Undergraduate Research Conference ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] 2020 Graduate Research Conference ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Policy 12.11, Administrative Leave Faculty Staff.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Professional Development Summary.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 7.24, Regents Scholar.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Regents Scholar Academic Affairs Stephen F Austin State University.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Teaching Excellence Awards Academic Affairs.pdf](#)

Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

7.1 The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

(Institutional Planning) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes. These processes focus on improving institutional quality and effectiveness, and they allow leadership to continuously review institutional goals and outcomes consistent with the university's [mission \[01\]](#). Institutional planning processes at SFA are integrated throughout the university [structure \[02\]](#), and are designed to provide decision makers the information they require to effectively plan for and execute necessary operations.

All planning, assessment, and improvement activities are based on the mission of the institution. Stephen F. Austin State University was chartered in 1917 as the Stephen F. Austin Normal School, but funding was delayed because of World War I. In 1923, Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College opened and began offering the higher education experience for the East Texas region. Although providing highly qualified educators remains at the core of the institution, SFA has grown to a comprehensive regional university dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Today, SFA offers 96 undergraduate degree programs, 48 master's programs, and three doctoral programs. As a result of institutional growth, the university community continues to refine the mission as the institution changes to meet the needs of students today. Along with the region it serves, SFA has adapted to modern needs for East Texas residents. Even our mission statements attest to this. A prior version of our mission from 2004 reads thusly:

“The mission of Stephen F. Austin State University is to provide students a foundation for success, a passion for learning, and a commitment to responsible global citizenship in a community dedicated to teaching, research, creativity, and service. The VISION: Stephen F. Austin State University will be the national model of a high quality, student-focused, comprehensive university whose graduates are productive citizens and successful leaders” ([Mission Statement 2004 as it appeared in our 2008-2009 General Bulletin \[03\]](#)).

By contrast, the current mission statement demonstrates how the university has changed as it has developed:



Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community. ([Mission Statement 2013 \[04\]](#)).

The most recent mission statement clearly relies on previous statements for its basic philosophy; however, the revised mission statement focuses on the unique ability of SFA to offer more personal attention and engagement opportunities for students. The institutional mission retains the threefold work of the professoriate (teaching, research/scholarship/creative products, and service) and continues to reflect the university's place within the global community, while putting new emphasis on a *learner-centered environment*.

Strategic Planning

The SFA mission statement serves as the guiding principle of the institution and delineates the priorities in all activities. The university-wide strategic planning process establishes broad institutional goals that focus the campus on strategic activities in support of the mission. This strategic planning process provides a foundation for institutional effectiveness at SFA, and, therefore, a direct path toward mission fulfillment. Strategic planning at SFA involves faculty, staff, students, and members of our East Texas community.

The most recent strategic plan is titled, "SFA Envisioned," and it guides the work of SFA as it prepares to celebrate its centennial year in 2023. [SFA Envisioned \[05\]](#) serves as a *flexible strategic compass* (FSC), allowing us to focus on our strengths while maintaining our unique identity as an independent public institution and navigating the inherently ambiguous future of higher education. As then President Baker Patillo characterized it:

This strategic plan looks different than the strategic plans of the past because it is different. It is a working plan that will evolve to reflect current external and internal conditions and respond to the realities that we may encounter along the way.

Such an approach has proven crucial in the current climate, best characterized by the military acronym VUCA (volatile, uncertain, chaotic, and ambiguous). Having a FSC instead of a rigid standardized five-year plan allows for quick and meaningful change in such an unpredictable environment. The plan brings six areas of emphasis to the fore of SFA planning, activity, and assessment. The goal list consists of one key overarching goal, four supporting goals, and a foundational goal.



SFA Envisioned

Our Overarching Goal—Transformative Learning Experiences: *We will engage our students in experiences that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community.*

Our Foundational Goal—Meaningful & Sustained Enrollment Growth: *Through an appropriate mix of relevant programs, delivery methods and locations, we will attract an increasing number of students seeking to prepare themselves for the future. Enrollment growth will be evidence of our productive participation in achieving the state's strategic goal for developing a more educated population. In addition, growth provides the foundation for our ongoing fiscal sustainability.*

Our Supporting Goals:

§ Attract and Support a High-Quality Faculty & Staff

Our faculty and staff are the university's greatest assets. It is all of us together who engage our students in the high-impact practices that provide the transformative experiences they seek. To successfully fulfill our mission, we must attract and retain highly qualified people.

§ Foster Academic & Co-Curricular Innovation

As the needs of our students evolve, so should our curricular and co-curricular programs. We will be innovative in the ways we reach our students and prepare them for lifelong learning and successful careers in the 21st century.

§ Redefine University Culture

We will have an energetic and respectful workplace where civility, inclusivity, and accountability are guiding principles for everyone.

§ Increase Connections

We will embrace the strengths of our stakeholders to better enable us to provide a stellar learning experience for our students and contribute to the quality of life of everyone we touch.



These six concepts can be visualized as a building, with an overarching roof, four pillars, and a foundation (See Figure 1).

The 2019-2020 academic year has been one of constant change. The year began with the arrival of President Scott Gordon. It had been a full 13 years since SFA had a new person at the helm. As the campus was settling in on new directions, COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the community, the nation, and the world. As we endeavor to move forward in a damaged world, clarification was in order—bringing more structure to a world in constant flux.

The Flexible Strategic Compass allows for rapid change. It also benefits from the expertise of faculty and staff. The Identification, Study, Decision, and Implementation (ISDI) of the FSC emanates from the Campus Community. Our process thoroughly vets suggestions and ideas, while involving all of SFA’s community throughout. Figure 2 below provides a graphic representation of SFA Envisions ISDI.

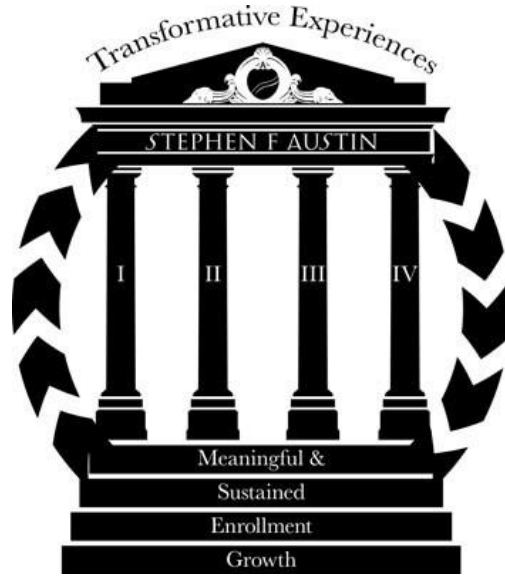


Figure 1 – 7.1 – Strategic Plan Visualization

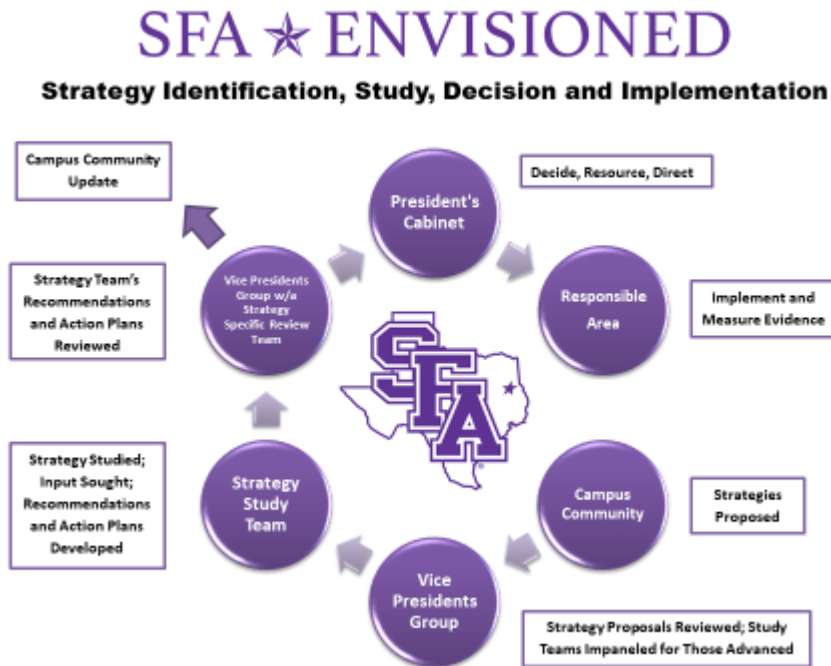


Figure 2 – 7.1 – SFA Envisioned ISDI



As an initial effort to glean the best ideas from the faculty and staff, SFA held a campus-wide [book study \[06\]](#) on *The Undergraduate Experience: Focusing Institutions on What Matters Most*, a collection of essays by student success professionals intended as “a practical guide for advancing student learning and improving institutional performance in the ever-changing landscape of higher education.” Small group studies abounded, punctuated by all-call sessions with relevant members of the Cabinet. Ideas were fused together, adjusted, and evaluated at campus-wide meetings. After much study and hard work, SFA had [twelve concepts \[07\]](#) that fit into five themes:

Academic Primacy--The “message” prospective and current students receive has to more strongly emphasize academics as the core of the undergraduate experience.

Connecting College Learning and Readiness for Career Success --

1. The connection between classroom learning and work/life skills needs to be stronger.
2. More students need to participate in high-impact practices (e.g., mentored research, study abroad, internships, experiential learning).
3. Departments need to create more campus programs that enable their majors to do things similar to what they will do in their intended careers.

Student Success —

1. Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, Academic Affairs, and the Student Success Center need to work together more closely in assisting incoming first-year students.
2. The Admissions Office needs to work with academic advisors and transfer students making sure there is complete understanding of what hours/classes transfer.
3. The “message” prospective and current students receive is that the university has high expectations and will help you achieve them.
4. What the university provides time for, recognizes, and rewards needs to be adjusted to reflect a greater emphasis on student learning and high impact practices.
5. All funding decisions should hinge on if/to what extent the expenditure will impact student success.
6. Mentorship programs on campus need to be broadened to include more students.

Culture Matters — Develop a more supportive university culture in which it is safe to ask questions/make observations and in which administrators respond to those questions/observations.

Evidence of Impact — Review assessment processes and findings, and disseminate information and implement actual changes. (Do not collect data for the sake of collecting data—use it.)

These ideas were presented to the cabinet. As a wrap-up to the project, one of the book’s authors (Betsy Barefoot) came to SFA for an in-person address to the campus community.



From 2015 through December 2018, a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), which consisted of a core membership of the cabinet augmented by other campus leaders, was formed to guide the university and provide advice to the cabinet and the president on various aspects of the strategic plan. The SPC met every Thursday with the exceptions of University holidays and times when key SPC members had other commitments, e.g., legislative committee hearings, Board of Regents preparatory meetings, and important external engagements. The president's cabinet has managed the strategic plan since August 2019.

Initially, diverse committees for each goal of the strategic plan, working under the guidance of the SPC, developed preliminary concepts designed to support the strategic goals. Committees would present these concepts to the SPC for discussion and consent. The SPC moved concepts that demonstrated merit to the cabinet for further discussion, refinement, and decision. Concepts selected for further consideration were typically assigned to smaller action teams that would flesh out the concepts, identify objectives, determine resource requirements, and suggest success criteria. Next, these teams reported back to the SPC with refined concepts and plans that were subsequently presented to the cabinet for review and approval by the president and, if required, the Board of Regents. The committees and teams worked closely with university stakeholders, e.g., faculty senate, chairs forum, deans council, and various administrative and student groups, as required. Updates to the plan and our progress are continuously available to the campus community and other interested stakeholders on the *SFA Envisioned* website.

On June 10, 2020, Dr. Scott Gordon, the ninth president of the university, formally announced a relaunch of the strategic plan in a [letter \[08\]](#) to all faculty and staff stating:

“In 2015, SFA launched the SFA Envisioned 2023 strategic plan. We are now “relaunching” the plan with a focus on strategically addressing the current “realities in higher education” referenced in our vision statement.

A new strategic plan website, <http://www.sfasu.edu/envisioned>, outlines the initiatives underway at SFA to meet these disruptive challenges. The status of the various initiatives will be updated regularly to keep you informed about the progress being made.

On this new site, you will find articles outlining strategies being deployed by other institutions to adapt to the new educational landscape we all face. As you may have heard, there is an initiative underway to redesign a portion of our 16-week courses to be delivered in 8 weeks. In the resources section of the website you will find research discussing the benefits of leveraging 8-week terms.



The future is now. The work we do today will lay the foundation for SFA's ongoing success. Working together, we will become the model for the new American university."

All units in the four major divisions of the institution (Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, University Affairs, and University Development), as well as units reporting directly to the president, have objectives nested within the strategic plan that provide direct or indirect support to university goals and objectives. All units annually report outcomes, assess progress toward achieving those outcomes, and make improvements based on the analysis of results.

The revised plan maintains the original overarching, foundational, and supporting goals while focusing on specific supporting objectives and activities deemed essential to the success of the university. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the genesis of the SFA Envisioned strategic plan in order to come full circle on its most recent evolution. A description of the creation of SFA Envisioned follows.



Figure 3 – 7.1 – Revised Strategic Plan

SFA Envisioned, A Comprehensive Plan

On January 27, 2014, the SFA Board of Regents rejected a [proposed update \[09\]](#) to “Strategic Plan 2013: Preparing for the Future,” and requested that a more comprehensive plan be developed using a new approach to strategic planning. An ad-hoc board committee was created to work with the administration to develop a new comprehensive plan. This led to the [adoption \[10\]](#) of an extended planning horizon and the extension of the 2013 strategic plan until a new plan could be developed. In May 2014, Dr. Patrick Sanaghan, an experienced planning facilitator, was hired to assist the university in this extended planning endeavor. Two key leaders from University Affairs and Academic Affairs were appointed to serve as co-chairs of the expanded/extended planning effort in June 2014, and in late August, 2014, a diverse committee of forty faculty and staff members was appointed by the president to serve on the [strategic planning team \(SPC\) \[11\]](#). Membership of the SPC reflected the diversity of the University community. Veteran, mid-career, and early career faculty from the colleges comprised a majority of the SPC. Administrative and professional staff from the four divisions of the university (Academic Affairs, University Affairs, Finance and Administration, and Advancement) rounded out the team’s membership. The SPC embarked on a five-phased approach that was presented to the Board on July 28, 2014.



During **Phase I** (August – September 2014), team members participated in an intensive two-day training, led by facilitator Dr. Patrick Sanaghan, to become more familiar with the [five-phase process \[12\]](#) and to learn about, and participate in, some of the interactive techniques that were used to gather data and solicit ideas from the campus community and other stakeholders.

Phase II: Engagement and Data Gathering consisted of meaningful stakeholder engagement, both on and off campus, about core values, challenges, and critical issues. SPC members used a variety of facilitated exercises to solicit ideas and feedback regarding these issues and developed prioritized responses. These planning exercises were conducted with targeted stakeholder groups (e.g., faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community leaders), which allowed for interesting comparisons of how different groups viewed and prioritized issues. The data gathered during this phase was compiled and posted on the [SPC website \[13\]](#). During Phase II (September 19 – November 21, 2014), the SPC conducted 49 engagement sessions with 2,104 stakeholders.

Phase III: Making Sense of the Issues (November 2015 – January 2015) was focused on identification and development of the dominant strategic themes that emerged from the data regarding stakeholder perceptions about the university and its future. The SPC, through review and analysis, was able to identify six [strategic priorities \[14\]](#):

- Academic Innovation
- SFA Identity
- Make/Increase/Strengthen External Connections
- Recruiting & Retaining High Quality Faculty and Staff
- Transformative Experiences for Students
- University Culture

Identification of these strategic priorities focused the subsequent phases of the planning process and helped prevent information overload. The SPC created six [concept paper-writing teams \[15\]](#), with each preparing a concept paper on one of the identified strategic priorities. These [concept papers \[16\]](#) distilled the information gathered from the previous phase, provided concrete information for both internal and external stakeholders, and presented the relevant issues in a clear and understandable way.

The concept papers focused on facts without lobbying for a particular viewpoint or opinion, and were written so that a layperson could easily grasp the essential elements. Topical areas contained in the concept papers included historical context, regional or national trends, stakeholders' perceptions of the issue, strategic goals, and short- and long-term tasks. The goal was to create a non-academic paper for laypersons that is informative and does not try to steer the reader in a specific direction or have an agenda of some kind. It helped translate the data we had received through the engagement and data-gathering process for the participants of the Vision Conference.

Phase IV: Vision Conference was held on [January 30, 2015 \[17\]](#), bringing together more than 70 diverse stakeholders, both internal and external, to review and discuss the concept papers the steering committee had prepared regarding the strategic priorities identified during the



Engagement/Data-Gathering and Sense-Making phases. This vision conference allowed stakeholders to share their unique perspectives and better understand others' priorities and concerns. The outcome of the vision conference was the creation of a preferred future for the university that was distilled into a university [vision statement \[18\]](#).

Stakeholder groups represented at the Vision Conference included:

- SFA Faculty
- SFA Staff
- SFA Students
- Academic Deans
- Cabinet Members
- Academic Administrators
- City Leaders
- Civic Leaders
- Business Leaders from Nacogdoches, Houston, Dallas, Tyler, and Longview
- SFA Alumni
- SFA Board of Regents
- Regional Two-Year Colleges

The vision conference started with heterogeneous groups reviewing and discussing concept papers developed by writing teams from the SPC that translated what had been learned during the engagement and data-gathering phase of the process. Cross-boundary discussions promoted understanding of different perspectives of the issues. In the course of these discussions, participants learned more about the essential elements of the identified strategic themes.

Once the concept papers had been reviewed, stakeholder groups were asked to develop and share what they believed is important for the institution's future and what issues they would like to be considered as the university's strategic goals are developed. This process promoted further cross-boundary discussion and helped expand participants' thinking about the strategic priorities.

The vision conference concluded with participants determining specific goals for the future. Participants, informed by the previous discussions, helped craft a shared vision for the university's future. The concept paper themes were used as a basis for specific focus questions that asked participants to envision what they want the university to "look like" five years from now. The preferred future described by the vision conference participants was condensed into a [Vision Statement \[18\]](#) that serves as the foundation to designing strategic goals and implementation plans during the final, and continuous, phase of the planning process. What follows is a description of SFA's comprehensive execution of the FSC, or [Phase V \[19\]](#).

SFA Envisioned, An Integrated Plan

SFA demonstrates commitment to the principles of continuous improvement by engaging in ongoing planning and evaluation processes. These processes focus on improving institutional



quality and effectiveness, while remaining flexible. Committees must remain flexible, as well. At SFA, nothing happens in a vacuum. President Patillo described it this way:

It will become quickly evident to you that the goals are all interrelated. Therefore, the work in meeting them will be interrelated, ongoing and dynamic - strategies will not be static, but will be modified and added as the plan progresses. Also, keep in mind that some work toward these goals was already underway when strategic planning began. This plan will serve to support that continuing work.

The first eight Teams were assigned to specific topics related to the pillars of the FSC:

- Leadership-SFA
- Employee Leadership
- Financial Literacy
- Instructional Materials
- Enrollment Actions
- HSI Readiness
- Internships
- Mentoring

Our Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is comprised of cabinet members and select others. While the overarching goal, Transformative Experiences for SFA Students, and our foundational goal, Meaningful and Sustained Enrollment Growth, are managed jointly by the committee, each supporting goal is individually managed by a vice president:

1. Attracting and Supporting High Quality Faculty and Staff - **Vice President of Finance and Administration**
2. Fostering Academic and Co-Curricular Innovation – **Vice President of University Affairs**
3. Redefining University Culture – **Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs**
4. Increasing Connections – **Vice President of University Advancement**

[Teams and committees \[20\]](#) are charged with developing [recommendations \[21\]](#) regarding strategies, actions, and tasks associated with goal accomplishment. These committees periodically report their recommendations to the SPC. The SPC is scheduled to meet every Thursday. Because of competing internal and external commitments, the committee typically meets 18 times per year. The SPC takes the recommendations to the cabinet for presidential decision. SFA cabinet meetings are confidential and minutes of these meetings are not maintained.

Our flexible strategic compass guides the university throughout the SFA Envisioned plan, which focuses on why each goal is important and how goal attainment will benefit the university. This broad approach maintains university level focus on the goal accomplishment and less emphasis



on parsing finite metrics associated with objectives that could potentially be overcome in the ever-changing landscape of public higher education in Texas.

SFA uses data to inform our decisions, and our SFA Envisioned 2015 – 2023 dashboard details the work we have completed, the successes we have accomplished, and the challenges SFA faces moving forward. The foundational goal of enrollment growth is presented both overall and split in numerous meaningful ways. A cursory look at the current data indicates our [summer credit hour count \[22\]](#) heading in the right direction for the first time in five years. Our [undergraduate enrollment \[23\]](#) has been trending upward since the FSC was set in motion. Also, our [Hispanic enrollment \[24\]](#) has been quite close to desired projections.

Challenges lie ahead, and targets have been missed, a reality made even more sobering by COVID-19. Our graduate programs have undergone a metamorphosis, and the change has resulted in a sharp drop in enrollment. Prior to COVID-19, SFA's efforts to remediate the situation looked poised for success. As of this writing, we remain unsure of upcoming results. Our overall credit hour production and undergraduate retentions remain essentially stagnant. While this would be an accomplishment in many states due to the overall decline in traditional college-age students, in Texas—where this demographic is projected to start declining within the next decade but has not yet declined—SFA recognizes the need to do better.

Select Examples of Data Informed Decisions

- Campus Space Utilization Strategy 2016-2020
- Full Time Lectureships in support of core course offering analysis 2017
- Hiring Director of University Partnerships 2017
- Limited merit pools 2015-2019
 - o Transformative Experiences
 - The university is conducting an extensive study with internal academic thought leaders to define transformative experiences and determine how to measure them.
 - o Meaningful and Sustained Enrollment Growth
 - Hired Director of University Partnerships
 - o Attracting and Supporting High Quality Faculty and Staff
 - Merit pools and equity raises made available even under a constrained budgeting environment
 - Full-time lectureships hired due to a core course analysis revealing unmet student need for gateway core courses
 - o Fostering Academic and Co-Curricular Innovation
 - Classroom upgrades implemented and ongoing
 - o Redefining University Culture
 - Book readings
 - Faculty and staff breakfasts
 - Leadership SFA
 - o Increasing Connections



Annual Planning and Assessment Process

Another major component of institutional planning and effectiveness efforts at SFA is the university's annual planning and assessment process. This annual process is ongoing and comprehensive. This process allows units (offices, programs, departments, colleges, and divisions) to evaluate their effectiveness and systematically evaluate the attainment of their goals and outcomes. Since the 2008 academic year, units at SFA have engaged in annual planning and assessment processes in which units regularly identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which they have achieved those outcomes, and provide evidence they are seeking improvement based on the analysis of their results. Results from this annual planning and assessment process are documented in Nuventive Improve, a cloud based relational database platform that supports assessment related activities.

The annual planning and assessment process is carried out by a wide range of units at SFA. Many of these plans are documented in detail within the narratives for standards related to Administrative Effectiveness [\(7.3\)](#) the Effectiveness of Educational Programs [\(8.2a\)](#), and Academic and Student Support Services [\(8.2c\)](#).

Budget Planning and Development Process

SFA creates an [annual budget \[25\]](#), working within the confines of funding appropriated by the legislature and other fund sources. The State of Texas works on a biennium-budget cycle. On an annual basis, the Budget Director determines the amount of discretionary funds available by subtracting encumbered monies from the pool of state monies and locally-generated revenues. The budget process combines strategic planning with financial management to provide SFA administrators with critical information for advancing institutional and student success.

Units use data and information gathered through numerous processes, such as annual planning, to develop resource analysis and budget plans. At the beginning of the budget process, college and division leaders analyze the base budgets for their areas and prepare requests or reallocations for the upcoming fiscal year associated with new positions; new technology, equipment, and supplies; and new contractual services to support new or expanded programs and services. Information submitted in support of all budget requests are supposed to describe how the proposal will improve or add to the quality of service of the unit.

Processes in Action

This narrative offers three key examples of SFA's work toward strategic success. These examples have been chosen because they indicate the directions we have taken, the inter-related nature of our goals, and our multi-pronged approach to meet each of our goals.

Example 1: Dual Credit

In 2017, SFA endeavored to meet enrollment targets—in part—through an expanded Dual Enrollment strategy. This effort entails more than one factor in the FSC. First, we needed to



increase connections with school districts (IV). Teaching younger students, many online, necessitated the curricular innovation goal (II). A Director of University Partnerships was hired and generated results quickly. Enrollment nearly tripled over the next three years, and the number of ED sites rose from two to 23 (plus online options). The result was a 281.3% increase in SFA's Dual Enrollment population, consistent with our Foundational Goal.

Example 2: Internships

Another key example of this interconnectedness is SFA's internship improvements, which originated in one of the first committees formed under SFA Envisioned. This effort demanded curricular and co-curricular innovation (II); it depended upon increased connections (IV); and it had the same overarching goal we all have at SFA: transformative experiences for our students. Internship tracking and data collection have improved. A common internship course numbering system is being developed, and zero-credit internships are now possible. SFA now coordinates with the Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation as a partner to increase internships (and thus, connections). There was a revision of our Internship [policy 11.29 \[26\]](#) in 2020, as well. This new policy wording standardizes procedures and expectations. An upgrade of software at the Center for Career and Professional Development and a renewed focus speak to SFA's efforts to redefine our culture (III). Together, these efforts have resulted in more transformative experiences for students (TF).

Example 3: Enrollment Management

In 2017, Governor Greg Abbott announced a [hiring freeze \[27\]](#) on all state agencies and budget cuts. Simultaneously, the Office of Space Scheduling and Utilization analyzed historical enrollment patterns, student academic history, and degree requirements. The forecast called for a larger number of seats and sections in upcoming terms for Core courses. Fifteen positions were filled, and course schedules were standardized. This effort generated an additional 5600 semester credit hours, doubling the number of SCH in the Fall of 2017 in general education courses. After one year, the process netted over \$1.5 million [\[ii\]](#). This was crucial in a year that required \$2.7 million in budget cuts from the State of Texas. These actions are strong examples of SFA's commitment to innovation (II) and our goal of attracting and supporting a high-quality faculty and staff (I).

Committees and Groups Supporting Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Efforts

President's Cabinet

Members of the President's Cabinet include the president, the provost and vice president for academic affairs, the vice president for university affairs, the vice president for university advancement, the vice president for finance and administration, the chief information officer, the executive director of enrollment management, the athletic director, and the chief diversity officer. This group meets regularly (usually every Tuesday) to study, review, and make recommendations on matters brought by the committee members; to consider university-wide issues and make recommendations where appropriate; to disseminate information on university-



wide activities; and to coordinate, where necessary, university-wide activities and policies. Minutes from the President's Cabinet meetings prior to the current academic year are not available because they were considered confidential. This practice was reevaluated at the request of the new associate provost for accreditation and assessment (who assumed his position in September 2018), and [minutes \[28\]](#) from February 26, 2019 forward are provided.

Academic Affairs Council (AAC)

The AAC consists of the provost and vice president for academic affairs, the associate provost, the director of the Ralph W. Steen Library, all academic deans representatives from the six colleges and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, key academic support units (such as Institutional Research, Institutional Effectiveness, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Academic Assistance and Resource Center, the Student Success Center, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships), and the chair of the University Faculty Senate. This group serves in an advisory capacity to the provost and vice president for academic affairs and provides a forum for the discussion of academic matters across SFA.

Deans Council

Deans Council membership consists of the provost, the associate provost, the deans of the academic colleges at SFA, and the dean of graduate studies. The purpose of this group is to meet regularly to discuss issues and concerns within their respective colleges and areas and for SFA as a whole. Additionally, this group meets regularly to discuss changes and revisions to institutional policies affecting students at SFA. This group provides advice and guidance to the Provost on matters related to Academic Affairs. It also provides strategic leadership to the respective colleges and SFA as a whole in academic-related matters. Guests from other areas of the university are often brought in to present areas of concern, institutional data, and information for the council to make decisions regarding institutional operations and the long-term strategic vision of both Academic Affairs and the respective academic colleges. Examples of meeting minutes from recent meetings are provided [here \[29\]](#) as evidence.

Faculty Senate

The [Faculty Senate \[30\]](#) currently consists of faculty from each of the six colleges and the Ralph W. Steen Library, representing all ranks of faculty (adjunct through full professor). Positions on the Faculty Senate are apportioned among the six academic colleges at SFA and the library. Faculty senate meeting minutes are available online through the [Faculty Senate website \[31\]](#) going back to the 2002-2003 academic year; however, as an example, [minutes \[32\]](#) are provided for the 2018-2019 academic year.



SFA Envisioned 2.0 Relaunching

As mentioned above, on June 10, 2020, faculty received notice of changes to the FSC. President Scott Gordon addressed the campus community to inform them of a new, modified direction in strategic planning:

The landscape of higher education has been undergoing drastic change over the last several years, and now Covid-19 has accelerated this transition. For SFA to be successful, we must reimagine, innovate, and modernize how we deliver and support education.

A new graphic now represents the Flexible Strategic Compass. It is more structured than the previous version; however, it retains at its heart the overarching goal (transformative experiences), the same four pillars of support, and the foundational goal of meaningful and sustained enrollment growth. Additionally, it offers some of the ways to ensure attainment, as well as acknowledgement of the mandates from the State of Texas. This new adjustment was made public in June of 2020; this reaffirmation response has focused on processes through AY 2020.

What is important for the reader is the *ongoing* planning process at SFA. SFA continues its efforts to meet the overarching goal, the four pillar goals, and the foundational goal. Future improvements include the introduction of more 8-week courses, more online offerings, and a comprehensive plan to lower the student debt our graduates carry. Notably, SFA only missed two days of instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to carry that grit, innovation, and determination into the future as we transfer abstract ideas into plans, and execute the plans for improvement.



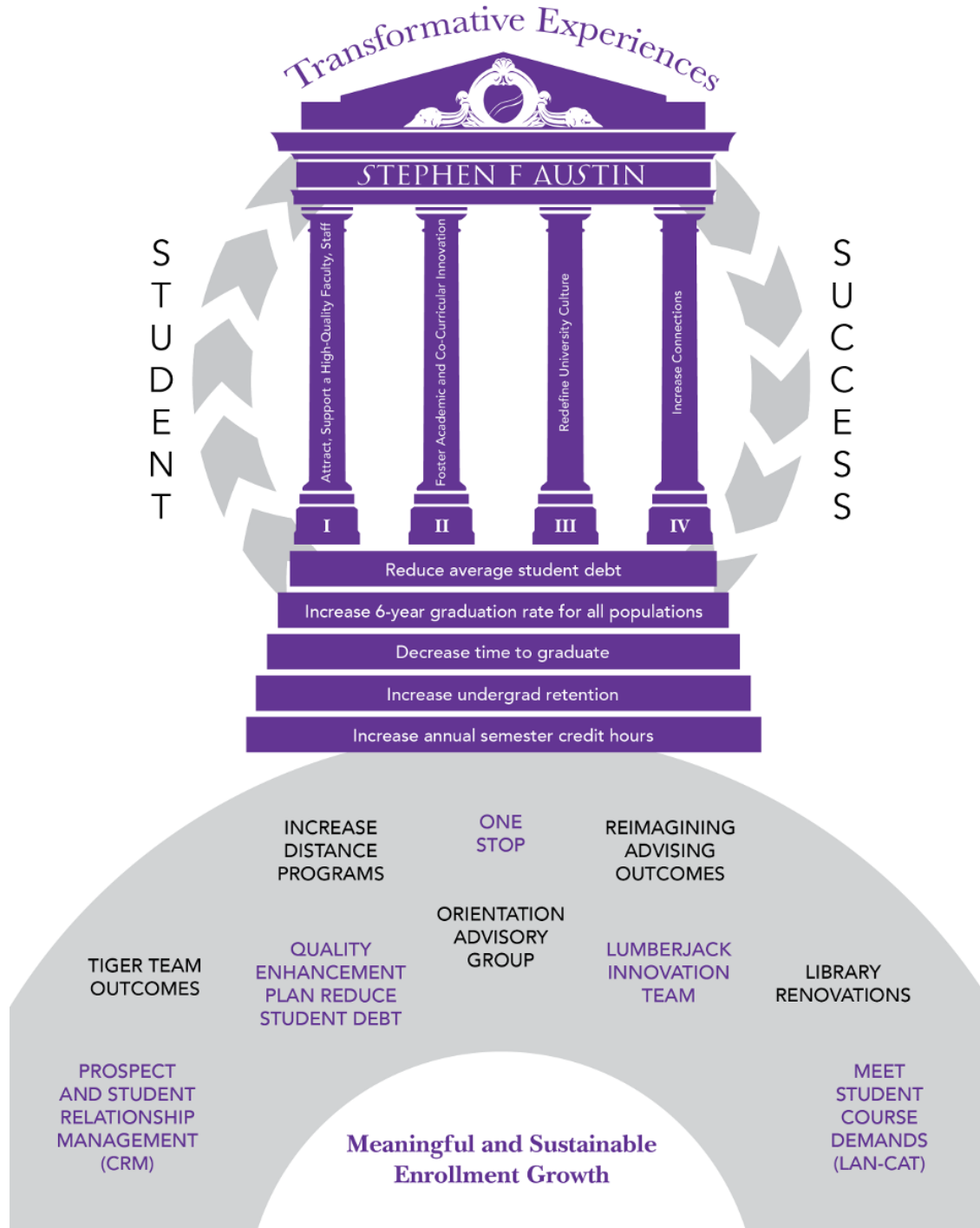


Figure 4 – 7.1 – SFA Envisioned 2.0



Conclusion








Stephen F. Austin State University has an integrated and ongoing institution-wide, research-based planning and evaluation process designed to continuously improve the university as well as demonstrate where the university has been successful in achieving its goals and objectives and fulfilling its mission. The institution systematically reviews its programs and services. These reviews include, but are not limited to, annual reporting, annual budgeting, strategic planning, ongoing program assessment, student services evaluation, and curriculum review.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/07/10/stephen-f-austin-optimizes-course-schedule-add-faculty-lines-paid-themselves> [33]

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Mission SFA Envisioned SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] General Bulletin 2008-2009.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Strategic Plan 2013.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan 2015-2023.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] The Undergraduate Experience.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Twelve Proposals.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Relaunch of SFA Envisioned 2023 Strategic Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] SFA's 2020 Vision.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Board Order 14-28.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Strategic Planning Team Member List.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Strategic Planning Team Orientation Presentation.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Data Gathering Results SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Phase III Making Sense of the Issues SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Strategic Planning Team Concept Paper Teams.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Concept Papers.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Phase IV Vision Conference SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Vision Statement.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Phase V Goal Setting SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Supporting Goals Teams.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Supporting Goal Team Recommendations.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Summer Credit Hour Dashboard.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Undergraduate Enrollment Dashboard.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Hispanic Enrollment Dashboard.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Annual Budget 2019-2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Policy 11.29, Student Internships.pdf](#)



-  [\[27\] Hiring Directive .pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Consolidated Cabinet Notes.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Deans Council Minutes March 4, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Faculty Senate Meetings Minutes webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Faculty Senate Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] 2018-2019 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Inside Higher Ed Article](#)



7.2 The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement and complete the QEP, and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.

(Quality Enhancement Plan)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The Quality Enhancement Plan ("QEP"), which is a separate document from the Compliance Certification, is being prepared by the QEP Committee. The Plan will be submitted six weeks prior to the site visit and will contain a full description of the QEP's topic, goals, methodology, organization, budget, and assessment plan. Here, as described in the SACSCOC Policy Statement, "Quality Enhancement Plan," Stephen F. Austin State University chooses to "submit selected information about its QEP for review by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee. This information allows the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee to provide an opinion as to whether the intended QEP appears to offer a reasonable attempt to comply with sections (a) and (c) of Standard 7.2 regarding the relationship of the QEP topic to the institutional planning process and the focus of the QEP on improving "student learning outcomes and/or student success."

Topic Identification Process and Broad-based Support

Ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes supported the open and transparent QEP topic selection. A [QEP Topic Selection Committee \(TSC\) \[01\]](#) was convened, with representatives from all key campus constituencies. The TSC studied longitudinal student learning outcomes and related [student success data \[02\]](#). Data experts explained details and context regarding continuous strategic planning, evaluation, and data results. The TSC identified a set of [topic candidates \[03\]](#) based upon identified student outcomes and success data and relationships of topics to the institutional mission and strategic planning initiatives and goals. A [survey \[04\]](#) was distributed to numerous groups, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni, to evaluate support and importance of selected topic candidates to Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) constituents. Topics reporting the highest volume of support were further vetted through an open [Town Hall \[05\]](#) discussion on November 15, 2018, which was attended by students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Although twelve general topic areas were proposed to the attendees, the floor remained open for additional ideas. See minutes/notes from [Town Hall \[06\]](#). The meeting was recorded and posted online by SFA's Center for Teaching and Learning.

A [second survey \[07\]](#) was administered to students, faculty, staff, and alumni following the first Town Hall. This survey offered respondents a choice of topic areas, as well as open options for anything new. The survey responses were tallied and shared before another [Town Hall \[08\]](#) meeting in February of 2019, also attended by students, faculty, staff, and alumni. From the



survey and the Town Hall discussions, the QEP Topic Selection committee determined meaningful combinations of the most popular and feasible options. These were the three finalists:

1. Lowering Student Cost & Debt
2. Critical Thinking Through Writing
3. Engaging Students in Their Chosen Discipline

In every survey, separate mailing lists were used between SFA students and SFA faculty/staff. This ensured we were able to determine “the voice of the students” in the discussion. Students immediately pointed to cost and debt. These responses did not waver, with the possible exception of expanding resources for mental health. Faculty were generally split, with nearly identical numbers between the top three topic options.

The following week a [final survey \[09\]](#) was e-mailed to students, faculty, and staff, followed by a TSC meeting to select the final topic, with the [announcement \[10\]](#) of “Reducing Student Debt” as the basis of SFA’s next QEP.

As described below, the Plan complies with both 7.2.a and 7.2.c.

Lowering Student Debt - Ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes

The topic of Lowering Student Debt was identified through SFA’s ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes (discussed in depth in [7.1](#)). It grows out of SFA’s mission as a regional, “comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.” It is further motivated by “our responsibility to the people of Texas” as articulated in SFA’s Vision Statement, “to prepare more citizens to lead our state into the future.”

The topic of addressing student debt is grounded in “SFA Envisioned,” the university’s strategic plan, which was launched in 2015. Specifically, the topic springs from the second pillar of the [plan \[11\]](#), which focuses on “Fostering Academic & Co-Curricular Innovation” through strategies such as addressing, “Affordability and Student Debt” through the cost of instructional materials and through financial literacy.

Affordability and Student Debt: Instructional Materials

In 2016, the Provost appointed twelve diverse faculty and staff to the “Affordability and Student Debt: Instructional Materials” team. The group met for more than two years, holding its first meeting in October 2015, and making its [final report \[12\]](#) in January 2018.

They explored strategies to reduce the cost of instructional materials for Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) students. The team studied the relevant issues, sought campus input, developed proposed action plans and costs, and reported out six proposals for further review and decisions regarding implementation. The strategies they developed are as follows:



Strategy #1: Increase campus-wide costs-savings associated with on-time textbook adoption through the on-campus Barnes and Noble bookstore.

Strategy #2: Articulate administrative support for campus-wide shift towards low-cost alternatives to textbooks with special focus on low/no cost course materials adoption, adaption, and/or creation.

Strategy #3: Comply with S.B. No 810 (Texas legislation requiring public disclosure of courses that offer open-access textbooks).

Strategy #4: Increase campus-wide awareness of and understanding about low-cost alternatives for instructional materials, with focus on low/no cost course materials adoption, adaption, and/or creation.

Strategy #5: Continuously assess the level of commitment shifts to low/no cost course materials use, paired with a research agenda that documents and promotes University success.

Strategy #6: Determine shift in leadership for on-going monitoring and maintenance of Team's mission: "commitment to low/no cost textbook use and other low-cost alternatives for instructional materials."

As part of this team's work, a low/no cost course materials survey was created and sent to all faculty in the SFA campus community in November of 2017. Out of about 700 faculty, more than 180 responded. Just over half indicated comfortable awareness with the concept. Only 37 respondents were opposed to using low/no cost course materials in their class sections.

In 2018, the College of Liberal & Applied Arts (CLAA) began implementation of an initiative titled, "Reimagining the Core (RtC)," the stated purpose of which was:

To redesign introductory courses in the liberal arts core curriculum to achieve three goals: (1) creating no cost textbooks and class materials for students; (2) redesigning courses to emphasize the values, themes, central questions, and concepts of the material rather than a litany of facts; and (3) moving courses into an online format.

A major component of this initiative requires the creation of a no-cost textbook as the sole textbook for the course. The University retains copyright over all created material, so it does not fit the definition of "open education resources." Faculty chosen to participate in the initiative are paid a total of \$10,000 to complete all phases of their respective projects. The CLAA has completed the first year of RtC, with final results scheduled for 2020.

Affordability and Student Debt: Financial Literacy

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has recognized the importance of financial literacy on the ability of students to finish college and to avoid paralyzing debt levels after



graduation. The [60x30TX plan \[13\]](#) outlines the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's four central goals. The fourth goal is the following:

By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

The student debt goal aims to help students who graduate with debt complete their programs with manageable debt. This goal challenges stakeholders to balance the levels of student loan debt with a graduate's earning potential the first year after college. The intent of this goal is to hold student loan debt in Texas to 60 percent of first-year wages after college – 60 percent being the current level of loan debt for students who graduate with debt.

The Coordinating Board's goal emphasizes the need to articulate to students the role that career development has on starting salaries. We can build the financial literacy of our students to promote a better understanding of how and why to pay for higher education. Furthermore, improving the financial literacy of our students would greatly improve their lives and their chance for success.

State law also requires academic teaching institutions to offer training in financial literacy; however, there is no mandate that all students should participate, and no topics are mandated. Section 51 of the [Texas Education Code \[14\]](#) states:

The coordinating board by rule shall: (1) require a general academic teaching institution to offer training in personal financial literacy to provide students of the institution with the knowledge and skills necessary as self-supporting adults to make critical decisions relating to personal financial matters; and (2) determine the topics to be covered by the training, which may include budgeting, credit cards, spending, saving, loan repayment and consolidation, taxes, retirement planning, insurance, and financing of health care and other benefits. (c) The coordinating board by rule may provide for the training required under this section to be offered in an online course.

A team of faculty and staff was empaneled by the Provost to look at the strategy of reducing student debt through financial literacy. This group met for a full year, holding its first meeting in April 2016, and making its final report on April 5, 2017.

The Affordability and Student Debt: Financial Literacy committee made three recommendations.

Recommendation #1: Use an already developed data source from the [Coordinating Board \[15\]](#) to share earnings/borrowing information with students.

Recommendation #2: Develop an easy to use, student friendly summary for these earnings data.

Recommendation #3: Develop mechanisms to disseminate this information consistently.



Recommendation #4: Hire a full-time staff member to coordinate the salary data and financial literacy activities of student affairs, financial aid, career development counselors, and academic advisors.

While many of these strategies have been implemented, they have not resulted in significant changes in student debt. In 2019, approximately 69% of SFA students had student loan debt, the lowest this number has been since 2016. This is beyond the target established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, but remains considerably below the target of 75% established by the Texas Legislative Budget Board (though the LBB figure does not include transfer students). One would expect to see a more dramatic reduction considering that during this same timeframe, the average financial aid award per full-time student has increased by 9.4% and the percentage of full-time students receiving financial aid has increased from 86% to 93% (an increase of 7 percentage points).

One explanation for the lack of overall success is that, while initiatives addressing student cost and student debt have been occurring during this timeframe, they have not been meaningfully brought together, and these efforts are often decentralized and disconnected. They represent the initiative of individual areas, but do not reflect an institutional commitment to reducing student debt as a key institutional priority. It is this critical factor which forms the basis of our QEP and the reason we believe this project can help improve student outcomes and enhance student success.

Improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success.

Another key way to achieve the goal of SFA's QEP of lowering student debt is by improving graduation rates and shortening time to completion. Since inception of the strategic planning process in 2015, the institution has employed a variety of strategies for reducing student debt. While many of these have been moderately successful, none has resulted in a significant reduction of student debt. We believe that this is because many of these initiatives seek primarily to reduce costs, and gains in this regard by themselves cannot achieve the overarching goal.

To truly impact the issue of student debt, the most effective strategy would be to improve graduation rates, and shorten time to completion. An adage states, "The most expensive degree is the one that is never earned." This is because students accumulate debt, but without the means necessary for paying it off. Research on default rates supports the conclusion that unpaid debt is significantly higher among individuals who do not complete their degree.

Time to completion is also a critical factor. Many factors extend the time for degree completion and come at significant cost. Failing/repeating courses, changing majors, taking unnecessary courses, or taking courses out of sequence cost students time and money. Additionally, the State of Texas does not provide funds to state institutions of higher education for excess semester credit hours attempted by a resident undergraduate student. Students who exceed the maximum semester credit hour limit of their program are charged an additional \$200 per semester credit hour. Clearly, this presents both a barrier to graduation and impacts student debt for those who are able to persist. The average SFA student graduates with 10 excess semester credit hours after



earning a bachelor's degree. That number has declined from 13 semester credit hours in 2016 and has hovered consistently near our established target since 2017. However, reaching our target of no more than 6 excessive hours by 2025 will require concerted and targeted efforts across the institution.

The specific major metrics planned for evaluating the QEP are integrated in the SFA strategic plan, the State of Texas 60x30TX, and performance reporting through the Texas Legislative Budget Board. Exact goals, value targets, and other details are continuously monitored and evaluated for improvements through institutional strategic planning. Major metrics are:

- Six-year graduation rate (key student completion indicator – KSCI)
- Four-year graduation rate
- Percent of students with student loan debt
- Average student loan debt
- Average financial aid awarded per full-time student
- Percent of full-time students
- Excess semester credit hours attempted

More information on these metrics are found in the responses to Standards [8.1](#) Student Achievement and [8.2.a](#) Student Outcomes: Educational Programs.

QEP Resource and Assessment Plan Overview

The QEP establishes the Accelerated Achievement and Affordability (AAA) project, led by an executive director who cross-reports between the vice president for academic affairs (provost) and vice president for university affairs (chief student affairs officer). This project will be responsible for coordinating institutional efforts to increase graduation rates, shorten time to completion, and reduce student debt.

Since 2009, Complete College America (CCA) has been an advocate for "...increasing college completion rates and closing equity gaps by working with states, systems, institutions, and partners to scale highly effective structural reforms and promote policies that improve student success." SFA's strategy for addressing student debt through improved student success would be rooted in the data-driven solutions of CCA. These Strategies include:

- Implementing a campus-wide focus on the 15 to finish initiative, encouraging students to take no fewer than 15 credit hours each long semester as a means of timely graduation. The AAA program would create strategies for increasing the buy-in of academic advisors as well as parents/families to this program.
- Improving student knowledge of the advantages of SFA's new flat-rate tuition, which incentivizes students to take more credit hours while decreasing costs, and discourages students taking fewer hours because no additional tuition is assessed beyond 12 credit hours (e.g., a student will pay the same tuition for 18 hours as 12 hours, in effect lowering the per-credit hour cost).


















- Improving and leveraging curricular maps or sequences, which lay out a semester-by-semester plan toward on-time completion.
- Leveraging predictive analytics and proactive advising to help keep struggling students on track toward graduation, saving students money in the long term.
- Ensuring all students enroll in and complete gateway math in their first year by designing math courses that are aligned with the skills students need for their chosen program of study.
- Encouraging first-year students to take at least three courses connected to what they think they want to study as a means of promoting student success.

Additionally, CCA's work is rooted in metrics and evidence, smart policy, effective communication, and implementation at scale. We believe that their approach can effectively improve SFA's outcomes because they are targeted – allowing a focus on implementation rather than research and development.

SFA's QEP Director and QEP Development Committee are building on the initial proposal to finalize the plan. Through central coordination of efforts and the strategic implementation of targeted objectives, SFA will help students improve their timely completion of their degree, reducing costs and lowering debt. The Lowering Student Debt QEP can provide a meaningful structure for improving student success and preparing students for successful lives. Based on these details, the SFA QEP plan for lowering student debt is identified through ongoing SFA comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; has broad-based institutional support; focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and student success; and includes planned resources and integrated assessment.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Committee List.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] QEP Topic Research.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Preliminary Topic List.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] QEP 1st survey invitation & results.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] November Town Hall Invitation & Presentation.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] QEP First Town Hall Notes.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] 2nd Survey & Student - Faculty - Staff Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] 2nd Town Hall Invitation, Presentation, & Survey Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Final Survey Invitation.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] QEP Final Topic Announcement.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Fostering Academic and Co-Curricular Innovation Supporting Goals SFA Envision.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Recommendations from Affordability - Student Debt - Instructional Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] 60x30TX - THECB.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Texas Education Code Chapter 51 Provisions Generally Applicable to Higher Education.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] THECB Accountability System.pdf](#)



7.3 The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.
(*Administrative effectiveness*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) stands in compliance with this standard. SFA maintains an annual reporting cycle that includes all administrative support services. These support services identify expected outcomes and demonstrate the extent to which they meet these outcomes.

SFA uses the Nuventive Improve assessment management system to maintain our assessment plans and associated data. Our assessment cycle encompasses the entire academic year with a reporting deadline as November 1 of the next year. Units were encouraged to accelerate the closeout of AY 2019-2020 for inclusion in this report, but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented all units from meeting this accelerated reporting deadline.

In AY17-18, SFA initiated a process of re-imagining and revising our assessment practices. In short, we hit the “reset button.” Assessment had become formulaic, relying on the sheer quantity of objectives, outcomes, and assessment methods; criteria that were excessively quantitative; and an overemphasis on Bloom's taxonomy. While the expected outcome of the reset was renewed vigor and adoption of a commonsense approach to the continuous improvement process, we encountered fear and hesitancy to change. This led to a process of individual engagement with each reporting unit on campus and subsequent ongoing consultative engagements to assist in identifying what was important and needed to improve, how to improve it, and how to assess it. We are not done with our work and probably never will be. We are making steady progress and positive gains, but realize that our improvement plans and assessments will always have room for further improvement.

Our assessment plans have three primary components:

- Objectives: a definition of what the unit wants to accomplish.
- Assessment Methods: a description of the measurement used to determine the unit's level of attainment of the objective. Oftentimes, these are used as sub-objectives.
- Criterion: a statement of the expected level of performance or a benchmark against which the assessment method will be judged or evaluated.



The following examples of administrative support units are representative examples for the following reasons:

- They exemplify *required administrative functions* on a campus.
- They typically do not interact heavily with students as their central function.
- They use institutional effectiveness processes to maintain quality.
- They represent diverse levels of the organization.

These reasons are not absolutes; there are exceptions in nearly every case. For example, the Registrar's Office interacts with students, but the office's purpose is to *maintain* integrity of degrees and standards. *Every* office at SFA interacts with students at some level. There are certain units that directly support student success; we present those in our response to Standard [8.2.c](#). Many units are within the narrative for Standard [12.1](#), as well.

SFA's Mission Statement declares, "Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community." While the offices exhibited in this narrative do not interact with students as a core unit function, the learner-centered culture at SFA leads all employees to seek ways to interact with students on a regular or semi-regular basis. Because of this, such offices often respond to calls for volunteers to increase engagement and interaction with students, through their offices and apart from them. They mentor students when needed, and they support those programs and offices that interact daily with students.

Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management [01]

The mission of the Department of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management (EHSRM) is to provide active leadership to enable Stephen F. Austin State University to protect employees, students, the general public, and the university's physical and financial assets by reducing and controlling risk in the most efficient and cost effective manner while adhering to all local, state, and federal regulations.

Because EHSRM focuses on prevention, success could be gauged in the number of potential tragedies avoided. However, it is difficult to measure what did *not* happen. The department's three objectives are:

1. Protect Employees, Students, and the General Public;
2. Comply with Local, State, and Federal Regulations; and
3. Protect Physical and Financial Assets.

EHSRM used a combination of data analysis and field observation to determine the success of the first objective. One method of determining achievement was through the introduction of new safety policies and programs and maintenance of existing safety policies and programs. In AY 2018 – 2019, the department met their criteria and planned to use the results to upgrade the format of the university's Continuity of Operations Plan and conduct a tabletop exercise.



Another method of assessing their effectiveness was tracking accident and injury trends and losses with the following criteria: 1) were injury costs lowered; and 2) was the SFA injury frequency rate reviewed and below the state average? The department met both criteria in AY 2018-2019, with a reduction in injury costs and an injury frequency rate lower than the prior year and lower than the state average. Further analysis indicated that custodial staff were the most vulnerable to injury and would require additional training and/or mitigation to protect them.

Enrollment Management – Registrar [02]

It is the mission of the Registrar's Office to compile, process, and maintain accurate academic records for all students currently and previously enrolled; assist academic registration and commencement, including completing degree audits on all students who have applied for graduation; and provide academic record services as required according to university policy. To accomplish this mission, the office developed twelve objectives and associated metrics, which they assess each year using internal data tracking and surveys.

One of the Registrar's objectives is establishing optimal early registration dates. Using a survey as the assessment method and a criterion of 85% respondent satisfaction, they determined in AY 2018-2019 that 96.15% of the respondents indicated that early registration was scheduled appropriately. The Registrar incorporated the survey data into communications plans with campus stakeholders, and in AY 2019-2020 100% of respondents indicated early registration was scheduled appropriately.

Perkins College of Education (PCOE) Assessment and Accountability Office [03]

The PCOE Assessment and Accountability Office (OAA) serves the needs of the Perkins College of Education only. This office is a necessary contributor to the mission of the PCOE because it handles the many certifications, reports, and state-mandated educational assessments demanded of the college. The PCOE is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), as well as the many Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) that accompany CAEP accreditation.

This office is a useful exemplar in that it demonstrated agility and a willingness to adjust organizational objectives in response to environmental factors. With the arrival of COVID-19 in Nacogdoches, the office developed a new standard based on the new situation:

The Perkins College of Education Office of Assessment and Accountability will be able to effectively and efficiently support academic units while working remotely/as needed due to COVID- 19.

The department determined that employees were able to find the necessary resources to perform their job duties remotely. A full 100% of employees identified at least 2-3 of these resources.

Another of the department's objectives did not have such good results. The OAA's attempt to run a quality check with the College's 22 different certification program coordinators did not



yield enough resulting data. The criterion was for 95% of these programs to analyze the data presented to them. Instead, 15 of the entities opened the data that was presented (60%), and two of those did not respond to the data. In a time of a pandemic, returning such information becomes more difficult. This led to a final, summarizing paragraph:

Due to the small number of completers evaluated in each of the above programs, it is difficult to determine if the lack of sufficient performance is representative of the total population of completers for each individual program. As result, the EPP [Educator Preparation Program] will see if this establishes itself as a pattern in the next cycle of data collected. Simultaneously, it is interesting to note that each of these are secondary and all-level certification areas whose candidates all take the same set of pedagogy courses together.

During the next academic year, the OAA will launch this same effort. They expect 100% compliance in AY 2021.

Office of Development [04]

The Office of Development (DO) is responsible for fundraising activities at SFA. The purpose of their assessment plan is to compare a current year's effort to past performance.

The office's first objective reads, "The Development Office will be able to increase opportunities to raise more private funds in support of academic units, faculty, and students." The criterion assumes that the number of contacts will increase year-over-year. This did not happen during AY 2018 or AY 2019. In AY 2018, the number of contacts remained the same as in previous years. Because of this assessment, the DO planned to increase the number of contacts made to solicitable entities to raise additional funds. In a follow up action in August 2019, the DO re-launched an online giving platform, which resulted in a significant increase in contributions and contact with potential donors. Despite these actions, in AY 2019 there was a slight decrease in the number of direct mail contacts, and, based on the response rates, the telephone contact season was cut in half. It should be noted that the DO is working with fundraising consultants on a capital campaign, so some of the decrease is explained through the new approach from these consultants.

In their fourth objective, the DO committed to improving donor stewardship efforts. In AY 2018, an automated internal customer survey received a 44% response rate. The next year, they focused on an external customer survey, and 8.3% returned constructive feedback. On a scale of 0 – 5, the internal program was scored at a 4.91, while the external survey netted a 4.75 average. The DO is adjusting and improving their customer service approach continually.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has halted much of SFA's development effort. Thus, this section of the narrative focuses on the previous two years' information.



Information Technology Services [05]







Information Technology Services provide a core business function of the university. Reliable networks, systems, and services are essential to the operations of a 21st Century university. In recognition of the importance of this department, the Chief Information Officer and department head joined the president's cabinet. Significant personnel turnover and departmental restructuring in fall 2018 resulted in no assessments for AY 2018-2019.

The department clearly focused its four objectives on information systems and services for the university. The first objective, *provide reliable systems and services*, demonstrates the use of assessment tools to improve processes and procedures. In AY 15-16, the criterion of less than one unscheduled administrative system outage per year was met, but a critical problem associated with the objective was identified leading to action plans and follow-ups associated with the AY 15-16 assessment. In AY19-20, administrative systems were briefly offline, resulting in not meeting the criterion. Subsequently, the department is reevaluating how this objective is measured and what criterion will serve as an accurate measure of the current information technology systems and environment.

Conclusion

Unit objectives are established, results are reviewed, and refinements are made as necessary to close the loop and improve services. SFA will continue to collect and analyze assessment data to make improvements that support the mission of the institution. As the process of assessment becomes institutionalized, learning outcomes and assessment processes will be refined. A complete listing of the administrative support services assessment results can be found [here \[06\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Mgmt Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Registrar Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] College of Education Assessment and Accountability Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Development Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Information Technology Systems Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Admin Support Services Assessment Binder.pdf](#)



Section 8: Student Achievement

8.1 The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

(*Student achievement*) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s [mission \[01\]](#), the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. SFA uses multiple measures to document student success related to these goals and outcomes. These institutional-level evaluations accompany more detailed student achievement outcome reviews in specific education programs in Standard [8.2.a](#), academic and student services units in Standard [8.2.c](#), general education in Standard [8.2.b](#), and administrative effectiveness units in Standard [7.3](#). Student achievement goals and outcomes data are utilized in determining actions to ensure continuous improvement towards student success.

SFA determines appropriate measurable student achievement goals and outcomes through institutional strategic planning efforts designed to support its mission of “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service” [Institutional Planning Standard [7.1](#)]. Specific SFA strategic planning goals directly associated with student achievement are:

- [Overarching goal \[02\]](#): transformative experiences for SFA Students
- [Foundational goal \[03\]](#): meaningful and sustained enrollment growth
- [Supporting goal \[04\]](#): fostering academic and co-curricular innovation

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) identifies SFA as a *Comprehensive* university, which by definition offers “a wide range of excellent baccalaureate programs” with a commitment to graduate education. THECB further notes comprehensive universities as preparing students for the workforce and professional schools and graduation. Additionally, THECB directs comprehensive universities to “focus on serving the student population within the region,” which includes significant portions of underrepresented groups (Hispanic, African American, economically disadvantaged). When evaluating student achievement outcomes, SFA compares itself to a custom state peer group. [Peer group selection \[05\]](#) methodology includes eleven criteria including Carnegie classification, SACS level, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Accountability grouping.

SFA student achievement goals and outcomes coordinate with institutional and state strategic efforts (60x30TX Strategic Plan) to accomplish state-supported university initiatives. By the year



2030, the Texas [60x30TX strategic plan \[06\]](#) intends to create a more *Educated Population* wherein at least 60 percent of 25-34 year olds in the state have a certificate or degree and help the state be “competitive in the global economy.” Specific state goals in *Completion* (degrees and certificates awarded), *Marketable Skills*, and *Student Debt* influence SFA institutional planning and student achievement goals and outcomes/objectives.

As part of accomplishing the institutional mission and helping the state achieve a more educated population, SFA strategic planning efforts emphasize [transformational student experiences \[02\]](#) for [more students \[03\]](#). SFA strategy teams study resources, create objectives, and develop actions supporting the achievement of those objectives. The enrollment-related efforts are summarized in an [Enrollment Actions report \[07\]](#) updated annually. The attached [table \[08\]](#) outlines the student achievement enrollment objectives/outcomes, targets, and criteria related to institutional and state goals. Student achievement outcome details are also publicly published on the SFA website and other [sites \[09\]](#). These tools provide interactive support for academic programs as well as the university as a whole. The same metrics are examined through the Academic Program Review. Details on educational program student outcomes are available in section [8.2.a](#).

Key Student Achievement Measures

SFA has designated the following as key student achievement measures:

- Six-Year Graduation Rate
- Four-Year Graduation Rate
- First-Time Undergraduate Retention
- Total Degree Completions
- Marketable skills

For each of these key measures, a threshold of acceptability and a target (goal) exist. In addition to tracking overall data, SFA tracks these measures by gender, ethnicity, and economically disadvantaged subpopulations. Longitudinal analysis is utilized in determining actions to ensure continued student success. For each key student achievement measure, goals, criteria, thresholds, and evaluations of outcomes are published within the [Student Achievement dashboard \[10\]](#). For additional reference, a detailed [table \[08\]](#) also provides complete information.

Six-Year Graduation Rate

“Six-Year Graduation Rate” is the percent of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates who earn a baccalaureate degree within six academic years. Six-year graduation rate is also designated as SFA’s Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI). The six-year graduation rate is calculated as the number of first-time undergraduates in the base period cohort who have earned a baccalaureate degree divided by the total number of first-time undergraduates in the base period cohort. First-time includes students who take courses as first-time undergraduates during the summer session and continue as full-time students during the following fall semester. Full-time is defined as taking 12 semester credit hours.



Six-year graduation rate coordinates with the SFA Envisioned goals of transformative experiences for students, meaningful and sustained enrollment growth, and academic and co-curricular innovation, as well as the 60x30TX goals of *Completion* and an *Educated Population*.

As displayed in Figure 1, the target six-year graduation rate is 50.7%, which is the median rate for SFA’s peer institutions. The Texas Legislative Budget Board (LBB) outcomes performance target for this measure (45.5%) is set as SFA’s threshold of acceptability. Longitudinal analysis indicates that the overall six-year graduation rate has increased 11 percentage points over the last five years. The six-year graduation rate is above the threshold of acceptability, and in fall 2019 the rate exceeded the target.

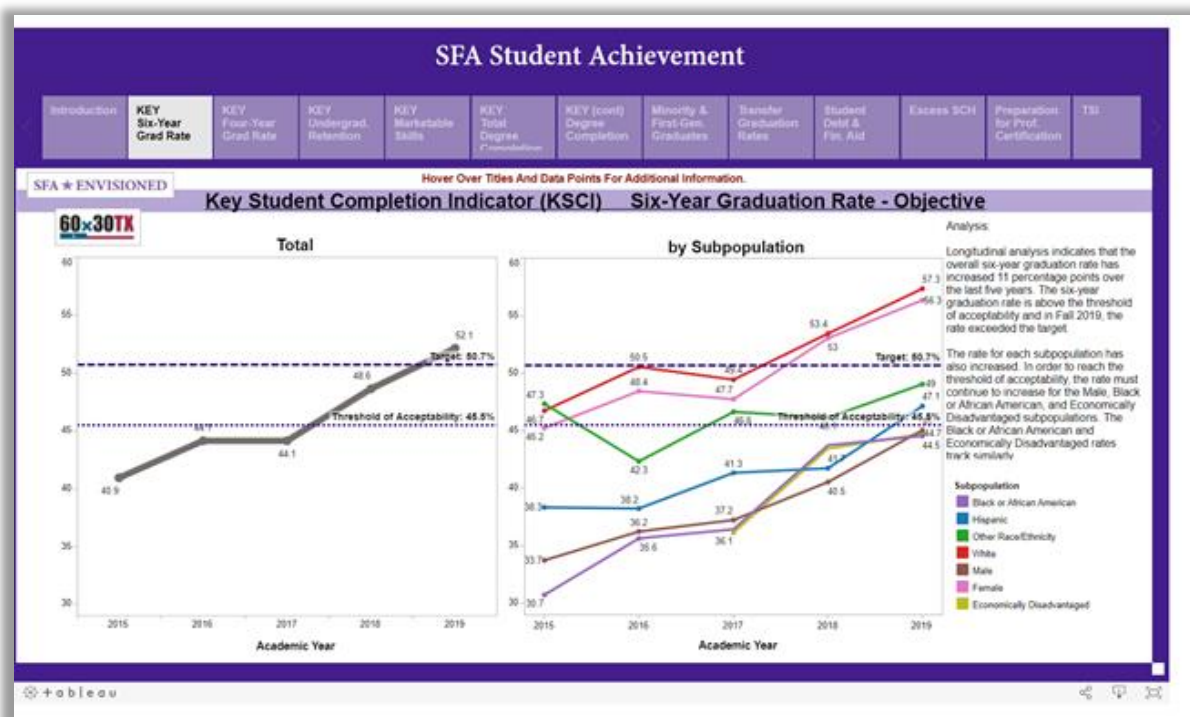


Figure 1 – 8.1 – Six-Year Graduation Rate

The rate for each subpopulation has also increased. In order to reach the threshold of acceptability, the rate must continue to increase for the Male, Black or African American, and Economically Disadvantaged subpopulations. The Black or African American and Economically Disadvantaged rates track similarly.



Four-Year Graduation Rate

“Four-Year Graduation Rate” is the percent of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates who earn a baccalaureate degree within four academic years. Four-year graduation rate is calculated as the number of first-time undergraduates in the base period cohort who have earned a baccalaureate degree divided by the total number of first-time undergraduates in the base period cohort. First-time includes students who take courses as first-time undergraduates during the summer session and continue as full-time students during the following fall semester. Full-time is defined as taking 12 semester credit hours.

Four-year graduation rate coordinates with the SFA Envisioned goals of transformative experiences for students, meaningful and sustained enrollment growth, and academic and co-curricular innovation, as well as the 60x30TX goals of *Completion* and an *Educated Population*.

SFA’s four-year graduation rates are displayed in Figure 2. The Texas Legislative Budget Board (LBB) outcomes performance target for this measure is 33%, and the median rate of SFA’s peers (31.3%) is set as the threshold of acceptability. Longitudinal analysis indicates that the four-year graduation rate has increased nine percentage points over the last five years. The four-year graduation rate is above the threshold of acceptability, and in Fall 2018, the rate exceeded the target.

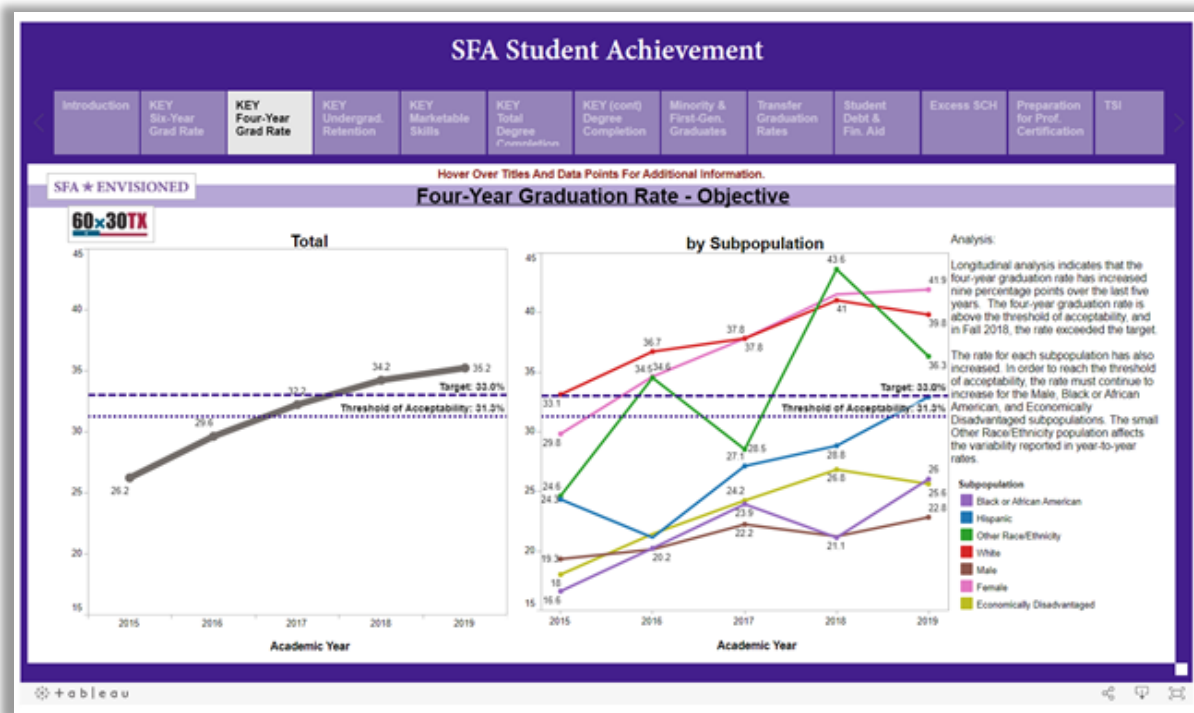


Figure 2 – 8.1 – Four-Year Graduation Rate

The rate for each subpopulation has also increased. In order to reach the threshold of acceptability, the rate must continue to increase for the Male, Black or African American, and



Economically Disadvantaged subpopulations. The small Other Race/Ethnicity population affects the variability reported in year-to-year rates.

First-time Undergraduate Retention

“First-time Undergraduate Retention” represents the percentage of first-time (in college after graduating from high school), degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled in at least 12 credit hours in the fall semester who enroll at SFA the following fall. Enrollment statuses are evaluated as of the fall census date. The undergraduate retention rate cohort description coincides with federal and state definitions, which include first-time undergraduate students enrolled in the summer term(s) prior to the fall semester when those students also subsequently enroll in 12 or more following fall credit hours. First-time undergraduate retention is also referenced as “freshmen retention rate” or “persistence rate of first-time students.”

First-time undergraduate retention coordinates with the SFA Envisioned goals of transformative experiences for students, meaningful and sustained enrollment growth, and academic and co-curricular innovation, as well as the 60x30TX goals of *Completion* and an *Educated Population*.

SFA’s first-time undergraduate retention rates are displayed in Figure 3. The average first-time undergraduate retention rate of SFA’s peers, 66.5%, is the threshold of acceptability for this measure. Longitudinal analysis indicates that the overall first-time undergraduate retention rate has increased five percentage points over the last nine years and is above the threshold of acceptability. The rate must increase nearly nine percentage points by 2023 to reach the target of 78.9% set forth in the 60x30TX strategic plan.

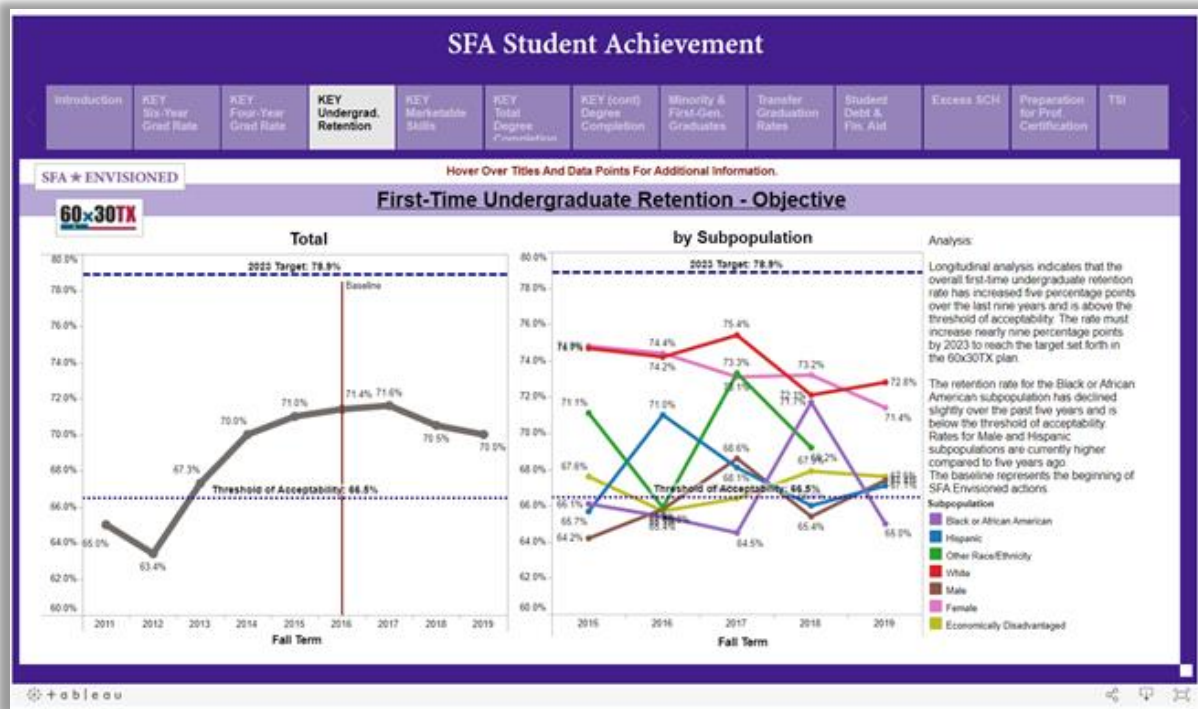


Figure 3 – 8.1 – First-Time Undergraduate Retention



The retention rate for the Black or African American subpopulation has declined slightly over the past five years and is below the threshold of acceptability. Rates for Male and Hispanic subpopulations are currently higher compared to five years ago. The baseline represents the beginning of SFA Envisioned actions.

Graduates with Marketable Skills

“Graduates with Marketable Skills” is the percentage of graduates found working or pursuing additional education one year after completing a credential. Outcome, targets, and criteria are prescribed by the Texas strategic plan (60x30TX), which notes student awareness of marketable skills and institutional contributions of working or enrolled students in the state.

Marketable skills coordinates with the SFA Envisioned goals of transformative experiences for students and academic and co-curricular innovation, as well as the 60x30TX goal of *Marketable Skills*.

The target for SFA is 80%, and the average rate of SFA’s peer institutions (79.6%) is designated as the threshold of acceptability. Marketable Skills data is displayed in Figure 4.

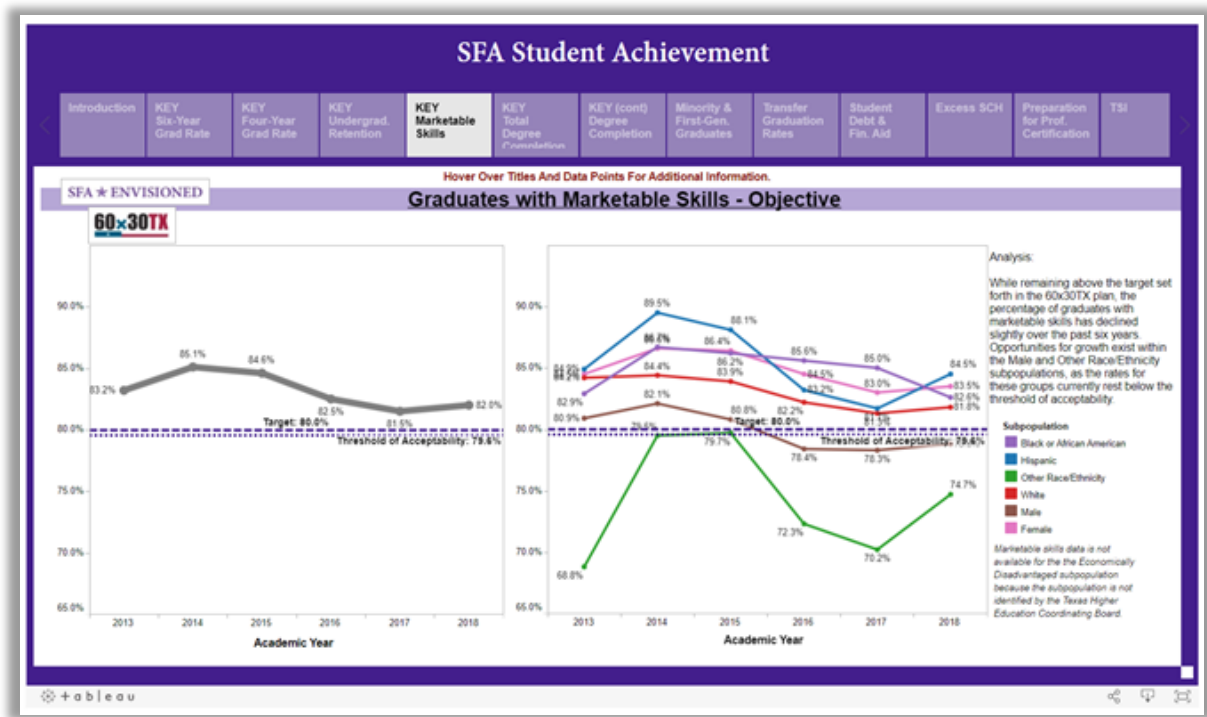


Figure 4 – 8.1 – Marketable Skills



While remaining above the target set forth in the 60x30TX plan, the percentage of graduates with marketable skills has declined slightly over the past six years. Opportunities for growth exist within the Male and Other Race/Ethnicity subpopulations, as the rates for these groups currently rest below the threshold of acceptability.

Degree Completions

“Total Degree Completions” is defined as the number of degrees awarded at all levels. Targets for academic years 2020, 2025, and 2030 are prescribed by the Texas Strategic Plan (60x30TX).

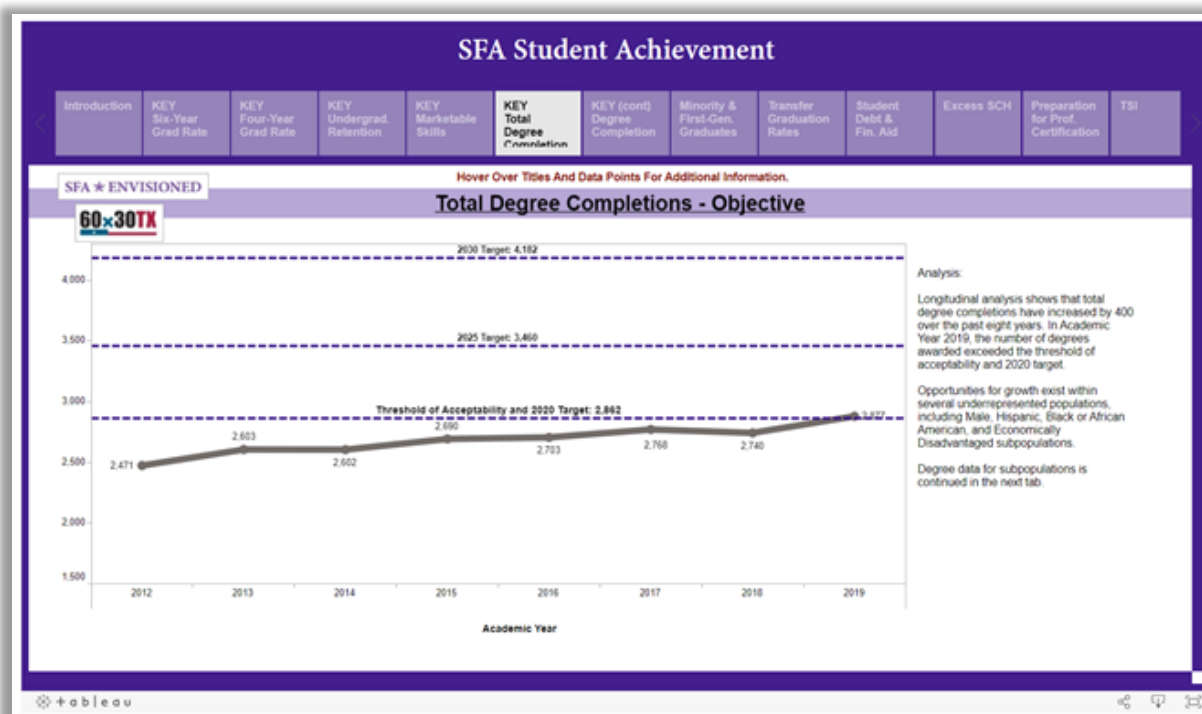


Figure 5 – 8.1 – Total Degree Completions

Longitudinal analysis of the data in Figure 5 shows that total degree completions have increased by 400 over the past eight years. In Academic Year 2019, the number of degrees awarded exceeded the threshold of acceptability and 2020 target.

The Texas Strategic Plan (60x30TX) also prescribes targets for degree completions of underrepresented populations, as seen in Figure 6. Opportunities for growth exist within several underrepresented populations, including Male, Hispanic, Black or African American, and Economically Disadvantaged subpopulations.



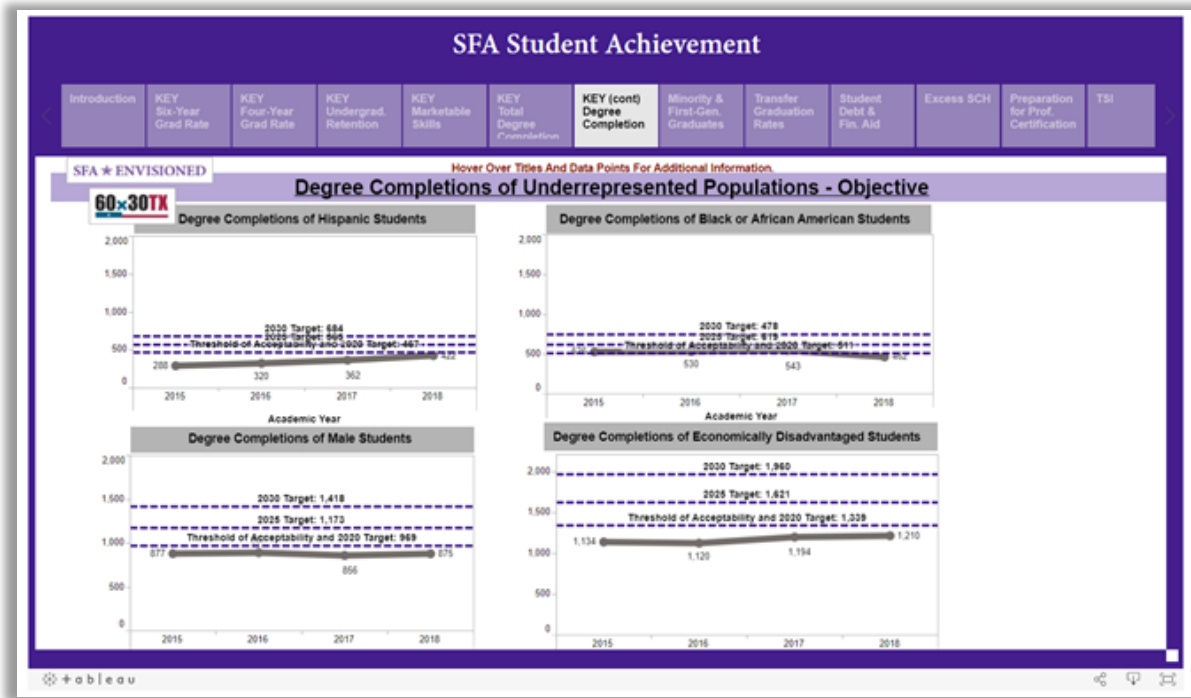


Figure 6 – 8.1 – Degree Completions of Underrepresented Populations

Contextual Measures

In addition to the primary institutional student achievement measures presented, SFA evaluates multiple contextual measures and data. The interactive tools serve as a basis for investigating longitudinal progress and identification of further study or actions needed for particular topics. Contextual student achievement measures are listed.

- Minority and first-generation graduates
- Transfer graduation rates
- Student debt and financial aid
 - o Percent of students with student loan debt
 - o Average student loan debt
 - o Average financial aid award per full-time student
 - o Percent of full-time students receiving financial aid
- Excess semester credit hours
- Preparation for professional practice
 - o Certification rate of teacher education graduates
 - o State licensure rate of nursing graduates
- Number of students who successfully complete Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Obligations
- Percent of semester credit hours completed



Conclusion

In conclusion, the data presented in this section confirm that SFA identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. SFA uses multiple measures to document student success related to these goals and outcomes. Student achievement goals and outcomes data are utilized in determining actions to ensure continued student success.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Overarching Goal.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Foundational Goal.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Supporting Goals.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA State Peer Selection Methodology.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] 60x30TX Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] 2018 Enrollment Actions Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Student Achievement Table.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] SFA and External Screenshots.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Dashboard Screenshots.pdf](#)



8.2.a The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

a) Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
(*Student outcomes: educational programs*) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) complies with this standard. Educational programs at SFA have identified expected learning outcomes, developed assessment measures for each outcome, established student performance criteria for success for each measure, annually assessed the extent to which they achieve those outcomes, and implemented improvements based on analysis of assessment results. SFA's process of continual improvement of academic programs has been ongoing and uninterrupted since Academic Year (AY) 2007-2008, when assessment plans for academic programs were entered in TracDat, SFA's reporting platform (now Nuventive Improve).

These plans included:

- Objectives: a definition of what the student should know and be able to do at the end of a program. These are the student learning outcomes for educational programs. For our purposes at SFA, the terms "outcomes" and "objectives" are used interchangeably.
- Assessment Methods: a description of the measurement used to determine students' level of attainment of the learning outcome.
- Criterion: a statement of the expected level of students' performance and benchmark to which students' performance on the assessment method will be judged or evaluated.

SFA faculty have a critical role in determining desired student learning outcomes for programs and courses, development or identification of appropriate assessment methods to document learning for each outcome, and development of appropriate criteria for each assessment method. SFA's assessment plans were operationalized beginning in AY 2008-2009 with the collection of the first round of assessment results. Outcomes were measured and reported on each year by program faculty with essentially no changes to outcomes or assessment methods. Improvement was difficult to illustrate, however, since much of the needed improvement existed outside the parameters of static and degree-specific SLOs. Therefore, to increase the likelihood of meaningful improvement, SFA's focus shifted away from this compliance model in 2016, and adopted a model designed with a focus on improvement. As program faculty see the need, based on analysis of assessment results and other relevant factors, the plans may evolve and be revised.



Annual assessment/institutional effectiveness reports for academic programs include the following, as appropriate:

- Results: a description of the primary results or findings from the program coordinator's analysis of the information collected from the assessment methods in relation to the criterion.
- Actions: a specific action plan the program coordinator has determined will be implemented to improve student performance on the outcome and/or the assessment plan.
- Follow-ups: an analysis that specifies how successful the implemented action plan was, and whether additional actions are needed to improve student performance on the outcome and/or the assessment plan.

While the faculty in academic programs are responsible for the assessment of their programs, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) at SFA has responsibility for the general oversight and support of institutional effectiveness efforts and reporting, including academic program assessment. The staff of the OIE oversee the entry of assessment results into SFA's online assessment management system, Nuventive Improve. OIE staff provide [training \[01\]](#), resources, and [support \[02\]](#) to units across campus. Our assessment cycle encompasses the entire academic year with a reporting deadline of November 1 of the next year. Units were encouraged to accelerate the closeout of AY 2019-2020 for inclusion in this report, but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented all units from meeting this accelerated reporting deadline.

A Note Regarding Modality and Location

Student learning outcomes for our educational programs are assessed, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). Distance education and off-site programs at SFA are required to follow the same schedule, procedures, and deadlines for assessment as main campus face-to-face programs. Programs that are offered through both online and face-to-face modalities have been asked to disaggregate assessment results for online and face-to-face students and to use the results from both groups in the formulation of their actions for improvement. Many of SFA's course offerings are online or hybrids of in-person and online. The COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, SFA is fully experienced in online instructional delivery and offers a variety of [distance education degrees \[03\]](#) and at the undergraduate and graduate level. Even when a degree program is delivered mainly face-to-face, most SFA students take at least one course that requires them to learn online.

There are a few documented cases of comparison between courses, but these emanate from genuine interest in quality control within a specific class. One example comes from the College of Business. In a particular evaluation, the criterion for student learning success was 75% of student meeting expectations based on a locally created rubric. Overall, 45 student samples were evaluated by two raters. Discrepancies of more than 1 point between raters were assessed by a third rater. Across all students, 84.44% met the criterion. Nine students from online sections were evaluated, and 77.78% of the students met the criterion. Of the 36 face-to-face students evaluated, 86.11% met the criterion. Another course surveyed 61 students over two years. Well



over 90% of online students met criteria on a separate rubric. In both cases, the criterion was met. The attached [document \[04\]](#) provides further details of these results.

The academic programs SFA offers at off-sites are required to follow the same schedule, procedures, and deadlines for assessment as main campus face-to-face programs. These programs include the Bachelor of Social Work at Tyler Junior College, and the Bachelor of Social Work, the Master of Social Work, and the Bachelor of Business Administration in Sports Business at Lone Star College Montgomery University Center.

A Note Regarding Dual Credit Courses at SFA

SFA's Institutional Effectiveness approach is run by faculty (usually program coordinators). Since dual credit courses have corresponding course sections on campus (and online), results for these courses necessarily involve student performance measures from all modes and locations of instruction. We offer the same credit; therefore, dual credit course results are held to the same standards and included in all resultant improvement approaches.

Exemplars with Narrative

The following narrative contains examples of the assessment reports from educational units at SFA, including online, dual credit, and face-to-face programs. These narrative examples are supplemented with four-column academic program assessment reports from each college for the past three assessment cycles (i.e., 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020). Hurricane Harvey delayed our mid-cycle review by one year. Since our latest review took place in 2017, the three academic years in these examples represent the period following our previous inquiry.

All plans presented in this narrative are provided for reference. The narrative also indicates key steps taken by SFA to ensure compliance with the guidelines, recommendations, and requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges regarding Comprehensive Standard 8.2.a.

Examples of Annual Outcomes Assessment and Program Improvement

Two examples from each of SFA's six colleges are highlighted below. These indicate how academic programs at SFA define objectives, measure outcomes, collect data regarding outcome attainment, and use data to determine the best course of action for improvement. The examples allow the reader to survey SFA's system in a variety of academic settings. This is not the only reason these programs are highlighted; this sampling illustrates myriad approaches to improvement. Even moreso, it exhibits the creativity, ingenuity, and flexibility of our faculty as they make adjustments—large and small—to the approaches they use to enhance student learning within their programs.



The Nelson Rusche College of Business

BBA Foundation

The BBA Foundation is the assessment of all common coursework for those degree programs that award a BBA (General Business BBA, Sports Business BBA, Management BBA, Accounting BBA, Business Communication and Corporate Education BBA, Business Economics BBA, Finance BBA, Banking BBA, Human Resource Management BBA, International Business BBA, and Marketing BBA). Please note that the [business reports \[05\]](#) follow a different format than other reports. The OIE at SFA work to provide value to our colleagues. This format fits with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Goal 4A states, “Our graduates will be able to apply key business concepts from across the business foundation curriculum and develop competency in the major business discipline - Students will complete a simulated business exercise applying the functional knowledge areas of business.”

To assess this, students in the Business Policy and Strategy course (MGT 463) completed a Capsim business simulation and the associated Comp-XM examination based upon this simulation experience. Capsim is a computerized business simulation program, and the course used Capsim to focus on the understanding of case studies as tools for business management. Officially, the company states:

Capsim builds online simulation and assessment software to help educators create meaningful learning experiences that prepare students for career success. [i]

The criterion for success was a class that came within 2% of the national average (50th percentile). Unfortunately, the median class percentile on the Comp-XM Balanced Scorecard for all students who completed the CAPSIM simulation in Fall 2017 was 25.5, below the expected 50th percentile. Failure can be a great teacher, so college faculty collaborated toward an approach to remedy the deficiency:

The Curriculum Committee discussed internally and with the faculty ways to engage students in experiential learning earlier in the business foundation so that they have more experience in solving applied business problems prior to MGT 463. The decision was made to pilot a simulation experience and a case study learning environment in GBU 325 [Business, Ethics, and Society] to see if adding a simulation experience earlier in the curriculum would help students on the capstone simulation. Additionally, the Dean made funds available to allow interested faculty members to obtain instruction in the case method of teaching during Summer of 2018, with the goal that more faculty members would use business case studies in their classrooms.

The following year, the median class percentile on the Balanced Scorecard for all students who completed the CAPSIM simulation in Fall 2018 was 36.67. While this is still below the



expectation, the result indicates an improvement and sustained effort toward graduating business majors capable of applying key business concepts from across multiple courses. Faculty removed the “within 2%” clause of the criterion for the following year. The most recent results (AY 2020) show that 48% of students scored above the 50th percentile. While this just missed the new, higher target of 50%, it represents yet another marked increase. The program coordinator writes, “We believe that this substantial increase in results is a result of previous action plans that have been implemented, namely the increased focus and devotion of funds towards increasing experiential learning across the curriculum.”

Accounting MPA

The Master of Public Accountancy degree is a five-year program. Upon completing this program, students graduate with both a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree. Of particular interest is data collected in ACC 512, Seminar in Accounting Research & Analysis. Analysis of and reflection upon the results led to an action plan *even though the criterion was met*. The criterion stated, “At least 70% of the students will score a 3 or higher.” The results section read, “83% of these students correctly demonstrated appropriate knowledge of technical accounting concepts through their ability to correctly identify applicable literature.” At that point, the instructors realized that a 30% failure rate (or even a 17% rate) was unacceptable. They took action to improve based on results from an assessment method and showed new intent through the related action plan:

While the students met the criterion for success, there was a decrease in the percentage scoring a 3 or higher from Spring 2017. Due to recent curriculum changes, we plan to reevaluate results in Spring 2019.

The same degree program coordinators used student feedback to determine whether new course requirements needed to be changed. Students indicated that they did not feel comfortable in their understanding of technical accounting concepts:

In investigating the [Spring 2019 results \[06\]](#), it was determined that the primary concern for students was their preparedness in the area of business tax. ACC 443 (Tax of Business) was recently added as an undergraduate course requirement. This will expose students to additional business tax information along with ACC 543 (Advanced Tax 1) at the graduate level. Students started to take this course at the undergraduate level in Fall 2019. It appears as if changes in the curriculum proved somewhat helpful. By Spring 2021, more graduate students will have had the opportunity to take the ACC 443 class and additional improvement should be recognized.

As you can see, a continual process of improvement is underway. By spring 2021, things may have changed, and students will feel more confident about their own skill levels. We know this: the faculty will assess and find out.



College of Liberal and Applied Arts

Mass Communication M.A.

For the post-bachelor's narrative, consider the Master of Arts in Mass Communication. The program has [five outcomes \[07\]](#) that were monitored over the three-year period:

- Mass Communication Theories
- Research Methodologies in Mass Communication
- Legal & Ethical Principles in the Media Industry
- Historical & Societal Implications
- Evolving Media Trends & Global Media

In each case, the program set standards for itself, with the ultimate goal of the program improving with each successive year. In the case of *evolving trends*, the setback came in 2018, when only 62.5% of the students rated a three or better on a four-point scale. This necessitated the following action plan: contacting students who do not read assignment feedback. This simple nudge led to a success increase of 16% year-over-year. Since the problem, as well as the solution, are fairly recent, the program determined to observe the success rate in 2020-2021 before increasing the criterion to a 75% passing rate.

A similar pattern can be seen in the *theories objective*, as well as the *legal/ethical objective*. As student performance improves, the criterion is adjusted incrementally toward 100% student success. In the *theory objective*, the problem reared itself in the 2018 academic year. A two-point plan was implemented, leading to students meeting the criterion in sufficient numbers. When further progress was documented the following year (AY 2020), the new criterion was adjusted to require 75% of students to perform acceptably on the assignment.

Student performance on the *historical context* was set at 75% of students earning a 4 or 5 on their assignment. This level was not met. However, student performance on the objective improved with a relatively simple fix: the instructor required a draft two and one half weeks prior to the final due date. Immediately, both student contact and assignment structure were enhanced. In these cases—like the others—there is a consistent push for all students to perform well on important assignments. The *research objective* plans for 80% success next year.

Political Science B.A./B.S.

There are two phrases that occur within the program's institutional effectiveness [plan \[08\]](#):

1. *While these numbers are not consistent with previous semesters, they are a concern to the program.*
2. *While the program goals are being met, the Political Science program has reassessed . . .*

This is important because the criteria set for success may or may not indicate sufficient effectiveness at any given point in time. Occasional setbacks can occur, and with low



expectations (such as the Oral Communication criterion) success can feel lackluster. What is important is that the program remains focused on a pattern of continual improvement. The criteria act as a gauge for the faculty; their collective discussions regarding student success are the drivers behind their IE plan.

Political Science faculty at SFA use multiple measures to ensure progress. For example, it is critical to the faculty that students are able to “clearly articulate hypotheses.” The program faculty check this criterion during a relatively early course, the Political Research Methods class (PSC 303). They also check for learning and growth in the department’s senior capstone course (PSC 490).

In a fairly unique action, the faculty determined that PSC 303 should be offered each semester, as opposed to once per year. This adjustment allows for smaller classes and more instructor time spent with individual students. This led to an improvement of results in the research objective in PSC 303. A similar move was made with the Senior Seminar course (PSC 490). This is significant for two reasons. First, the program faculty determined that the best solution was not remediation or curricular adjustment, but a change in the frequency of course offerings. Also interesting, the faculty determined that data from one course could inform meaningful decisions affecting a later course in the sequence.

Perkins College of Education

Human Sciences B.S. (Human Development and Family Studies)

Much like other programs, this program necessarily ties its objectives to a set of standards from a professional association—in this case, the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). In AY 2017, many of the program’s institutional effectiveness [objectives \[09\]](#) were not meeting set criteria. Sometimes the cause was simply a failure to teach the objective in a class. Other situations regarded a mismatch between an assignment’s requirements and the skill level or subject matter being assessed. In one case, the assessment revealed a distractor from within an assignment. In each case, the faculty analyzed, met, discussed, and determined the path forward.

In one case, a relatively new objective (*Families and Individuals in Social Contexts*) was assessed during the 2019-2020 academic year. Parallel to Certified Family Life Educator requirements (offered through NCFR), the objective’s wording read, “Learners will identify social & cultural influences affecting family life.” A criterion was set that 80% of students would perform satisfactory work, as delineated by a rubric. Out of 91 work samples, only 75.8% were satisfactory. Since faculty meet regularly to discuss progress, a two-pronged approach was agreed upon. As a short-term action plan, faculty added additional information on social and cultural influences to the course. This information would need to stay current, so each semester there will be curricular updates. The point of these changes is simple: faculty want to make such information more relevant (“real”) for students. There is also a long-term plan. Faculty

...discussed that we desire that students at this level of the undergraduate program should have a good grasp of social and cultural influences on the family. We would like



to introduce the concepts at an earlier point in the curriculum and make it a larger focus area. As a result, we are planning to develop a 200-level “Diversity in Families” course to be submitted through SFA’s Curriculum Committee in AY 2021.

Educational Leadership Ed.D.

The Educational Leadership Ed.D. had a focus on professional synthesis. Their first objective states that a graduate should be able “to synthesize each year’s study in relation to his/her growth as a scholar-practitioner leader.” This is another case where the Doctoral Faculty Council noted the mean average scores were acceptable (with exception of one student). Despite this, it was noted there was room for improvement, so the faculty discussed the situation. The Doctoral Faculty Council met in Fall 2018 (September, October) to review the assessment results for both Portfolio Synthesis I and II (AED 650 & AED 651). The worst component performance was not in the learning and production, but rather the presentation skills of the doctoral candidates. This led the Council to focus on three primary objectives: (1) preparing the portfolio and selection of contents to align with assessment criteria (including graded work from each doctoral faculty member) and the need to address the preparation of the portfolio in terms of both artifacts and narrative analysis on the part of the doctoral students; (2) addressing alignment between the physical content and the oral presentation; and (3) revisiting the rubric, itself.

It should be noted that this program is added to show how the IE system handles significant changes in program structures or personnel. Significant faculty turnover has occurred, and SFA is in the process of working with new faculty to continue institutional effectiveness actions. This has resulted in new SLOs, and a new overall [plan \[10\]](#). Because of this, you will see “Directed No Report” listed in the Result section. This is illustrative of OIE’S flexible approach to planning and reporting. Since the former objectives were not foci moving forward, it is imperative that we keep IE relevant to all of SFA’s stakeholders. Data will be collected in coming years, as the new faculty implement a new program, discussed in the AY 2020 Action Plan, quoted below:

For AY 21-22, as a result of major curricular changes to the program, the following will be implemented as the new Program Learning Outcomes:

Students graduating with an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership will be able to:

- 1) use data, policy, and research to lead continuous improvement and drive transformative change and innovation in P-20 education settings (EDLE 6321);
- 2) demonstrate knowledge of ethical and moral responsibilities of leadership (EDLE 6302);
- 3) apply theory and contextual knowledge to educational practice (EDLE 6304);
- 4) practice analytical and communication skills in leadership roles (EDLE 6313); and
- 5) understand, design, and conduct research in educational leadership (EDLE 6199).



College of Science and Mathematics

Nursing (Post RN) BSN

This program, while technically a bachelor's degree, functions differently than most programs. In this case, the students come to SFA having already passed their examinations and gained RN credentials. The Post RN (or "RN to BSN") represents an innovative approach in the nursing profession.

The OIE has worked closely with the leadership of the Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing (SON) to move toward improvement [objectives \[11\]](#). This is difficult, since the formal requirements of nursing schools are voluminous and burdensome. Our partnership resulted in three significant improvements:

- The SON plan is turning toward improvement and away from compliance.
- The OIE developed a means for SON leadership to track their Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing progress in another part of Nuventive Improve.
- The partnership led to an [article \[12\]](#) in *Assessment in Practice*, the working journal of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

As a part of their improvement process, the SON offered three separate entry points each year and lowered the cost burden on students. One key example of reflective practice involves the Health Education System, Inc. Examination (HESI). Participation was low, and mean scores were consistently lower than national average scores, and further investigation revealed an obvious cause:

The RN-BSN students have not had medical surgical nursing since their Associate Degree Nursing programs. See attached Summative Course Evaluation for NUR 440.

Sometimes, the best course of action is to remove unhelpful activities:

HESI testing in the RN-BSN program will be discontinued for multiple reasons. First, the technical requirements for students taking HESI remotely are cumbersome and not all students have computers that are compatible with HESI requirements. Secondly, the HESI Exam scores are a prediction of student success on NCLEX, and these students have already passed NCLEX. Thirdly, after discussing assessment measures for the End of Program Student Learning Outcomes at the School of Nursing Administrative meetings, it was determined that course HESIs are not the best assessment measure since these HESIs are content-based and not cumulative. Instead, a Capstone project will be implemented for students to demonstrate and support how they have met the End of Program Student Learning Outcomes.

A capstone project will replace the standardized test. This is regarded as a more meaningful way to determine whether the End of Program SLOs are being met.



Engineering Physics B.S.

This degree program is quite new, and a large part of the unit's focus has been recruiting, staffing, and achieving accreditation from Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). As there are only four years of reports for this unit, the entire IE planning history is included with this narrative. This degree is included because it serves as an example of a startup IE plan and documentation of SFA's IE approach change that came in recent years. This provides a look into an IE report from a department in a unique situation.

A few historical points (usually documented in the Action/Follow-up section):

- The initial *assessment* plan was focused completely on the ABET standards.
- ABET changed their standards toward a more streamlined approach.
- The new *institutional effectiveness* approach led to a focus on what needed to improve.

Thus, there were *three separate stages* to this IE plan: the first plan from scratch, adjustment to new ABET standards, and adjustment to new IE expectations. As a result of these events and policy changes, this report offers contextual features not found in any of the other provided IE reports:

- The report includes four years of information to illustrate the very beginning of the process.
- Objectives are marked INACTIVE on the later pages, indicating what was let go for the newer plans.
- The term *Directed No Report* is used. This indicates that someone from the OIE (or someone in the college's administration) determined it best to implement new objectives or foci, making it impossible to report on newly-initiated plans.
- By the third page, you see evidence of reflective instructional practice.
- When the number of foci decreases, the energy put to improving that smaller number of objectives increases. The report writer put it this way (p. 6 and others):

The leaning of the assessment process to 2 to 3 outcomes every year has helped us focus on key problem areas in our courses and program.

- This program is four years old, and the assessment/IE [report \[13\]](#) covers 38 pages.

College of Fine Arts

Art Certification (EC-12)

This is not a certificate awarded by the university nor is it a degree program. However, it is a significant component of the School of Art's educational programs. Each semester, the School of Art administers a comprehensive examination that is designed to mimic the content examination for EC-12 Art certification in the State of Texas. A passing score would be 75% correct, and the assessment criterion was set at a 50% pass rate, but students consistently scored lower. Despite



the continued below-criterion performance of students on the practice exam, a high percentage of students pass the actual content exam and achieve teacher certification.

Several actions have been explored. Exam preparation continued, but new test preparation measures were added. Next came a search for a better practice examination from Pearson. More significant was that the faculty felt a revised course sequence in the art education program would allow a clearer progression in content, allowing course content to be more specifically tailored to beginning students at early stages in the program, with advanced students returning later in the course sequence.

Outside of standardized tests, there were more portfolio-based approaches to assessment. In one example, students created lesson plans that aligned with Texas Education Agency standards. These are called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Using a locally [designed rubric \[14\]](#) , students were assessed on five separate benchmarks.

In AY 2018, [results \[15\]](#) were mixed. Though 4 of 5 criteria for the assessment were met, the data showed room for improvement in student expression of both assessment methods and age appropriate strategies in their lesson plans. The art education faculty worked to develop additional scaffolding for students through readings, interaction with school-age children, lectures (when appropriate), or other suitable teaching methods, all with an increased emphasis on assessment and age appropriate lesson planning. The next semester/year, the same assignment was given.

The ensuing results were not satisfactory; in fact, they were much worse. *None* of the 5 criteria for the assessment were met, with data showing room for improvement in all areas, with a greater emphasis on diversifying assessment methods and seeking age appropriate strategies in their lesson plans.

The art education faculty will continue to develop additional scaffolding for students in the form of added readings, interaction with school-age children, lectures, or other appropriate teaching methods for an increased emphasis on assessment and age appropriate lesson planning. More significantly, the School of Art is exploring a revised course sequence in the art education program to allow for a clear progression in content, allowing course content to be more specifically tailored to beginning students early, and advanced students later, in the course sequence.

Art BFA

Throughout the assessment process, the criteria have remained stable. The art faculty have a vision for success, and they choose to adjust their approach to achieve that success. Overall, two classes are being adjusted as a means of improving the quality of work (indicated by [rubric scores \[16\]](#)). First, they have created an art-specific section of SFA's freshman orientation/student success course, SFA 101, designed to help students get a better understanding of what contemporary art is, what will be expected of them in the program, and how to be successful as a student in the program. New students are advised in summer orientation sessions



to take these art-specific sections of SFA 101. Also, students will be advised to take ART 492 (Professional Practices) earlier in their degree plan.

This leads to the second approach. The curriculum for the required ART 492 class has been changed to help students prepare work that meets desired outcomes in technique, concept, and professional preparation. Now, students will be divided into separate sections of the class that are more aligned with their desired career paths. There will be separate sections of the class for filmmaking, graphic design, and studio art students, as opposed to keeping them all in one large section. Like the first approach, the goal is a student-centered, more relevant creation experience. See the [Art BFA Assessment Plan \[17\]](#).

Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture (ATCOFA)

Environmental Science MS (MSES)

The Environmental Science [program \[18\]](#) is transitioning, and their assessment work indicates such change. This program was chosen for illustration, in part, because it exemplifies use of the institutional effectiveness process to improve (or maintain quality) in the face of negative circumstances. Now, more than any other time in our lives, such action is pertinent to higher education.

By necessity, the MSES program is based on two key factors: closed-book examinations and graduate theses. The program has two tracks. One is a thesis track; one a non-thesis track. For over 20 years, SFA had offered a concentration in environmental and occupational health as part of its M.S. in Environmental Science offsite at the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler (UTHSCT). However, in 2017, UTHSCT discontinued this arrangement, and some of the non-thesis data did not materialize. This is noted in the IE plans.

Regarding the program's efforts to seek improvement, note the *Environmental Risk Assessment* section (page 3), which consists of a comprehensive, closed-book written examination. The criterion is set at 90% of students passing. Over the course of two years, the combined results only represent the work of ten students. Of those, 50% met the standard. However, in AY 2019, 75% of students passed. This is much better than the 33% success rate from AY 2018. In response to these passing rates, the director conferred with the faculty member, who suggested some wording changes in the examination to better match what students are taught.

Regarding *Occupational and Environmental Health*, only 50% met standard in AY 2018. This resulted in a major change. A new instructor was brought in to teach the class, resulting in a 75% pass rate. Again, the progress is apparent, but the criterion was not met. This data was shared with the new instructor, who made changes accordingly.

Throughout the IE report, the same themes emerge. The program took a blow from a severed agreement with UTHSCT. Test scores were not meeting criteria. New instructors and new approaches are being utilized to improve the situation.



Forestry BSF

This [program \[19\]](#) was chosen because it is a fundamental degree to the ATCOFA. No account of the college would be complete without this inclusion.

Perhaps the best example of the program's push for continual improvement is the first objective, *Forest Ecology and Biology Understanding and Competence*. In AY 2018, there were shortcomings in student performance. The Forestry faculty met to discuss whether the deficit warranted remediation and what potential remediation could be implemented. The next year, extra credit was given to any student passing this examination, which provided extrinsic motivation toward success. The criterion was met during AY 2019. Unfortunately, the criterion was not met the following year. As a result, the examination's importance was stressed to students. Also, the wording of one question was altered.

Faculty expected results to improve in the Spring of 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shutdown, which forced new and different methods of teaching, learning, and evaluation. The examination was not given during the semester. Results for AY 2020 are based only on Fall 2019 data, and they show a 76% success rate, missing the overall 80% rate slightly. (Note that one more successful student attempt would have met the criterion.)

This led the program coordinator to note the following:

Student performance in this area has been steadily declining over the past few years. Extra credit was offered to students meeting the criteria [sic] in Spring 2019 to address the concern that students were not taking the exam seriously since there was no grade attached to it.

The assessment four-column report indicates the following measures were taken to improve student performance on learning outcomes:

- Faculty discussion
- Changes to the question wording
- New faculty in place
- Refresher lectures
- Extrinsic motivation (extra credit)
- Curriculum changes (potentially)
- Assessment of the assessment itself

While the above examples were selected to illustrate how academic programs at SFA follow through the complete assessment process to make improvements in their programs, not all academic programs at SFA regularly demonstrate that they are making improvements. The OIE works with the faculty of programs that are not regularly demonstrating improvement to determine appropriate changes to IE plans, appropriate changes to data interpretation, or identification of more meaningful improvement targets. OIE's efforts to help notwithstanding,























the planning, assessment, execution, and reporting remain under the direction of the program, office, or college.

All academic program assessment reports are available [here \[20\]](#).

[i] <https://www.capsim.com/>. Retrieved July 9, 2020.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] OIE Training Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] OIE Support Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Distance Education Inventory 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] BCM 247 Example.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] BBA Foundation.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Accounting MPA.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Mass Communication M.A. pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Political Science BA-BS.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] B.S. Human Sciences \(Human Development and Family Studies\).pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Educational Leadership Ed.D.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Nursing \(Post RN\).pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Emerging Dialogues - Nursing's Different.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Engineering Physics BS.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Effective Lesson Planning Assessment Rubric.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Art Certification \(EC-12\).pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Art BFA - PLO1 Result.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Art BFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Environmental Sciences MS \(MSSS\).pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Forestry BSF.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Academic Program Assessment Reports Binder.pdf](#)



8.2.b The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

b) Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.

(Student outcomes: general education)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves those outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for the university's undergraduate general education competencies, which derive from the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC). In keeping with the spirit of SACSCOC's Principles of Accreditation, SFA faculty created, led, and implemented our approach to general education according to the parameters of the TCC.

The Core Curriculum Committee

A faculty committee, headed by an assistant dean, directs the assessment of SFA's general education core. The [Core Curriculum Committee \[01\]](#) (CCC; formerly the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee) meets monthly to discuss the current core status and determine the future direction of general education assessment activities. The CCC reviews syllabi each year to find the evidence of core instruction. The deans of the six colleges at SFA nominate the CCC faculty-voting members. CCC voting membership includes a representative of the library faculty and the Faculty Senate. While other staff are present at these meetings, they do not vote. The Institutional Effectiveness director, the director, and the associate provost serve as ex officio members. All other staff observe as non-members and answer questions from the committee. The university curricular modification process incorporates all CCC decisions regarding core curriculum content. (See also section 9.1 and 9.3.) The committee forwards all decisions regarding core assessment to the provost for administrative approval. Artifacts of CCC activities are attached to this narrative. [\[02\]](#) [\[03\]](#) [\[04\]](#) [\[05\]](#)

The Texas Higher Education Core Curriculum

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approved a major revision of the Texas Core Curriculum on October 27, 2011. This [revision \[06\]](#) included a "42 semester credit hour core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas...[including]...a statement of purpose, six core objectives, and common component areas." The statement of purpose says:

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of



personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. (THECB, 2018, Texas Core Curriculum)

Institutions are required to submit a report to the THECB on institutional assessment of the core. This happens every 10 years, and the THECB submission coincides with the institution’s SACSCOC submission. Accountability for assessment of the core objectives is at the institutional level. The THECB staff reviews these reports to confirm ongoing assessment of the core objectives.

The Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) is sub-divided. The first division—the Component Areas—describes specific types of courses that should be taken. The second division—the Core Objectives—indicate which specific skills should derive from each Component Area. Table 1 below depicts the TCC.

Component Area	Core Objectives					
	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional	Required
Mathematics	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	Required	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Creative Arts	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Required	Optional
American History	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Government & Political Science	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
Social & Behavioral Science	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Optional
Component Area Option	Required	Required	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent

Table 1 – 8.2.b. – Texas Core Curriculum Visualization



Each instructor in each core course must address four core objectives required of their academic discipline. (Note: Mathematics courses are the exception, having only three objectives to address.) It is expected that instruction in the Core Component Areas lead to student mastery of the Core Objectives. SFA assesses the Core Objectives.

The component area descriptions of the TCC are as follows:

Communication - Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Mathematics - Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.

Life and Physical Sciences - Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.

Language, Philosophy, and Culture - Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

Creative Arts - Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

American History - Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area (3 out of 6 hours). Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.

Government/Political Science - Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.



Social and Behavioral Sciences - Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.

Component Area Option –

- a. A minimum of 3 SCH, the Component Area Option must meet the definition and corresponding core objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas.
- b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that:
 - (i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and
 - (ii) Include(s) a minimum of three core objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining core objectives of the institution's choice. (THEBC, 2018, Foundational component areas)

SFA's component area option courses include English Research and Argument, Business Communication, Technical and Scientific Writing, Elementary Language courses, Beginning and Intermediate American Sign language, and International and Intercultural Communications courses.

Along with the six component areas of the core, the THECB determined six specific objectives that students should master and that faculty and staff should assess. These Core Objectives are as follows:

Critical Thinking Skills: assignments that allow students to demonstrate the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of texts, data, or issues. Assignments focused on the evaluation of information sources and student reflection may also be appropriate.

Communication Skills: any assignment that requires students to present a grammatically correct essay or speech effectively organized with an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, supportive reasoning, and appropriately documented evidence. If the assignment is an oral presentation, the assignment should also require effective verbal and nonverbal delivery. Visual design elements should be incorporated into communication assignments. Visual elements include, but are not limited to, photographs, graphs, tables, charts, slides, videos, presentation graphics, etc.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills: assignments where logic, scientific analysis, or mathematical analysis may be required. Empirical skills must address the thinking process as it is



demonstrated through observation, experimentation, and/or experience and that can be demonstrated through quantitative data and/or qualitative reasoning. Quantitative skills will ideally demonstrate a student's higher-order thinking capabilities through the use of applied logic and/or analytical assignments that have a purpose beyond merely providing the "right" answer.

Teamwork: assignments that demonstrate the quality of the teamwork process rather than the end result. Assignments will demonstrate evidence of an individual's contribution and interaction within a team.

Personal Responsibility: assignments that require students to reason about ethical human conduct. Assignments may involve, but are not limited to, requiring students to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Social Responsibility: assignments that provide students the opportunity to demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and/or global communities. Assignments also allow students to demonstrate the cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett, 2008). Assignments may involve, but are not limited to, service-learning projects, volunteering, civic awareness activities, political involvement, reflective learning activities, discussions about race/ethnic relations, and diversity experiences.

When SFA assesses general education, the focus is these six Core Objectives. We do not determine the effectiveness of specific courses or components within courses; rather, we determine whether students as a whole are mastering the Core Objectives. SFA expects each instructor in each core course to address the four core objectives required of their academic discipline. (As noted above, mathematics courses have three objectives to address.) The CCC reviews selected syllabi each year to verify evidence of core objective instruction in these lower-level courses, but mastery is a community effort.

Core Instruction Across All Levels

SFA's core assessment process allows for evaluation of the core objectives as students progress from lower-level courses through upper-level courses. Student learning outcomes for our collegiate-level general education competencies of our undergraduate degree programs are assessed, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). The focus on measuring performance at the upper-level supports the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2018) requirement that the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. The CCC interpretation of the standard is that SACSCOC expects the development of the general education competencies/objectives to take place throughout a student's college career, and not just in lower-level core courses.



Therefore, to gain an accurate picture of student achievement on general education competencies/objectives, it became necessary to measure student achievement as close to the end of the student's college career as possible.

Extant Data: The Senior Exit Survey

Fortunately, for the past six years our graduating seniors have taken a detailed survey about their experiences at SFA. As part of the Senior Exit Survey, students have been asked to rate the progress they felt they had made in each of the six objectives of the Texas Core Curriculum. Students were asked to rate their level of progress from 1 (NONE) to 5 (I REALLY made progress at SFA.) For purposes of Core assessment, scores of 4 and 5 are positive indicators. Figure 1 illustrates the results Core Component Areas (color-coded). The percentages reflect respondents answering 4 or 5 on a five-point Likert scale by Year of SES Administration (x-axis data points). This strong self-assessment data is one built-in way SFA can estimate core attainment.

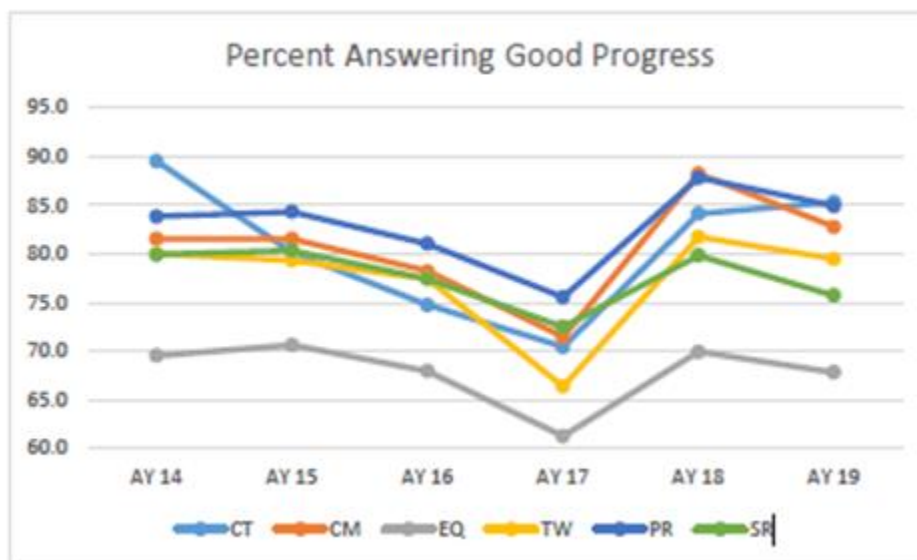


Figure 1 – 8.2.b. – Graduate Self-Assessment of Core Attainment

In all six administration years, Empirical and Quantitative Skills had the least perceived improvement. Through AY 2017, responses were continuing a downward pattern; however, graduate self-assessment has been more positive in the past two administration years. Of special note is the Critical Thinking response set, which indicates a positive trend line over the past two years. Overall, graduates felt they progressed the most in Personal Responsibility.

Early Core Curriculum Assessment (Fall 2014 – Fall 2019):

To assess the core objectives mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, SFA created faculty work teams to modify the Association of American College & Universities Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics to fit our campus purposes. To the extent possible, rubric teams consisted of representatives from each



component area required to assess an objective, and specialists in assessment of a particular objective. The design of the common rubrics focuses on the skills developed through the core objectives, and not on course content-specific information. The teams started their work by modifying these VALUE rubrics to fit the needs of SFA. The [final rubrics \[07\]](#) developed by the teams for use at SFA are attached to this narrative.

Faculty members were required to design a common assignment for all sections of each course designated “core.” The Core Curriculum Committee reviewed these signature assignments for alignment to the required and optionally selected objectives. The CCC notified the departments if the assignments did not align effectively with TCC Core Objectives. On such occasions, the department was required to submit modifications, revisions, or new assignments.

The assignment went through the CCC for approval. Once approved, a signature assignment was given to students, with any consequence (i.e. grade points) at the discretion of the instructor. Students then uploaded this assignment into SFA’s LiveText system (online). In the fall of 2014, the committee gathered written communication and written and visual communication core objective student work samples. This began an ongoing process that continued through the fall of 2019. Table 2 depicts the Collection Plan used by SFA, including specific courses.

Student work Collected COMPONENT AREAS	CORE OBJECTIVES					
	Critical Thinking Fall of Odd Years	Communication Skills Fall of Even Years	Empirical & Quantitative Skills Spring of Odd Years	Teamwork Spring of Even Years	Social Responsibility Spring of Even Years	Personal Responsibility Spring of Odd Years
Communication	COM 170; GER 131; POR 131; SPA 131, 132	Written BCM 247; ENG 131, 132, 133H Written and Visual ENG 273 Oral and Visual COM 111	Optional	COM 215; SPH 172, 272	Optional	FRE 131, 132; GER 132; POR 132
Mathematics	MTH 220	Written and Visual MTH 127, 233	MTH 110, 138, 143	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	GOL 101, 131, 132	Written BIO 123; PHY 241	AGN 110; AST 105; BIO 121, 131, 133, 225, 238; ENV 110; PHY 100, 101, 102, 110, 118, 131, 132, 242	BIO 125; CHE 101, 111, 133, 134	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	HIS 151, 161	Written ENG 200, 209, 211, 212, 221, 222, 229, 230, 233H	Optional	Optional	HIS 152, 162; ENG 223H	PHI 153, 223
Creative Arts	THR 161, 163	Written ART 280, 281, 282	Optional	MHL 245; MUS 140	DAN 140	Optional
American History	HIS 134	Written HIS 133	Optional	Optional	HIS 134	HIS 133
Government & Political Science	PSC 142	Written and Visual PSC 142	Optional	Optional	PSC 141	PSC 141
Social & Behavioral Science	ECO 231, 232	Written and Visual GEO 131 Written PSY 133	SOC 137	Optional	ANT 231	Optional

Table 2 – 8.2.b. – Core Courses Mapped to Objectives for Which They Will Collect Student Work Beginning Fall 2016

The above chart shows the semester of collection for each of the Core Objectives, as well as the specific courses that were providing specific artifacts. Artifacts scoring occurred the semester following their collection. OIE staff members trained the members of the 6-10 Scoring Teams, who were appointed by deans. The scoring team members used the SFA-specific rubrics to



assess student mastery of Core Objectives. OIE distributed the [results \[08\]](#) of these assessments throughout the campus community each academic year to inform potential adjustments that might be required based on the data. In the spring of 2018, student work from upper-level courses began collection. Chart 4 illustrates collection by year.

	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Student Work Collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Communication • Social Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Communication • Social Responsibility <p>(Repeated fall and spring of every even numbered year)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical and Quantitative Skills • Teamwork • Personal Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical and Quantitative Skills • Teamwork • Personal Responsibility <p>(Repeated fall and spring of odd numbered years)</p>
Student Work Assessed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Communication • Social Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Communication • Social Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical and Quantitative Skills • Teamwork • Personal Responsibility

Table 3 – 8.2.b – Schedule for Assessment of Student Work from Upper-Level Courses

The CCC made adjustments and improvements throughout the process in repeated attempts to enhance the process, increase faculty buy-in, and produce meaningful, actionable data that would support improvement of student outcome attainment. A streamlined process led to the elimination of one platform for collecting core assessment results (LiveText), saving the University approximately \$210,000 per year. Sample sizes were adjusted to conform to workload expectations and common practice. Likewise, the time spent calibrating scorers was adjusted. Yet, none of these attempts led to the meaningful results SFA required.

Seeking Improvement

The data generated from our assessment process did not provide immediately actionable data for improvement. We knew that on a 0-4 VALUE rubric scale, our students in core courses were performing in the 1.9 – 2-2 level, which straddles the Beginning and Developing levels, in nearly every assessed area. The CCC was not able to identify specific curricular adjustments that would appeal across diverse disciplines and instructors. Additionally, it would be difficult to accurately assess the variety of adjustments across the breadth of the courses associated with the core objectives to identify what worked and what did not.

Rather than focus on a curricular approach to improve student attainment of the core objectives, the CCC worked with the university’s [Academic Assistance and Resource Center \(AARC\) \[09\]](#) to enhance student learning and objective attainment. The AARC program directors incorporated the [core assessment data \[08\]](#) into their planning processes and departmental outreach activities



to revise services and, when required, created new services to address potential student learning deficiencies from the assessment process and other student academic success metrics. Examples include the development of a walk-in table and supplemental instruction for economics (Critical Thinking) tutoring in AY17-18 which was expanded in AY 18-19 to include 1:1 tutoring sessions, and [learning teams \[10\]](#). The AARC expanded the capability and access of the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\) \[11\]](#) in AY 18-19 and was able to assist 1,121 students improving their writing skills (Written Communication).

Justification for a Change in Plan

SFA's initial core assessment [plan \[12\]](#) won [awards \[13\]](#) for its thoroughness and substance. This well-structured plan met the THECB requirements on multiple fronts; however, unforeseen confounding factors relegated the core assessment ineffective. Core Objectives are equivocal in nature, and determining attainment of these objectives proved quite difficult. The initial process was cumbersome, with hundreds of instructors and thousands of students involved for untold hours.

One key issue emanated from the fact that the faculty must maintain control of the curriculum, even in core courses. Because of this tenet, the assignment format of the signature assignment remained at the discretion of the instructor. While some instructors infused signature assignments into their normal course routine, others used the signature assignments as extra-credit options. Still others offered no credit whatsoever for signature assignments and only announced the THECB requirement to students. This resulted in mixed quality in the student artifact pool. Student performance has been consistent across all VALUE rubric dimensions for all objectives. While this could provide a potentially good baseline of convenience, the lack of corresponding reliable upper level work made improvement difficult to quantify.

Similar issues came from supplemental measures within the plan. Since multiple measures are preferred, the original model called for administration of the SFA Senior Exit survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and the Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile (ETS-PP). This contributed to the burdens on faculty, staff, and students. Further, there was nothing in place to require students to complete these assessments. Thus, the data could be skewed at times. For example, not enough faculty scheduled time for administration of the ETS-PP in their classes and the upper-level respondents became a sample of convenience, usually limited to seniors majoring in education. Freshman-level course instructors accommodated the lower level administration through random agreement with only one or two instructors allowing the administration of the test in their classes. None of the testing occurred through a systematic approach.

A more acute version of the data quality issue became evident only after collecting upper-level assignments (beginning in 2018). Requesting faculty in capstone courses to create or modify assignments for purposes of the Core Curriculum was a non-starter. The only reasonable and practicable approach was to make requests of every dean and chair to provide at least one assignment that addressed one or more of the Core Objectives.



Too many upper-level student work samples did not align well with the core objective rubrics. While the quality of these assignments was high, the artifacts had applicability issues. For example, PowerPoint slides do not lend themselves to the AACU Communication rubric. Upper-level scores reflected this discrepancy. In the summer of 2019, OIE analyzed the comparative scores of students in lower-level courses (using signature assignments) and upper-level students (using relevant assignments). Figure 2 indicates that core-complete, upper-level students knew less than their less-advanced counterparts did.

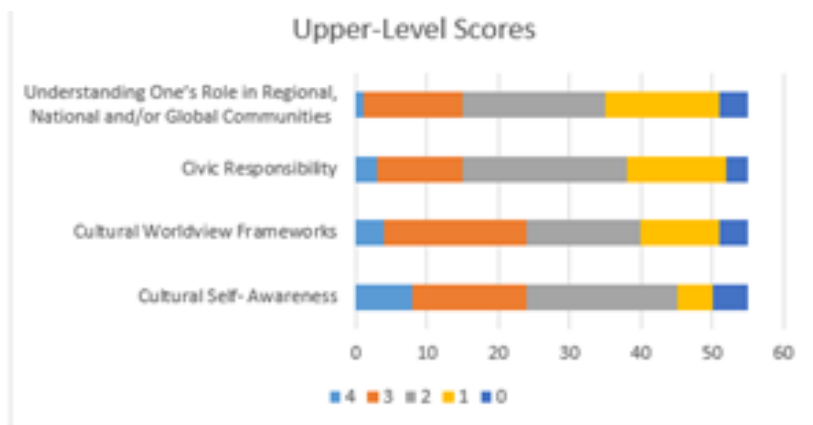


Figure 2 – 8.2.b. – Core Curriculum Results, Summer 2019

After considered review of the core assessment results in the summer of 2019, it was determined that in all three sets of scored Core Objectives anomalies and discrepancies clouded the overall picture. Despite considerable time, effort, and analysis we had not put ourselves in a position to demonstrate improvement regarding the Core objectives. The students were fine. Our process was not.

Multiple process issues affect assessment professionals as they try collecting meaningful, actionable data. In this case, the resultant data were questionable, easily discreditable, and contrary to what faculty and staff were observing. This left no potential for meaningful improvement. In five years, no major changes in SFA's approach occurred, nor were they justified by any of the data produced by this system. Such changes would need better data, not more of the same data. The SFA Core Curriculum Committee repeatedly expressed strong concern for the core assessment model in monthly meetings. These concerns were valid and escalated to a call for change.

Over the past decade, the CCC has retooled its approach to general education assessment and meeting the Core Objectives. The changes have come about through input from the faculty population at SFA and support from administration. The new approach took three years' discussion, and we look forward to new, more actionable information from the process.

The Faculty Trust Model

The Core Curriculum Committee now uses a unique approach to determining Core Objective attainment. This approach compares faculty evaluations of upper-level students (assessments) with the faculty evaluations of lower-level students (grades). A capstone course professor assesses a student in the six Core Objectives. Then, we compare that assessment rating to the Core Curriculum course grades related to each objective. Instead of the one-way communication of core reports, this plan *requires* discussion and professional decision-making as a whole faculty using standard protocols.

The plan requires the collection and comparison of two specific streams of data:

1. Professors in upper-level, capstone courses receive a set of student names from their discipline majors. They are asked to rate each student (i.e., assess/grade) regarding their attainment of the following Core Objectives:
 - a. Communication
 - b. Critical Thinking
 - c. Teamwork
 - d. Personal Responsibility
 - e. Empirical & Quantitative Data
 - f. Social Responsibility
2. Course grades from Core Component area courses are collected from these same students and matched with each corresponding Core Objective. To maintain confidentiality, only results without individual faculty and student personal identifiers will be reported and/or disseminated.



Use of Course Grades in Assessment

Course grades are the first and primary method educational institutions use to assess student progress. Listed below are some of the reasons to utilize course grades for purposes of general education assessment:

- While assessment methods result in small, unique pictures of student data, grades provide a large, historical record of student work.
- Anonymous assessments are devoid of context, while course grades provide links to specific students. Both data types are ordinal, but grades are more summative, while assessment methods take formative results and recast them as summative. Outside of full portfolio assessment, course grades offer a greater amalgamation of student work than assessments. Course grades are readily available in normal education contexts and more viable as measurement, whereas most assessments are specifically created for singular, one-off assessment purposes. If courses teach specific Core Objectives, and SFA has tangible evidence of this instruction, then (syllogistically) these course grades reflect such instruction.

Stephen F. Austin state University has revisited the meaningful data and insights offered by course grades. The Core Curriculum Committee, the Deans' Council, and staff from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness unanimously agree that this approach offers the most meaningful opportunity for general education student learning outcome assessment.

Perhaps Dr. David Eubanks, Assistant Vice President of the Office of Institutional Assessment and Research at Furman University, put this [issue \[14\]](#) most aptly:

If our goal is increasing student success, the ban on grades is a significant barrier, and it has undoubtedly already costs us a great deal. The history of assessment would have been very different if at the beginning we had resolved to use grades as the primary outcome measure, and then spend our time trying to align grading practices with desired course outcomes. Instead, we have created a new parallel grading scheme via assessment that is supposed to be superior but in most cases cannot live up to that promise.

Faculty Trust Model Preliminary Pilot Initial Data

In an effort to bring SFA's new core assessment plan to fruition, we conducted a small-scale test of the assessment design over the summer. All spring 2020 graduates served as the subject pool.

We created a stratified sample of recent graduates from the spring 2020 graduating senior list. The sample (stratified by college) ensured that we collected upper-level work from all colleges. Sample sizes were calculated with a confidence level of 80% and a margin of error of 10% using the following formula $Z^2 * (p) * (1-p) / c^2$, where Z represents the Z value (in this case, 1.28), p is the population of submitted work in a specific core area, and c is the confidence interval (.1).



Once we created the stratified sample, we sent a Qualtrics assessment survey to 54 different instructors regarding 112 of their former students on June 16, 2020. Logistical issues, along with the summer execution, led to a low response rate. We expect this to improve during the academic year. Full or partial responses on 24 students (118 unique data points) were used to create the first data in our proof of concept and preliminary pilot.

The second data set consisted of course grades from objective-specific core classes. These were the classes that had been collecting lower-level artifacts (shown previously in Chart 3). Thus, each student in the sample would have two scores: an upper level assessment and a lower level grade point average (GPA).

Chart 6 presents the comparison of these two sets. A comparison of student results for (a) the mean from upper-level faculty assessments in each core component; and (b) the core course GPA of these students in relevant core courses. Hypothetically, the shading pattern used in Table 4 could represent areas of success, as well as areas that may need deeper consideration. Similar to a traffic light, green is good, yellow indicates borderline progress, and red represents potential problems.

	CT	CO	EQ	PR	SR	TW
UPPER-LEVEL FACULTY EVALUATION	3.10	3.11	2.93	3.36	3.06	3.40
COMPUTED LOWER LEVEL CORE COURSE GPA	2.93	3.14	2.63	2.82	3.02	3.12

Table 4 – 8.2.b – Proof of Concept Preliminary Results

If these results were to hold for a larger population, the first order of business would be to conduct an in-depth review of communication skills. The course grade point average in related coursework indicates better performance than capstone instructors felt they observed in upperclassmen. Second, the Social Responsibility results show very little improvement. The departments most related to these objectives may have insight for core instructors; however, this discussion needs to be campus-wide. As stated prior, all SFA faculty are responsible for Core Objective attainment.

Following dissemination of this data, a Town Hall or other all-faculty discussion would offer an open forum focused on core attainment perceptions, and possible ways to move forward with core instruction. Changes to SFA’s core approach would emanate from faculty for subsequent deliberation in the CCC. At that point, any changes would follow standard protocol at SFA.

Mentioned previously, the data from the Senior Exit Survey provides a third set of data for comparison and discussion. These three sets of data, while unmatched, can provide potential insights and inform practice. Further, we can triangulate the data sources for a stronger overall perception of core attainment. As a preliminary example, consider Charts A and B in Figure 3



below, which represent the upper-level instructor assessments and the SES self-assessment percentages, respectively. Both form a similar pattern among specific objectives.

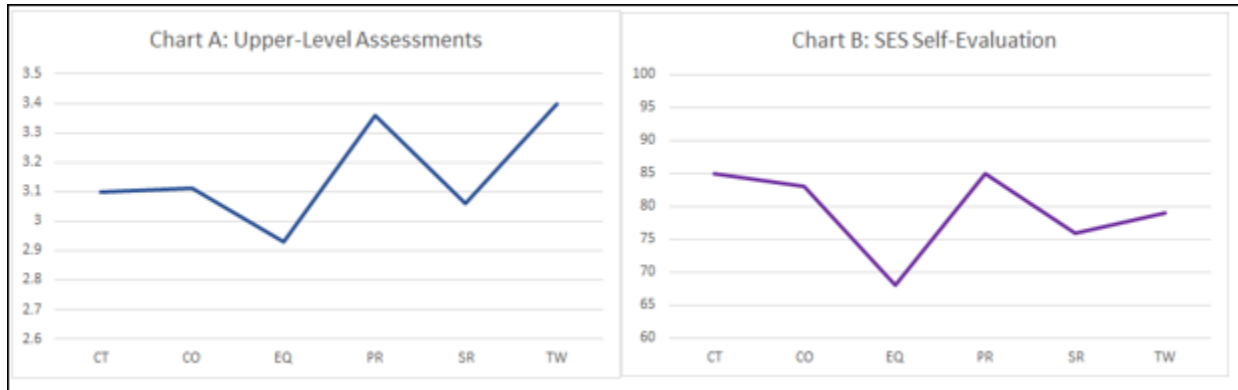


Figure 3 – 8.2.b. – Upper-level Instructor Assessments and the SES Self-assessment Percentages















In summary, a short, bulleted list may be appropriate. SFA’s current assessment plan provides a veritable bevy of advantages to the original structure:

- It costs less.
- It takes less time.
- It lowers the frustration level of the professoriate.
- It provides flexibility toward future iterations of the Texas Core Curriculum.
- It avoids confusion regarding assignments and assessment protocol.
- It provides a simple, yet powerful, means of determining whether success in Core Component courses translates to success at the finishing stages of the undergraduate experience.
- It demonstrates trust to the very faculty on whom we depend to both educate and assess students.

Most importantly, these data provide the fodder for meaningful dialogue among faculty (and other stakeholders).

The process is named The Faculty Trust Model because we believe in the experience and judgment of our faculty, when provided with meaningful data. Unlike previous core assessment attempts, the resultant data can motivate action, which is a necessity for improvement. Finally, such a significant departure from the standard approach declaims our desire and continued effort to improve the process. We consistently pursue improvement, and we changed this process because we seek improvement.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] CCAC Roster and Function.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Core Curriculum Assessment Committee Summary Notes 02-21-20.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Core Curriculum Committee Agenda 10-04-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Example Syllabus for Face Masks and Core Courses 20200724.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] The Faculty Trust Model Proposal - Core Curriculum Assessment Committee 12-04-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Core Curriculum Wording.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Core Assessment LEAP VALUE Rubrics.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Combined Core Assessment Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] AARC Impact Workbook 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] AARC Econ Example.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] OWL Visit Frequency AY19.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] SFA Core Curriculum Assessment Plan Fall 2014-Forward.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] TAIR Award.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] David Eubanks Improving Assessment Practices Presentation.pdf](#)



8.2.c The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

c) Academic and student services that support student success.
(*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) identifies expected outcomes for academic and student services supporting student success, assesses the extent to which it achieves those outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results.

SFA uses the Nuventive Improve assessment management system to maintain our assessment plans and associated data. Our assessment cycle encompasses the entire academic year with a reporting deadline of November 1 of the next year. Outcomes of academic and student services that support student success are assessed, regardless of how students obtain their education (online or other) or where they are located (on-campus or off-site). Units were encouraged to accelerate the closeout of AY 2019-2020 for inclusion in this report, but the COVID-19 pandemic prevented all units from meeting this accelerated reporting deadline.

In AY17-18, SFA initiated a process of re-imagining and revising our assessment practices. In short, we hit the “reset button.” Assessment had become formulaic, relying on the sheer quantity of objectives, outcomes, and assessment methods; criteria that were excessively quantitative; and an overemphasis on Bloom's taxonomy. While the expected outcome of the reset was renewed vigor and adoption of a commonsense approach to the continuous improvement process, we encountered fear and hesitancy to change. This led to a process of individual engagements with each reporting unit on campus and subsequent ongoing consultative engagements to assist in identifying what was important and needed to improve, how to improve it, and how to assess it. We are not done with our work and probably never will be. We are making steady progress and positive gains, but realize that our improvement plans and assessments will always have room for further improvement.

Our assessment plans have three primary components:

- Objectives: defines what the unit wants to accomplish.
- Assessment Methods: a description of the measurement used to determine the unit's level of attainment of the objective. Oftentimes, these are used as sub-objectives.
- Criterion: a statement of the expected level of performance or a benchmark against which the assessment method will be judged or evaluated.



On an annual basis, educational support services units at SFA identify expected outcomes and assess whether they have achieved those outcomes. Where appropriate, we use these assessments to improve services to students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. Student support services participate in an institutional effectiveness process similar to that of academic programs.

Students support services' unit assessment plans are documented and tracked in the university's assessment management system, Nuventive Improve. Unit objectives, assessment methods, success criteria, results, action plans, and follow-up plans are maintained on the platform. The units annually review these plans and update them based on the findings in the annual assessment report. The annual report not only includes measurements and analyses, but also evidence of improvement. An annual assessment cycle was established for institutional assessment. While our typical due dates for reports and plans is November 1 of each year, for purposes of the SACSCOC reaffirmation, the reporting data deadline was moved to June 30, 2020. This quick deadline, paired with the COVID-19 pandemic, prevented some units from completing their AY 2019-2020 assessments.

The following narrative includes seven Institutional Effectiveness reports. These were chosen because they represent the two divisions that directly connect with students and the six colleges at SFA. The sample includes:

- SFA's tutoring center
- SFA's recreation center
- A dean
- Two school directors
- An advising office
- A department chair

Assessment Results

Academic Assistance and Resource Center

The [Academic Assistance and Resource Center \(AARC\) \[01\]](#) is committed to improving the academic performance of the individual student at Stephen F. Austin State University. Through the personal attention of peer tutors and Program Directors, they engage students in a collaborative, learner-centered environment focused on developing the scholarship of clients and the leadership of tutors. The AARC has two objectives:

1. Student Persistence: The AARC will decrease undergraduate students' time to graduation for target populations by engaging them to try AARC and by offering satisfying services so they repeat those visits.
2. Student Learning: The AARC will improve student learning in three ways: course grades, affective learning skills for our clients, and professional development for our tutors.

The student persistence objective has six assessment methods, and the student learning objective has three assessment methods. One of the assessment methods associated with the first objective involves tracking and analysis of first-year target client GPA's and retention with a success



criterion of 70% of target client populations with five or more visits at the AARC in the fall. These students are expected to end their fall semester with a 2.5 or better and re-enroll at the one-year point.

The results for the 2018-2019 academic year for this particular assessment method were:

The retention rates for AARC first-time clients of Fall 2018 were measured at the top of Fall 2019. Those with five or more visits had a 77% retention rate (which meets our goal but last year's retention rates were 94% for 5-14 visits and 90% for 15 or more visits). Those with 5-14 visits (31%--up from 27%) had a Fall GPA of 2.98 (way up from 2.28). Those with 15+ visits (22%--up from 9%!) had a Fall GPA of 3.23 (way up from 2.73). Are these the students who need us most? How many were from the 3rd and 4th quartile of their high school ranking? 13% for 5-14 and 5% for 15+. 56% of those who did not come to AARC at all from this target group were in the 3rd and 4th quartile of their high school ranking. AARC saw 42% of the total population of first-time students (a BIG increase from 30% last year).

When the AARC staff met six months later for their Data Day in October, they discussed the above result and determined that:

AARC must think more like Student Affairs if we are to attract more first-year students. We need to be present at more events like the Involvement Fair and create our own events on the square. These need to be hosted by multiple AARC staff so we look big. One tutor said at the AARC Leadership Council SWOT that she "hears about AARC out there but doesn't really see AARC out there." All AARC staff and team leaders will be committed to getting outside of AARC to show we are fun and engaging. We will continue to hire our GAs from students in the student affairs program so that we have a compass for where and when we need to be.

While they work toward continual improvement in all areas, this objective indicates the work they do to reach the most students practicable.

Campus Recreation

Campus Recreation's mission holds that they are "committed to developing a culture of Lumberjack wellness through excellent facilities and inclusive experiences in adventure, fitness, sport, and play." One of Campus Recreation's nine [objectives \[02\]](#) is to effectively train student employees on safety skills. One of the assessment methods for this objective is to conduct "red shirt" drills. Red shirt training uses scenarios to test staff reactions (and reaction time) in emergencies. The criterion for this assessment is that 75% of student employees successfully demonstrate the necessary skills associated with the drill.



During the 2018-2019 Academic year, the 75% criterion was not met. To improve on this shortfall, the department created an internal safety committee to manage the on-going training of student staff in emergency skills throughout the school year. The safety committee was given the charge to create and maintain documentation of the drills. The data collected from the drills was used to focus training efforts and meet the standard.

The actions taken based on the assessment results paid off. This past academic year (2019-2020), 153 drills were conducted covering 410 individual skills in the fall term. Student staff were proficient in 317 skills, for a proficiency ratio of 75%. The spring term was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited the number of drills to 67 with a proficiency level of 87%.

College of Sciences and Mathematics Dean

Through excellent teaching, research, and other scholarly activities, the SFA College of Sciences and Mathematics provides high quality undergraduate and graduate programs in a nurturing environment that prepare students for leadership and service as STEM professionals. This [assessment unit \[03\]](#) was chosen because it shows two things. First, it documents the refinement and maturity of assessment within a unit over time. Second, it shows the level of COVID-19 damage to administrative plans.

The first objective, Student Success, was revised over time. During the 2016-2018 reporting periods [\[03 pp. 1-2\]](#), the college was administering a survey to gauge student satisfaction regarding course planning and ease of scheduling. For the 2018-2019 reporting period, the college revised the objective and assessment methods as they adjusted the assessment methods to obtain data they felt was useful in improving efficient and effective student advising. The 2019-2020 period reflects additional adjustments and a realization that an analysis had to be completed to provide meaningful baseline data for future assessments. The analysis showed that the academic success program seems to be lowering the delinquency recidivism rate. Of the 174 probation students, those in the success program reached good standing at a rate of 49%, while only 14% of those not in the program got off of probation. The criterion was met, but it led to questions regarding the initial year of the program (AY 2019). Though not listed in the objective, the Academic Success Program Comparison is attached to the Institutional Effectiveness report.

The college's recruiting objective [\[03 pg.13\]](#) indicates the interruption of the Dean's Office plans. The report writer documents efforts and plans toward an enrollment increase. Then, COVID-19 led to a campus shutdown:

...pursuit of these targets ended in the face of all the challenges of transitioning teaching and closing the campus due to COVID-19. Concerns over enrollment in AY 20-21 have prompted significant changes in marketing, advising, student orientation, scheduling and planning for multiple delivery formats for 2020-2021.

As a response, the CoSM will set new targets, dependent upon the approach to Fall 2020 and possible realignment within the University. At this point, that is the most responsible option.



School of Music Director and Schlieff School of Accountancy Director

These two assessment units are highlighted to show the diversity in their approach to assessment. The [School of Music's plan \[04\]](#) features ten assessment methods flowing into five objectives; the [School of Accountancy \[05\]](#) has three methods for three objectives. At SFA, both fall within acceptable limits.

The School of Music (SoM) uses Institutional Effectiveness principles to develop a plan of action to increase recruiting success through social media, and they investigated options for curriculum changes. The criteria for new courses were focused on touch points along the way to approval. As the results and analysis show, the criteria were met because those benchmarks were met; however, roadblocks and resistance have led the SoM to reconsider things. Simultaneously, the SoM is using online presence and data to determine the best course of action for increased recruitment. Finally, the IE process was quite useful in resolving intra-school disputes focused on applied music grading and graduate assistantships. This is a good example of how useful the IE process can be.

SFA asks these units to choose three to five things to focus on for one year. As shown throughout the process, some units have more than five or fewer than three objectives. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness staff work with unit leaders to determine the best course of action and assist these leaders as they make decisions for the units they manage. Because of this, the School of Accountancy has a much shorter assessment report.

The Schlieff School of Accounting is part of the Nelson Rusche College of Business (NRCOB) and is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). Maintaining AACSB accreditation is the focal point of many NRCOB plans. This plan is both succinct and complete. It meets certain demands from SFA leaders while using assessment as a means of checking their unit each year. Since much of business is quantitative in nature, it is not difficult to determine whether criteria are met. The assessment results indicate that enrollment has decreased, faculty are publishing peer-reviewed articles at an acceptable level, and the School of Accountancy remains revenue-positive for the university.

The College of Liberal & Applied Arts (CLAA) – Academic & Career Advising

This [IE plan \[06\]](#) for the Academic and Career Advising office is relatively new. The CLAA advisors are responsible for helping students in CLAA majors as they navigate the first 45 hours of their college degree requirements. At 45 hours, the student typically is assigned to a major professor who also acts as advisor. As with other units in this section, the IE plan functions more as an assessment of the necessary. It is crucial that every course a student takes fits within the chosen major's plan of study. That seems to be happening. Student satisfaction remains high throughout the three years of collected data, and a very high percentage of students are focused on required classes.



Forestry Chair

The mission of the Department of Forestry is to maintain excellence in teaching, research, and outreach; and to enhance the health and vitality of the environment through sustainable management, conservation, and protection of forests and natural resources. In terms of position and duties, the chair of the Forestry Department is like many other chairs at SFA. That is, duties can be unlimited. Our chairs work hard as the first line of administration, most closely tied to faculty and students. The [Forestry Department Institutional Effectiveness plan \[07\]](#) focuses on teaching, research, and community outreach. This department already has built-in means of assessing teaching: responses from the students they teach.





As a department, the end-of-degree surveys serve as the first check. The department expects at least 80% of these students (graduates) will assess the advising, programs, and facilities as satisfactory or better. This criterion is a hard line: 81% is acceptable, but 79% is not. In the three years leading to this accreditation response, the criterion has been met. Another way the department checks student satisfaction is the small class size of upper-class students. The BSF Forestry Field Station offers a six-week course off campus between the junior and senior years. These students function as a focus group while they learn.

Regarding research and outreach, the same criterion (80%) applies. At least 80% of the faculty must produce meaningful research in a given year. Also, 80% of faculty must document at least one outreach activity.

Conclusion

Assessment of educational support services units is occurring across the university. Objectives are established and results are reviewed annually. SFA will continue to collect and analyze assessment data to make improvements that support the mission of the institution. As the process of assessment becomes institutionalized, learning outcomes and assessment processes will be refined. For a complete listing of the assessment results, see the [Academic and Student Support Services Report \[08\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] AARC Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Campus Recreation Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] College of Sciences and Mathematics Dean Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] School of Music Director Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] School of Accountancy Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] College of Liberal and Applied Arts Advisors Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture - Forestry Chair Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Academic and Student Support Services Assessment Report.pdf](#)

Section 9: Educational Program Structure and Content

9.1 Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.
(*Program content*) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

All degree programs offered by Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) embody coherent courses of study, are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

Coherent Course of Study

Academic program development is guided by three principles: (1) the field of study must be appropriate to higher education; (2) the degree must support the institution's mission; and (3) the program must embody a coherent course of study. SFA is a public regional comprehensive institution and is required to submit all [degree programs \[01\]](#) to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for approval. Texas uses a modified classification of instructional programs (CIP) taxonomy based upon the U.S. Department of Education's (CIP) taxonomy. The [CIP codes for Texas \[02\]](#) are somewhat broader by recognizing degrees, certificate programs, courses, and declared majors that may not appear in the national index. The first six digits of the Texas CIP taxonomy codes are identical to those in the CIP taxonomy published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The seventh and eighth digits, when they are not zeroes, are Texas suffixes intended to better specify the diversity of courses and program offerings in the state. Since SFA conforms to CIP classifications at national and state levels, the fields of study delivered by the institution are widely recognized as appropriate to higher education. A degree program could not exist otherwise.

SFA offers 96 baccalaureate programs, 48 masters programs, and 3 doctoral programs in a variety of disciplines, such as agriculture, business, criminal justice, fine arts, forestry, humanities, social sciences, sciences, education, and health sciences. The [Institutional Summary Form \[03\]](#), [Undergraduate Bulletin \[04\]](#), and [Graduate Bulletin \[05\]](#) provide a comprehensive inventory.

All programs of study at SFA incorporate progressive program content that demands increasing levels of integration of knowledge. Degree programs are designed to appeal to a wide array of student interest within a discipline through the incorporation of concentrations and minors.



While SFA's programs of study have significant breadth, they are appropriately sequenced and incorporate progressively advanced scholarship.

At SFA, all degree programs are subjected to a rigorous review process to make certain each embodies a coherent and academically solid course of study. This review is triggered when a program is initially introduced and is repeated on a regular schedule afterward as part of our [academic program review \(APR\) process \[06\]](#). The normal cycle for APR is annually (brief checkup), every five (5) years (more detailed review), and every ten (10) years (full-scale review). Multiple levels of scrutiny take place that solicit internal as well as external input.

Under university [policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[07\]](#), the faculty in the appropriate academic department must initiate any change in curricula, including new or modified courses, new or modified programs, and deletion of courses and/or programs. In the context of new programs, [Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Part 1 Ch. 5 Sub C 5.44 \[08\]](#) governs the content and supporting documentation that must accompany a proposal to introduce a degree. Once submitted by an academic department through its chair, a faculty-elected curriculum committee within the relevant college considers new program proposals and, if approved, they are forwarded by the dean to a university-wide undergraduate or graduate council depending on the coursework.

Once the relevant faculty curricular committee makes its approval, proposals for new degree programs are carefully examined by the Deans Council and, if endorsed, forwarded to the provost, president, and Board of Regents for final institutional authorization. Both undergraduate and graduate curricular revisions that represent "substantive change," as defined by the THECB and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, will be communicated to the appropriate entity and, if necessary, approval will be obtained before implementation ([Policy 4.10, Substantive Change \[09\]](#)). See Standard [6.2.b](#) for further discussion of SFA's program review process.

Mission and Goal Compatibility

Our [mission statement \[10\]](#) requires that through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community. Accordingly, our [goals \[11\]](#) push us to engage our students in experiences that prepare them for the challenges of living in a global community. One of the key strategies for meeting this goal is offering an appropriate mix of relevant programs, delivery methods, and locations that will attract an increasing number of students seeking to prepare themselves for the state's strategic goal of developing a more educated population. To fulfill our mission, we must attract high quality faculty and staff who engage our students in high impact practices while fostering academic and co-curricular innovation, which requires the evolution of our curricular programs and demands innovations in the ways we reach our students and prepare them for lifelong learning and successful careers in the 21st century. The majority of our academic programs offer specific areas of concentration within the degree program that allow students to pursue specific interests within the discipline that are relevant and marketable. For example, our bachelor of science in rehabilitation services degree allows



students to specialize in deaf services, orientation and mobility, or rehabilitation services. Our bachelor of science in forestry allows students to concentrate on urban forestry, wildlife management, and fire management, among others.

The THECB ensures that all degree programs operated by public universities in Texas are consistent with their unique mission statements. Specifically, THECB rules stipulate that new baccalaureate, master's ([Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule §5.45 \[12\]](#)), and doctoral degrees ([Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule §5.46 \[13\]](#)) will not be approved unless they directly support an institution's mission. As such, the supervisory role played by the THECB provides independent confirmation that all [baccalaureate \[14\]](#), [master's \[15\]](#), and [doctoral \[16\]](#) degree programs at SFA have a clear relationship to our mission statement. Since institutional missions change over time, state law, [Education Code, Title 3, Subtitle B, Chapter 61, Subchapter C, Sec. 61.051 \(e\) \[17\]](#), further mandates that the THECB must review the Table of Programs for each public university every four years to determine whether an institution's current program offerings remain relevant to its most recent mission statement. Constant monitoring, therefore, guarantees that all degrees at SFA are mission-appropriate at any given time.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

The [Undergraduate Council \[18\]](#) reviews and makes recommendations concerning proposed changes in the undergraduate curriculum. The Council's Curriculum Committee ensures (1) that academic quality is maintained in programs and courses; (2) that redundancy is minimized in the curriculum; and (3) that changes are consistent with academic policies and with the role and scope of the department, college, and university. The Council is composed of two faculty representatives elected from each of the undergraduate colleges and ex officio representatives from the library staff, the Registrar's Office, Institutional Research, and the Provost's Office. The Council functions as the faculty gatekeeper on whether new programs will be recommended upward or vetoed. Recent additions to our degree inventory that went through this comprehensive review process include a bachelor of science in construction management, a bachelor of arts in medical humanities, a master of arts in publishing, and a master of arts in national security.

The inventory of undergraduate degrees at SFA can be found in the [baccalaureate program inventory \[14\]](#) and the [Undergraduate Bulletin \[04\]](#). It should be noted that undergraduate degrees, no matter the discipline, possess a common overall architecture. In 2005, the state's legislature ([Education Code Title 3, Chapter 61, Subchapter C, § 61.0515 \[19\]](#)) imposed a limit of 120 semester credit hours to earn the typical undergraduate degree at a four-year public institution, "unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree ([Paragraph \(a\), §61.0515 \[19\]](#))." SFA has converted all but six specialized degree programs that exceed the 120-hour model. The exceptions are the bachelor of science in environmental science (124 hours), the bachelor science in forestry (130 hours), the bachelor of science in forest management (130 hours), the bachelor of science in forest wildlife management (130 hours), the bachelor of science in child development and family living (122 hours), and the bachelor of fine arts in



theatre (125 hours). Section [9.2](#) discusses the basis for the decision to exceed 120 hours.

Undergraduate degrees are generally divided into two main parts, the core curriculum, and the academic major. This sequence is designed to make learning progressively more advanced by building on assignments and scholarship. The core curriculum at SFA, according to the Undergraduate Bulletin, “seeks to equip students with the broad intellectual foundations needed to live satisfying lives, to ready themselves for advanced study, to contribute significantly to society, and to succeed in a diverse global community.” Consistent with Texas law ([Title 3, Subtitle B, Chapter 61, Subchapter S, § 61.822 \[19\]](#)), all undergraduate programs at SFA prescribe 42 semester hours of core curriculum coursework distributed among several areas of general knowledge: communication (both written and oral), mathematics, natural sciences, humanities, visual and performing arts, and social and behavioral sciences. See Standard [9.3](#) for further discussion of SFA’s core curriculum.

Each college supplements the core curriculum with foundational work pertinent to its programs. For instance, a bachelor of arts in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts requires four semesters of a foreign language and an additional humanities course, and our College of Sciences and Mathematics requires a course in statistics or calculus (depending on the major), two semesters of laboratory sciences, and a 1000-level computer science course for the bachelor of science. An academic major generally encompasses between 30-36 semester hours, at least 18 of which must be advanced, and often includes an academic minor of at least 18 semester hours, at least nine of which must be advanced. The remaining courses needed to fulfill a 120-hour (or more) degree are composed of electives selected at the discretion of a student. At least 30 hours out of the 120 must be advanced. To qualify for a degree, candidates may choose to meet the requirements of the current Bulletin or of any Bulletin in effect between the dates of their matriculation and graduation, provided that the period between such dates does not exceed six years and provided they were enrolled during the year of the Bulletin chosen. Sample baccalaureate [degree maps \[20\]](#) from our six colleges reflect coherence in sequencing, increasing complexity, and linkages between and among program components.

Graduate Degree Programs

The [Graduate Council \[21\]](#) recommends policies and procedures involving graduate student admission and programs, graduate faculty membership, the graduate curriculum, graduate theses and dissertations, and other matters relevant to graduate education. The Graduate Council is composed of one elected faculty representative from each college, three members appointed by the chair of the Council (Dean of Graduate Studies), three ex officio members (Dean of Library, the Registrar, and chair-elect of the Faculty Senate), and a graduate student. The Council, above all, engages in the review and approval of new graduate programs. [Master’s degree programs \[15\]](#) range from 30-63 semester hours of coursework, while [doctoral degrees \[16\]](#) require between 42 and 66 semester hours. Details of graduate programs can be found in the [graduate bulletin \[05\]](#). In addition to satisfying all coursework for a graduate degree, certain programs may oblige a student to satisfy other requirements, including a final comprehensive examination



or a thesis/dissertation. See Standard [9.6](#) for a discussion of the progressively advanced academic content of SFA's graduate degree programs.

Program Review

Once a degree is in place, SFA requires each program to undergo periodic review. Under [Policy 5.1, Academic Program Review \[22\]](#), all undergraduate and graduate degree programs must conduct a full-scale formal program review every ten years. This review seeks to maintain compliance with the accreditation standards of SACSCOC. The process requires an academic unit to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving unit outcomes and learning outcomes through a self-study. An external reviewer, the college, and the provost will analyze a departmental self-study to determine the extent to which its programs present coherent fields of study. The outcome of the review process is a set of recommendations designed to guide program improvement. The unit with the program under examination is responsible for translating the recommendations into a concrete action plan. Academic program reviews are intended to provide information for curricular and budgetary decisions while also identifying resources needed for growth, continuation, or modification of existing programs. Please see Standards [6.2.b](#) and [10.4](#) for further discussion of the academic program review process.

In addition to the institutional review process, certain programs at SFA report to specialized accrediting agencies, which typically impose their own self-study protocols. A complete list of unit/program accreditations and professional organization affiliations can be found on the university [accreditations web page \[23\]](#). The self-study reports produced resultant of professional accreditations are sensitive to the unique curricular needs of a discipline and, for that reason, supplement SFA's institutional academic program review.

Fields of Study Appropriate to Higher Education

The internal and external review processes discussed above ensure our degree programs and courses of study are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. We do not have any highly unusual or unique programs. In addition to the review processes, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has a substantial role, mandated by law, to ensure that our educational programs are appropriate to a public university. The [Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Part 1 Ch. 5 Sub B 5.25 \[24\]](#) prohibits public universities from offering "courses at levels or in programs not approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board." [Texas Education Code Title 3, Subtitle B, Chapter 61, Subchapter C, § 61.0512 \[19\]](#) specifies, "a new degree or certificate program may be added at an institution of higher education only with specific prior approval of the board." These safeguards, along with the curriculum vetting process followed by the university (discussed in Standard [6.2.b](#)), ensure applicability of all SFA degree programs.









Graduate Program Review and Appropriateness of Fields of Study

As stated above, all master's and doctoral programs are required to submit the results of a graduate program review to the THECB at least once every ten years. For master's programs not submitting reviews performed for licensure or accreditation, reviews must include 19 criteria stipulated in [Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Part 1 Ch. 5 Sub C 5.52 \[25\]](#). SFA submits the results of each graduate program review to the THECB. The THECB reviews these submissions and may require additional actions to improve a program.

As demonstrated in our response to this standard, degree programs offered by SFA embody coherent courses of study, are compatible with our stated mission and goals, and are based upon fields of study eminently appropriate to higher education.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFASU Degree Program List SFASU_20200813.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Texas CIP Codes.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Institutional Summary 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Program Offerings \(A-Z\) - Undergraduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Program Offerings \(A-Z\) - Graduate Bulletin \(1\).pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] APR Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews Modifications and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 4.10, Substantive Change.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] SFA Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Goals SFA Envisioned 2023.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Texas Administrative Code New Bacc or Master Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Texas Administrative Code New Doctoral Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] SFASU Baccalaureate Degree Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] SFASU Masters Degree Programs_20200813.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] SFASU Doctoral Degree Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Texas Education Code Title 3, Sub B, Ch. 61, Sub C, 61.051.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Undergraduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Education Code Chapter 61.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Baccalaureate Degree Map Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Graduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Policy 5.1, Academic Program Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] SFA Accredited Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)



9.2 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.

(Program Length) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) offers 147 programs of study (96 baccalaureate, 48 master's, and 3 doctorate) as listed in our May 2019 [program inventory \[01\]](#), the [Undergraduate Bulletin \[02\]](#), and the [Graduate Bulletin \[03\]](#). All degrees are based on the semester credit hour with 3 semester credit hours of instruction equal to 37 and one-half true hours or 45 Carnegie units of instruction, totaling 2,250 minutes of instruction using a 4.0 grading system. The university offers no associate degrees. Our baccalaureate degree programs have a minimum requirement of 120 semester credit hours (SCH), all master's degree programs require a minimum of 30 SCH, and all doctoral programs require a minimum of 42 SCH. The university [program inventory \[01\]](#) lists all degree programs at Stephen F. Austin and the required number of semester credit hours for each degree. Students in the Schlieff School of Accountancy have the option of simultaneously pursuing a B.B.A and M.P.A in a five-year program that requires 156 SCH of course work. Semester credit hours for students in this program are not double-counted.

The Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, [Subchapter C, § 61.0515 \[04\]](#) sets the minimum requirement for baccalaureate programs in Texas at 120 SCH. SFA [policy 5.7 Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[05\]](#) guides the establishment and modification of courses, new programs (degrees, endorsements, and certificates), modified programs, deletion of courses and programs, and changes in mode of delivery. Curricular proposals originate in the academic department or school and are reviewed on an annual timetable so that all required approvals are completed in sufficient time to allow the university to officially offer the curricula or courses. Departments and schools submit their proposals to their respective college, each of which has an academic council, college council, or curriculum committee composed of faculty that provides an independent review of the proposals. The work of the college review body is then submitted to the dean of the college for approval. Proposals affecting undergraduate programs are forwarded to the [Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \[06\]](#) of the Undergraduate Council for a university-wide review. Proposals affecting graduate education are sent to the [Graduate Council \[07\]](#). The curriculum modification process is further elaborated in Standards [6.2.b](#) and [10.4](#).



SFA reviews programs on a regular cycle under SFA [Policy 5.1 Academic Program Review \[08\]](#) using the [Academic Program Review Handbook \[09\]](#). Additionally, outside program evaluators review programs with external professional accreditation as part of the accreditation process. The academic program reviews provide information for curricular and budgetary planning decisions at each administrative level. Resources needed for growth, continuation, or modification of programs can be included in the planning process. The academic program review process is further explained in Standards [6.2.b](#) and [10.4](#).

Stephen F. Austin's degree granting colleges are the Nelson Rusche College of Business, James I. Perkins College of Education, College of Fine Arts, Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture, College of Liberal & Applied Arts, and College of Sciences & Mathematics. All six colleges award the baccalaureate and master's degrees, and two colleges—the James I. Perkins College of Education and the Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture—award the doctorate.

The decisions to exceed the 120 hours minimum were made in the colleges with faculty involvement and guided by SFA [Policy 5.7 \[05\]](#). Currently, there are six such exceptions: Forestry BSF (130 SCH), the Forest Management BSF (130 SCH), the Forest Wildlife Management BSF (130 SCH), Theatre BFA (125 SCH), Environmental Science BS (124 SCH), and the Child Development and Family Living BS (122 SCH).

[SFA Policy 6.15 \[10\]](#), our in-residence policy, directs that undergraduate degrees require at least 25 percent of the semester credit hours to be completed in-residence. To be eligible for graduation in any of the baccalaureate programs, students complete a minimum of 30 SCH of the 120 required in residence at Stephen F. Austin. All 30 hours must be advanced (upper-level).












All master's programs offered at the university require at least 30 semester hours. Students enrolled in master's programs requiring 30 hours (typically a thesis program) are allowed to transfer a maximum of 6 hours of graduate level credit from another accredited university. Students enrolled in masters programs requiring more than 36 hours (typically a non-thesis program) can transfer up to 12 hours of graduate level credit from another accredited university. These guidelines are published under Transfer of Credit in the [Graduate Bulletin \[11\]](#).

Doctoral programs are offered in two colleges. The May 2019 program inventory indicates that the James I. Perkins College of Education offers the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at 66 SCH and a Ph.D. in School Psychology at 63 SCH. The Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture offers the Ph.D. in Forestry requiring 42 semester credit hours.

The [Undergraduate General Bulletin \[02\]](#) and [Graduate Bulletin \[03\]](#) publish all degree programs offered by the university. The General Bulletin is available to students in both hard copy and electronic format, which is on the university web site. The Graduate Bulletin is published electronically also on the university web site. Archival copies are available in the Office of the University Registrar.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Degree Program List 20200813.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Program Offerings \(A-Z\) - Undergraduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Program Offerings \(A-Z\) - Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas EDUCATION CODE.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews Modifications and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Undergraduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Graduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 5.1, Academic Program Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] APR Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Graduate Admission.pdf](#)



9.3 The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that

(a) is based on a coherent rationale.

(b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.

(c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.

(General education requirements) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that is based on a coherent rationale, is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program, and ensures breadth of knowledge in humanities, fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics.

The general education component for undergraduate degrees is our core curriculum. The core curriculum at Stephen F. Austin State University seeks to equip students with the broad intellectual foundations needed to live satisfying lives, to ready themselves for advanced study, to contribute significantly to society, and to succeed in a diverse global community. In service to these objectives, the mission of the core curriculum is to develop students' abilities to think in disciplined, critical, quantitative, and creative ways, and to communicate effectively. Successful completion of the core curriculum is required of all students regardless of their physical location (on-campus or off-site) or program delivery modality (online or other).

A. Coherent Rationale

The core curriculum at SFA is based on a coherent rationale and promotes student knowledge, encourages student inquiry, reinforces student cognitive skills, and provides effective student learning opportunities. [Revising the State Core Curriculum: A Focus on 21st Century Competencies \[01\]](#), a report published by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board), in April 2011, was the guiding framework for SFA's core curriculum.

In 2014, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board), with the assistance of its Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee, designed a new 42-semester



credit hour (SCH) [core curriculum \[02\]](#) for all undergraduate students in Texas public higher education institutions. The purpose of this core curriculum is to ensure that Texas undergraduate students enrolled in public institutions of higher education will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. The core curriculum facilitates the transfer of lower-division course credit among public colleges, universities, and health-related institutions throughout the state.

[Texas Education Code Chapter 61, Subchapter S, §61.822 \[03\]](#) mandated the development of a common core curriculum of 42 semester credit hours. The Texas Administration Code directed the Coordinating Board in [Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B - Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula, RULE §4.28 \[04\]](#) to adopt rules regarding the content, component areas, and objectives of the statewide core curriculum.

The [Texas Core Curriculum \(TCC\) \[02\]](#) requires each institution to select the specific courses it will offer to fulfill TCC requirements in a way that accounts for the individual role and mission of the institution. The TCC implementation at each institution must receive approval from the Coordinating Board and institutions must evaluate the effectiveness of their TCC at regular intervals.

To qualify for the core, a course must meet [specific requirements \[05\]](#) from the Coordinating Board and the university. The SFA [Core Curriculum Committee \[06\]](#) (formerly the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee) is a faculty-led committee with [oversight \[07\]](#) for the core curriculum, and this committee [approves \[08\]](#) all course additions to the SFA core as part of the curricular modification process (See Standard [9.1](#)). Further, the committee regularly [reviews \[09\]](#) each course in the core to ensure it addresses the [core objectives \[10\]](#) directed by the coordinating board.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) developed eight required (and one optional) Foundational Component Areas and six Core Curriculum Learning Objectives to serve as [guidelines \[11\]](#):

Foundational Component Areas

1. Communication (aligns with Humanities/Fine Arts)
2. Mathematics (aligns with Natural Sciences/Mathematics)
3. Life and Physical Sciences (aligns with Natural Sciences/Mathematics)
4. Language, Philosophy, and Culture (aligns with Humanities/Fine Arts)
5. Creative Arts (aligns with Humanities/Fine Arts)
6. American History (aligns with Humanities/Fine Arts)
7. Government/Political Sciences (aligns with Social/Behavioral Sciences)
8. Social and Behavioral Sciences (aligns with Social/Behavioral Sciences)
9. Component Area Option



Core Curriculum Learning Objectives

1. Critical Thinking
2. Communication Skills
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills
4. Teamwork
5. Social Responsibility
6. Personal Responsibility

These Foundational Component Areas align with the guideline of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' requirement that students take "at least one course from the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics." SFA incorporated the guidelines discussed above to develop our current core curriculum. A course must demonstrate that it meets the required content and curriculum objectives for its component area and the required [core learning objectives \[05\]](#) to be accepted into the core curriculum.

Core curriculum requirements are published in the SFA [General Bulletin \[12\]](#) and on academic [degree plans \[13\]](#), which clearly indicate the component area and the available courses associated with each component area. The Registrar's Office verifies that all requirements, including the core curriculum, are complete prior to a student's graduation. For graduation purposes, the number of hours in the core curriculum cannot be reduced and substitutions cannot be made without administrative approval. By [state law \[14\] \[4\]](#) and in accordance with THECB Rules, transfer students who have completed some, or all, of the core curriculum at another state-supported institution (2- or 4-year) in Texas must receive credit for that portion of the core curriculum at SFA. Students taking a distance education undergraduate degree program must meet the same 42-hour core curriculum requirement as all other undergraduate students. SFA does not have any competency-based education programs.

Departmental faculty create the content of a proposed core curriculum course; appropriate departmental and college curriculum committees, as well as the dean, review the proposed course prior to submission to the Core Curriculum Committee. Proposals for core curriculum courses include a description of how the course content will address the requirements of the respective Foundational Component Area. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee reviews the submissions for inclusion in the core and makes recommendations in our curriculum management software, Curriculog, as part of our [curriculum modification process \[15\]](#). If accepted by the council, the submissions are presented to the president and the Board of Regents for approval. The curriculum revision process is further discussed in Standards [6.2.b](#) and [10.4](#).

The process culminates with final approval by the THECB in a rigorous review of the course's fit within the purpose and objectives of the [Texas Core Curriculum \[02\]](#). Core curriculum requests recently submitted to THECB for review and approval are also [provided \[16\]](#).



B. Substantial Component

The core curriculum at SFA is a substantial component of undergraduate students' degree programs, consisting of 42 semester credit hours of students' 120-hour baccalaureate degree plans. At 42 semester credit hours, the SFA core curriculum exceeds the SACSCOC recommended 30-semester credit hour minimum for baccalaureate programs. SFA does not offer associate degree programs.

C. Breadth of Knowledge

The core curriculum at SFA provides a wide breadth of knowledge encompassing the SACSCOC recommended knowledge areas of humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics. Courses in SFA's core curriculum are aligned with [THECB guidelines \[17\]](#), providing students with a breadth of knowledge that goes beyond skill development. Texas has a communication requirement as part of the core curriculum that meets the SACSCOC definition of skill courses. While these language and communications courses are not part of the SACSCOC principal areas of knowledge, they are required as part of the Texas general education curriculum. The following table illustrates how the Texas and SFA core curriculum aligns with the SACSCOC guidelines regarding the principal areas of knowledge (humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics) and with the component areas required by the THECB:

SACSCOC Principle Areas of Knowledge	Humanities and Fine Arts	Natural Sciences and Mathematics	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Skill Courses Unrecognized by SACSCOC
Texas Component Areas				
Communication				12 SCH
Mathematics		3 SCH		
Life and Physical Sciences		6 SCH		
Language, Philosophy and Culture	3 SCH			
Creative Arts	3 SCH			
American History	6 SCH			
Government Political Science			6 SCH	
Social and Behavioral Science			3 SCH	
42 Total SCH	12 SCH	9 SCH	9 SCH	12 SCH

Table 1 – 9.3– Core Curriculum Alignment with SACSCOC Guidelines

Students are required to complete 12 hours from the Humanities and Fine Arts component area, 9 hours from the Natural Sciences and Mathematics component area (not including lab hours), and 9 hours from the Social and Behavioral Sciences component area. This requirement ensures that students meet or exceed the SACSCOC's requirement that students complete at least one course from each of the recommended principle areas of knowledge. We publish these requirements in our Undergraduate Bulletin under a separate listing and within specific degree programs within the bulletin when core curriculum requirements are due to discipline-specific accreditation



requirements and other considerations. The requirements are also included in [degree maps \[13\]](#) and are listed in our [Undergraduate Bulletin \[12\]](#).

General Bulletin Excerpt

SFA Core Curriculum Requirements (42 SCH)*

Communication

Three hours from:

- ENGL 1301 - Rhetoric and Composition Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 1303 - Honors Composition: Analysis, Argument and Research Credit(s): 3

Three hours from:

- SPCH 1315 - Public Speaking Credit(s): 3
- SPCH 1318 - Interpersonal Communication Credit(s): 3
- SPCH 2333 - Teamwork and Group Communication Credit(s): 3

Mathematics

Three hours from:

- MATH 1332 - Math in Society Credit(s): 3
- MATH 1350 - Introduction to Foundations of Mathematics I Credit(s): 3
- MATH 1314 - College Algebra Credit(s): 3
- MATH 1324 - Finite Mathematics Credit(s): 3
- MATH 1342 - Introduction to Probability and Statistics Credit(s): 3
- MATH 2313 - Calculus I Credit(s): 3 **

Life and Physical Science**

Six hours from:

- HORT 1231 - Cultivating Plants Credit(s): 2
- HORT 1131 - Cultivating Plants Lab Credit(s): 1
- ASTR 1303 - Classical and Modern Astronomy Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 1308 - Biology for Non-Science Majors I Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 1309 - Biology for Non-Science Majors II Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 1307 - Biology for Science Majors II Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 1313 - General Zoology Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 2381 - Local Flora or Fauna Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 2301 - Anatomy and Physiology I Credit(s): 3
- BIOL 2361 - Plant Form and Function Credit(s): 3
- CHEM 1371 - Conceptual Chemistry Credit(s): 3
- CHEM 1305 - Intro to Chemistry I Credit(s): 3
- CHEM 1311 - General Chemistry I Credit(s): 3



- CHEM 1312 - General Chemistry II Credit(s): 3
- ENVR 1301 - Intro to Environmental Science Credit(s): 3
- GEOG 1301 - Physical Geography Credit(s): 3
- GEOL 1301 - Fundamentals of Earth Science Credit(s): 3
- GEOL 1303 - Introductory Geology Credit(s): 3
- GEOL 1304 - Historical Geology Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1305 - General Physics I Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1307 - General Physics II Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1310 - Fundamentals of Electronics Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1318 - Acoustical Physics Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1301 - Mechanics and Heat Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 1302 - Electricity, Sound and Light Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 2325 - Technical Physics I Credit(s): 3
- PHYS 2326 - Technical Physics II Credit(s): 3

Language, Philosophy and Culture

Three hours from:

- ENGL 2341 - Introduction to Literature Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2309 - Introduction to Mythology Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2332 - World Literature to 1650 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2333 - World Literature from 1650 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2322 - British Literature to 1800 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2323 - British Literature from 1800 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2327 - American Literature to 1865 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2328 - American Literature from 1865 Credit(s): 3
- ENGL 2335 - Literary Genres Credit(s): 3
- HIST 2311 - Western Civilization I Credit(s): 3
- HIST 2312 - Western Civilization II Credit(s): 3
- HIST 2321 - World Civilizations I Credit(s): 3
- HIST 2322 - World Civilizations II Credit(s): 3
- PHIL 1301 - Introduction to Philosophy Credit(s): 3
- PHIL 1304 - Introduction to World Religions Credit(s): 3
- PHIL 2306 - Introduction to Ethics Credit(s): 3

Creative Arts

Three hours from:

- ARTS 1301 - Art Appreciation Credit(s): 3
- ARTS 1303 - Art History I (Prehistoric to the 14th century) Credit(s): 3
- ARTS 1304 - Art History II (14th Century to the present) Credit(s): 3
- DANC 2303 - Dance Appreciation Credit(s): 3
- MUMH 1307 - Intro to Music Literature Credit(s): 3
- MUSI 1306 - Music Appreciation Credit(s): 3
- DRAM 1310 - Theatre Appreciation Credit(s): 3



- DRAM 2366 - Film and Culture Credit(s): 3

American History

Six hours from:

- HIST 1301 - United States History I Credit(s): 3
- HIST 1302 - United States History II Credit(s): 3

Government/Political Science

Six hours from:

- GOVT 2305 - Federal Government Credit(s): 3
- GOVT 2306 - Texas Government Credit(s): 3

Students who took PSC 141 or 142 should consult their advisor for the appropriate course to complete this requirement.

Social and Behavioral Science

Three hours from:

- ANTH 2351 - Cultural Anthropology Credit(s):3
- ECON 2301 - Principles of Macroeconomics Credit(s):3
- ECON 2302 - Principles of Microeconomics Credit(s):3
- FORS 2351 - Introduction to Human Dimensions and Recreation Credit(s):3
- GEOG 1303 - World Regional Geography Credit(s):3
- MCOM 1307 - Survey of Mass Communication Credit(s):3
- PSYC 2301 - General Psychology Credit(s):3
- SOC1 1301 - Introduction to Sociology Credit(s):3

Component Area Option

Three hours from:

- ENGL 1302 - Research and Argument Credit(s):3

Three hours from:

- BUSI 2304 - Business Communication Credit(s):3
- ENGL 2311 - Technical and Scientific Writing Credit(s):3
- FREN 1311 - Elementary French Credit(s):3
- FREN 1312 - Elementary French Credit(s):3
- GERM 1311 - Elementary German I Credit(s):3
- GERM 1312 - Elementary German II Credit(s):3
- PORT 1311 - Elementary Portuguese I Credit(s):3
- PORT 1312 - Elementary Portuguese II Credit(s):3
- SPAN 1311 - Elementary Spanish I Credit(s):3
- SPAN 1312 - Elementary Spanish II Credit(s):3




















- SGNL 1301 - Beginning American Sign Language Credit(s):3
- SGNL 1302 - Intermediate American Sign Language Credit(s):3
- INCM 1301 - International and Intercultural Communication in Latin America Credit(s):3
- INCM 1302 - International and Intercultural Communication in France Credit(s):3
- INCM 1303 - International and Intercultural Communication in Germany Credit(s):3
- INCM 1304 - International and Intercultural Communication in Brazil Credit(s):3

Note

* Specific degree programs may direct core curriculum choices due to accreditation requirements or other considerations. Please see core requirements for specific degree programs.

** Lab hours are counted in the major.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Revising the State Core Curriculum THECB.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Texas Core Curriculum Overview THECB.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Education Code Section 61.822.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas Administrative Code RULE §4.28.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] TCC Points of Consideration.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] CCAC Roster and Function.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] CCAC Minutes 042117 FOR 251 not recommended.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Review of Courses Applying to the Core Curriculum.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Core Curriculum Assessment Committee Review of Core Course Syllabi.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Core Recertification Protocol 2018_11_22.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Core Requirements.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Core Curriculum - General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Sample Degree Plans for Core Curriculum.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Texas Administrative Code RULE §4.24.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Core Course Proposal.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Approval of Changes to Core Courses.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] THECB Core Application Guide.pdf](#)



9.4 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
(*Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) maintains policies that ensure at least 25 percent of the credits required for undergraduate degrees to be earned in residence at SFA. The term "in-residence" includes on-campus, off-campus, distance education, field-based, practicum, internship, and thesis/dissertation work for master's/doctoral degrees offered by Stephen F. Austin State University. The General Bulletin states, "all students must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours in residence at SFA in order to earn a bachelor's degree," constituting at least 25% of the 120 hours typically required for a baccalaureate degree at SFA. University [policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement \[01\]](#), also states that "Undergraduate degrees with 120 hours total degree program hours require a minimum of 30 advanced (upper level) in-residence semester credit hours." For the small handful of undergraduate programs that require more than 120 hours, policy 6.15 adds, "Undergraduate degrees with more than 120 total degree program hour requirements will ensure semester credit hours for the specific discipline include at least 25 percent of total semester credit hours in-residence."

Dissemination of the In-Residence Rule

The university defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education and in-residence requirements, in the [General Bulletin \[02\]](#) and [SFA Policy Manual \[03\]](#). Both the General Bulletin and SFA Policy Manual are available online to all students, faculty, and advisors.

Monitoring of the In-Residence Rule

The Admissions Office and the Office of the Registrar monitor transfer credits and degree requirements. However, all undergraduate programs are supervised by the deans of the various colleges under the administration of the provost/vice president for academic affairs. Each dean is responsible for directing the guidance of students in the college, from initial registration to graduation. Students are assigned to advisors by the deans of their respective colleges, but all students—including those whose majors are undeclared—may use the Academic Advising Center. Degree requirements are also tracked via degree audits. Both students and advisors are able to run "What-If" Degree Evaluation (CAPP) reports to determine which degree requirements—including in-residence hours—are met or not met for the student's degree plan, as well as for any hypothetical degree/major/minor variations. Provided is a sample degree audit showing the built-in requirement of 30 in-residence hours, [complete \[04\]](#), and [incomplete \[05\]](#).



Moreover, the Office of the Registrar audits the file of every student who has applied to graduate to ensure compliance with degree requirements for every academic program, to include 30 hours of in residence requirement. Once a student earns 95 hours, students and their advisors receive correspondence from the Office of the Registrar informing them they are eligible to apply for a degree and request their final degree audit. If a degree audit reveals deficiencies, the Office of the Registrar informs the student's advising department, and advisors help the student correct the problem. If the final graduation degree audit conducted by the Office of the Registrar reveals that the student has not earned the required hours in residence for the degree, then that student is not allowed to graduate until the required hours are earned.

Identification of Transcribed Coursework

SFA follows the [best practices \[06\]](#) of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. In accordance with these guidelines, SFA identifies on each [transcript \[07\]](#) the name of each institution in which students have completed coursework. All courses transferred to SFA are noted at the beginning of the [transcript \[08\]](#) under the heading "Transfer Credit" and divided into sections labeled by institution. Courses completed at SFA are listed under the heading "Institutional Credit" and are divided into sections labeled by semester.

SFA does not offer competency-based programs or joint or dual undergraduate programs with other institutions.

As demonstrated above, SFA ensures that all undergraduate degrees contain at least 25% of coursework earned directly through our own institution.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 6.15, In-Residence-Requirement.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Undergraduate Admissions \(Transfer of Credit\) - General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 6.20, Undergraduate Admission and Credits.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Degree Evaluation Report Complete Resd.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Degree Evaluation Report Incomplete Residence.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Registrar Best Practices.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Official UG Transcript Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Unofficial UG Transcript Redacted.pdf](#)



9.5 At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.

(Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) safeguards the integrity of its graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs by requiring at least one third of credits to be earned at SFA. To do so, SFA limits the number of graduate hours transferred to SFA from other accredited institutions. Compliance is ensured through several sources including the online [Graduate Bulletin \(Transfer of Credit\) \[01\]](#) and SFA [Policy 6.17, Graduate Admission \[02\]](#), and [Policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement \[03\]](#).

The master's degree without a thesis requires a minimum of 30 semester hours (with some exceptions, which require 36 hours) of coursework. The master's degree with thesis requires a minimum of 30 semester hours (with some exceptions, which require 36 hours), including six hours thesis. According to university [policy 6.17 \[02\]](#), under certain circumstances, a graduate student may transfer from six to twelve semester hours of graduate course work taken at other accredited institutions. The student pursuing a master's degree with thesis may transfer a maximum of six semester hours; a student pursuing a master's degree without thesis may transfer a maximum of twelve semester hours. Therefore, [transferred graduate courses \[04\]](#) may constitute no more than 40% of the graduate degree at SFA.

Furthermore, only courses in which the student earned a "B" or higher are eligible to be transferred. To transfer any credit from other institutions, the student must submit an official transcript of the courses to be considered and receive the approval of the appropriate academic department and academic dean. The courses must have been taken not earlier than six years prior to the student's first graduate enrollment at SFA. If the student fails to complete work on the graduate degree at SFA before the expiration of the six years, the transfer credit will not be applicable toward a SFA degree. Any course accepted by transfer will carry credit but not grade point value. General en bloc credit is assigned to a course that is transferable but is not an exact equivalent by level or by description. In this case, the credit is awarded on the same level as was attempted at the transferring institution, and the student's academic dean will determine its acceptability into degree programs.

All courses transferred to SFA are noted at the beginning of the transcript under a heading entitled "Transfer Credit," then are divided into sections labeled by institution. Courses completed at SFA are listed under the heading "Institutional Credit" and are divided into sections labeled by semester. Graduate students and graduate advisors may monitor students' degree progress in regular advising sessions and by degree audit. Both students and advisors are able to run "What-If" Degree Evaluation (CAPP) reports to determine which degree requirements—



including in-residence hours—are met or not met for the student’s degree plan, as well as for any hypothetical program variations. Provided are samples of [official \[05\]](#) and [unofficial \[06\]](#) graduate transcripts showing the differentiation between transfer and institutional credits.

Moreover, the Office of the Registrar audits the file of every student who has applied to graduate to ensure compliance with degree requirements for every academic program. If a degree audit reveals deficiencies, the Office of the Registrar informs the student’s advising department, and a faculty advisor helps the student correct the problem. If the final graduation degree audit conducted by the Office of the Registrar reveals that the student has not earned the required hours in residence or for their degree, then that student is not allowed to graduate until the required hours are earned. Provided is a sample graduate [degree audit \[07\]](#) showing the built-in requirement of 30 in-residence hours.

The SFA Policy Manual and the [Graduate Bulletin \[01\]](#) are available online to all students, faculty, and advisors within two clicks of the homepage, and the institution requires faculty to adhere to these policies and procedures regarding the [awarding of credit \[04\]](#). Students are made aware of these policies and procedures during the graduate admissions process, and graduate advisors assist in the implementation of these policies over the course of the student’s degree program.

SFA does not offer competency-based programs or joint graduate programs with other institutions.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Graduate Admission \(Transfer of Credit\) - Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 6.17, Graduate Admission.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Master Degree Transfer Credits Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Official Graduate Transcript Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Unofficial Graduate Transcript Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Degree Evaluation Report Graduate Complete InResd.pdf](#)



9.6 Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.
(*Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum*)

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) demands progressively more advanced academic content in its post-baccalaureate and graduate degree programs than its undergraduate programs by emphasizing knowledge of the literature of the discipline and engaging students in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.

As indicated by the Graduate School mission stated in the online [Graduate Bulletin \[01\]](#):

In its programs of graduate education, Stephen F. Austin State University seeks to afford qualified students the opportunity and a supportive environment in which to gain sufficient mastery of their chosen fields so that, by virtue of their depth and breadth of knowledge and the extent of their expertise, they may contribute significantly to those fields. In the service of this mission, the university seeks to staff the graduate departments with faculty members who maintain a high level of competence and productivity and to equip them so as to permit scholarship, creation, and practice to advance at the leading edge of their respective disciplines.

SFA ensures academic content and quality through the academic curricular review process, adherence to discipline specific accreditation standards, and standards for graduate faculty membership.

The following review of the requirements of graduate study completion, graduate course syllabi, the progressive numbering for all courses, and the requirements of program specific research/scholarly/creative projects exemplifies the academic rigor and progressive advancement of curricular content in SFA's post-baccalaureate and graduate programs.

Advanced Curricular Content

Course Descriptions

Comparison between program descriptions provides evidence that the academic content from undergraduate programs to graduate programs of similar subjects is progressively more advanced. For example, the [program description \[02\]](#) for the B.S. in Psychology states:



The psychology major curriculum will provide the student with a general background in psychology preparatory for graduate work in the main areas of psychology or for employment.

Clear indication of engagement in research, training, and professional practice is conveyed in the [program description \[03\]](#) of the M.A. in Psychology. The description appears in the Graduate Bulletin as follows:

The graduate program in general psychology is designed to expose students to some of the main subfields in psychology as well as train students to conduct psychological research and teach psychology courses at the college level.... All students in the program will take coursework in various subfields of psychology as well as receive mentorship and training in psychological research, data analysis, ethics, college teaching, and professional development. Furthermore, students will have the option to complete a thesis (i.e., independent research project) or a non-thesis option (i.e., independently teach a college psychology course).

Course Numbering System

SFA uses a course numbering system that indicates the progressive advancement of academic content from undergraduate to graduate courses. As stated in the response to standard [10.7](#) of this report:

For many years, SFA has used its own course numbering system with a three letter prefix to identify the academic discipline to which the course belongs, and a three digit course number. The first digit identifies the course level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, master's, doctoral). The second and third digits establish course sequencing and/or distinguish the course from others of the same level, credit value, and prefix.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, SFA has adopted the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS). All SFA courses—undergraduate and graduate—conform to TCCNS. TCCNS assigns a four-letter prefix to each course identifying the academic discipline to which the course belongs, followed by a four-digit course number. The first digit identifies the course level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, master's, doctoral). The second digit identifies the number of credit hours the course carries. (If it is a variable credit course, the lowest value is used here.) The third and fourth digits establish course sequencing and/or distinguish the course from others of the same level, credit value, and prefix.

Course level numbering in both the old and new numbering system was as follows: freshman or first-year courses are designated by a 1; sophomore or second-year courses are designated by a 2; junior or third-year courses are designated by a 3; senior or fourth-year courses are designated by a 4; graduate-level courses are designated by a 5; and doctoral-level courses are designated by a



6. Some 100- to 400-level courses taken for leveling purposes may appear on the graduate transcript with zero attempted and earned hours.

Both the current course numbering system and the new TCCNS system distinguish between progressive levels of course complexity in a hierarchical order.

Course Syllabi Comparison

Examining course syllabi of undergraduate and graduate courses in similar subjects provides another example of curricular advancement and academic rigor at the graduate level. The undergraduate course, [ART 450 Ceramics II \[04\]](#), includes the following student learning outcome:

This course will teach more advanced techniques in working with clay as an artistic medium.

The graduate course, [ART 550 Graduate Ceramics \[05\]](#), includes enhanced learning outcomes, such as the following:

This course will teach graduate level techniques in working with clay as an artistic medium... including a graduate level understanding of clay body formulation, glaze chemistry, and kiln firing.

Similarly, examples of increased academic rigor from lower- to upper-level coursework are highlighted at the program level when comparing an undergraduate course, [ENV 403 Remediation and Reclamation of Disturbed Land \[06\]](#), to its cross-listed graduate course, [ENV 503 \[07\]](#). Both syllabi list the following program learning outcomes:

1. *Demonstrate competency in environmental regulation and compliance.*
2. *Demonstrate understanding in environmental risk assessment.*
3. *Demonstrate understanding in occupational and environmental health.*
4. *Demonstrate competency in statistical methods and data management.*
5. *Demonstrate competency in oral and written communication skills.*

However, ENV 503 has an additional program learning outcome stating that graduate students will “demonstrate competency in M.S. thesis research,” indicating the heightened requirement of independent research within the graduate program.

Additionally, examination of syllabi from cross-listed courses, EPS 502 Applied Behavior Analysis and EPS 602, a doctoral course, demonstrates the additional requirement of advanced academic rigor between the two programs. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) stated in the syllabus for [EPS 502 \[08\]](#) are:



1. *Students will demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the principles of applied behavior analysis through exams and in-class discussion. (Critical Thinking)*
2. *Students will demonstrate professional dispositions by participating in peer supervision sessions. (Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork)*
3. *Given a referral problem, students will demonstrate knowledge of behavioral assessment strategies by developing a plan for a functional behavior assessment. (Critical Thinking, Communication)*
4. *Students will demonstrate appropriate behavior and dispositions in order to be effective in a diverse educational environment (Communication; Personal responsibility; Social Responsibility)*

As stated in the syllabus, student learning outcomes for [EPS 602 \[09\]](#) are:

1. *Students will demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the principles of applied behavior analysis through exams, presentations, and in-class discussion. (Critical Thinking)*
2. *Students will demonstrate professional dispositions and consultation skills by leading a peer supervision session. (Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork)*
3. *Given a referral problem, students will demonstrate knowledge of behavioral assessment strategies by developing a plan for a functional analysis of behavior (Critical Thinking, Communication)*
4. *Given assessment data, students will work together in teams to create a function-based plan for intervention utilizing the principles of applied behavior analysis. (Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork)*
5. *Students will demonstrate appropriate behavior and dispositions in order to be effective in a diverse educational environment (Communication; Personal responsibility; Social Responsibility)*

As evidenced above in outcomes 1, 2, and the inclusion of an additional outcome (4), doctoral students are required to demonstrate deeper analytical skills as well as greater technical expertise and research capabilities through an additional presentation, leading peer supervision sessions, and collaborating to create a functional-based plan stemming from their analyses.

Establishment of Content and Rigor

To ensure that the graduate faculty are proficient in current literature and research, membership on the graduate faculty is updated every five years with a requirement of updated research scholarship. See [Graduate Faculty Spreadsheet \[10\]](#). Additionally, the curricula vitae for all graduate faculty are reviewed by the department chair, the faculty from the college, the academic dean, and the dean of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies as part of the initial admittance as a graduate faculty and for renewal of graduate faculty membership. See [Graduate Faculty Form and vitae examples \[11\]](#).



Membership on the graduate faculty is required for those faculty who are active in at least one of the areas of responsibility for graduate education at SFA. These responsibilities include teaching graduate courses in one's area of expertise; directing theses and dissertations, as well as serving on thesis and dissertation advisory committees; serving on the university [Graduate Council \[12\]](#); and serving on the university [Research Council \[13\]](#).

All members are expected to maintain an active program of scholarship and remain current in the literature, methodologies, and techniques of their respective disciplines; contribute to the establishment of appropriate standards for admission and retention of qualified students into the graduate programs of the university; contribute to the establishment of appropriate criteria for conferring graduate degrees and for the development of quality curricula; promote the highest standards of student scholarship; and contribute to the establishment and maintenance of an environment of learning and achievement among graduate faculty and students.

The Graduate Council serves as an advisory body for graduate education at SFA. The council makes recommendations concerning:

- Policies and procedures relative to graduate student admission and programs;
- Membership on the graduate faculty;
- Graduate curriculum including new programs and substantive changes;
- Graduate theses, exhibitions, performances, and dissertations;
- Graduate student appeals; and
- Other matters pertaining to graduate education as requested by the dean of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, the vice president for Academic Affairs, or the president of the university.

The Graduate Council constitutes the primary advisory body for graduate education at the university and makes recommendations on all aspects of graduate education throughout the university. These faculty members not only represent their individual departments and colleges, but also serve as important contacts and sources of information for both faculty and graduate students. Members of the council serve a three-year term.

Critically, the Graduate Council serves as the university-level curriculum review body for all curricular changes to graduate programs—new programs and courses, modified programs and courses, and deleted programs and courses. As described in more detail in Standard [10.4](#), the Graduate Council ensures curriculum standards and rigor for all graduate programs by vetting any proposed change to a graduate program (a degree or certificate) or course, after these changes have been vetted by the originating academic unit and corresponding college-level curriculum committee. Upon being vetted by the Graduate Council, all graduate curriculum changes must also be approved by the Deans Council, the provost, the president, and SFA's governing board prior to submission to the THECB and, if substantive in nature, SACSCOC for final approval.



In addition to the oversight of the Graduate Council, discipline specific program accreditation ensures that the graduate and post-baccalaureate programs at Stephen F. Austin State University conform to commonly accepted standards and practices with more advanced content and rigor. Table 1 indicates the colleges and programs that have received Department of Education recognized discipline specific accreditation:

Accrediting Agency	Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)	Nursing, MSN	2019	2024
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	Speech-Language Pathology MS	2014	2021
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Commission on Accreditation	Art, MA Art, MFA Art Education, MA Interior Design, MS	2013	2022-2023
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Commission on Accreditation	Music, BM Music, MM	2012	2022
American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation (APA)	Doctoral Internship in School Psychology	2019	2020

Table 1 – 9.6 – Department of Education Recognized Discipline Specific Graduate Program Accreditations

Graduate Program Review

All graduate degree programs are reviewed as part of our Academic Program Review ([APR process \[14\]](#)). All programs are scheduled for a cumulative review every ten years, a brief self-report every 5 years, and annual check-up report. See the [APR Schedule \[15\]](#). The cumulative review includes a study by the department, an external review, and a response to the external review. A recent APR for the School of Music is provided as evidence [here \[16\]](#). This external confirmation of SFA’s graduate programs also ensures that they include adequate content and rigor expected of graduate programs.

Knowledge of the Literature of the Discipline

All graduate programs at SFA require students to demonstrate knowledge of the literature specific to their chosen discipline through research projects, presentations, essays, comprehensive examinations, theses, and dissertations. These requirements are found in the syllabi required for submission to the department chairs and deans of each college. One such example includes the syllabus for [ECH 510 – Introduction to Early Childhood Education Research \[17\]](#). The course description states the following course objective:

Development of a research project proposal including comprehensive review of literature over a topic of choice is included.



In addition, the student learning outcomes for the course also state that:

SLO 6.11 Candidates synthesize peer-reviewed articles in their field of study.

SLO 6.14 Candidates analyze valid and credible research articles. (assessment: articles in their area of interest utilizing the library database to find peer-reviewed journal articles.)

SLO 6.15 Candidates evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of peer-reviewed articles in their field of study.

SLO 6.16 Candidates synthesize current issues related to early childhood education. (assessment: write a proposal to investigate a relevant issue in education, identifying independent and dependent variables, a problem statement, and appropriate qualitative or quantitative methodology) (InTASC 6)

Another example from MUP 558 – Opera Repertoire, which is cross-listed with an undergraduate course (MUP 448), not only indicates the expectation of students acquiring knowledge of the literature of the discipline, but also exhibits the academic advancement in rigor from undergraduate to graduate coursework. The [syllabus \[18\]](#) for this course states:

Students have significant weekly assignments/preparation, are expected to take regular content quizzes, listening quizzes, and a final examination. Graduate students (MUS 558), in addition to the aforementioned, are required to make a major [class presentation \[19\]](#) in which they discuss a significant composer of the genre, review journal articles, and are required to present 2 representative works with song backgrounds over the course of the semester.

Many of the graduate programs use a seminar style design where students read and discuss selections of articles from research journals, case studies, book chapters, and books. One example from the History, M.A. is [HIS 547 - African American History \[20\]](#), in which graduate students are assigned a reading list, two book reviews, and a seminar paper, all incorporating literature of the discipline. Another example provided from the Biology, M.S. includes two cross-listed courses [BIO 431 and BIO 532 \[21\]](#) demonstrating the inclusion of literature of the discipline and greater academic rigor with the requirement for graduate students to complete a research paper on a topic concerning a protein or protein family.

Some programs also have graduate students lead the discussions of the assigned reading materials. One example derives from the Psychology, M.A. is [PSY 526 - Advanced Developmental Psychology \[22\]](#). In this course, graduate students are required to serve as discussion leaders to facilitate a class discussion and critical analysis of selected literature. Another example of student led discussion is from a hybrid course, [ENG 510 – British Literature Topics \[23\]](#). According to the syllabus, students are “required to participate in bi-monthly discussions on D2L (SFA’s learning management system).” Additionally, “students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments of primary, secondary, and tertiary materials.



Completion and comprehension of the readings is assessed regularly through seminar style discussions, informal presentations, and a series of writing assignments.”

Graduate students demonstrate the ability to integrate information from their disciplines through comprehensive examinations, standardized tests, thesis exhibitions, and dissertations. Almost half of the master’s programs offered at SFA (24 out of 48 (50%)) require or have a thesis option. The remaining master’s programs call for a research paper, term project, essay paper, comprehensive examinations, or an exhibit requiring students to incorporate literature specific to a topic in their discipline. Included is a [list \[24\]](#) of all master’s programs indicating those that require a thesis or have a thesis option.

SFA currently offers three doctoral degrees: Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Doctor of Philosophy in forestry, and Doctor of Philosophy in school psychology. The requirements for admission, degree completion, dissertation, time limits, etc., may be found in the [Graduate Bulletin \[25\]](#). Due to the compulsory standard of the dissertation, doctoral students are required to demonstrate knowledge of the literature of their discipline and engage in independent research.

Support of Independent Research and Appropriate Professional Practice and Training Experiences

Graduate students engage in research, as many graduate programs require graduate students to learn research design, develop and complete original research projects and papers, demonstrate understanding of the ethics of research, and present their research results. An example of this is found in the Master in Elementary Education with a Reading Specialist Certification, in which graduate students spend an entire [practicum \[26\]](#) year reading literacy research and then creating practitioner-friendly pamphlets, infographics, trainings, and writings to influence and help guide teachers who practice in the field of reading.

Graduate students completing a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation gain experience in literature review, data collection, data analysis, and research design while writing in a specific research style for their discipline. For example, graduate students completing a master’s thesis in psychology gain experience developing a theoretically driven and testable hypothesis; designing an experimental study; collecting, coding, and analyzing data; writing their results as a scientific manuscript; and defending their project to a committee of scholars. Among the coursework for the Psychology, M.A. is [PSY 585, Advanced Research Design \[27\]](#). One of the SLOs for the course states:

Students will be able to understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Further, graduate students conduct and disseminate research specific to their discipline. The Master of Science in Biology is another example of the support for independent research within SFA’s graduate programs. Each student pursuing a thesis-based degree must complete an



original research project. The [thesis project \[28\]](#) is developed in consultation with the major professor to include a hypothesis, an appropriate experimental design, and protocols for collecting and analyzing data. The thesis that results from this process is written as a manuscript suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Students must present their work in a public defense seminar that includes the student's thesis committee (members of the Graduate Faculty).

For those students who choose the non-thesis option, independent research is supported in various ways. Students pursuing a [Master of Arts in English \[29\]](#) with a non-thesis option take comprehensive exams and must also spend two semesters completing three detailed literature reviews on their chosen subjects, under the direction of three graduate faculty members. For the [Master of Arts in Publishing \[30\]](#), students complete a publication project from prospectus to finished publication, inclusive of a marketing plan. This may be a book, website, or journal, among other possibilities, as determined by the student and project committee. The capstone project will be carried out in conjunction with a professional internship, thereby providing the student with professional practice and training experience.

SFA holds a [Graduate Research Conference \[31\]](#) each year so graduate students may learn the formal aspects of presentation. This conference gives masters and doctoral candidates a chance to share their research projects. A few graduate programs also encourage publication of students' research such as Biology and Educational Leadership. An [example \[32\]](#) of a student learning outcome in research from the Master of Education in Educational Leadership states:

Students will elaborate essential research skills including identifying problems and questions, creating research instruments, analyzing data, and using research findings to create school improvement plans.

SFA graduate students also engage in appropriate professional practices and experiences. An example of professional practice in the Master of Social Work (MSW) is the completion of [needs assessments \[33\]](#) by graduate students. Additionally, [MSW \[34\]](#) candidates are required to complete two semesters of field instruction (SWK 519 and 529), which include educationally supervised practice in a social welfare agency setting under the direct supervision of a professional social worker. Two hundred and forty hours of agency experience and a one-hour weekly integrative seminar are required each semester.



























Other graduate programs that incorporate field experiences are the Master of Education in Educational Leadership ([AED 554 – Practicum for the School Principal \[35\]](#)), [Master of Science in Athletic Training \[36\]](#) (KIN 521, 522, 541, 551 – Athletic Clinical Training I-IV), and [Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner \[37\]](#) (which requires 720 clinical hours). The field and clinical experiences include students' reflections on observations, development of projects specific to the discipline, assessments related to the discipline, and portfolio development.











As demonstrated in this response through an examination of graduate course descriptions, a comparison of graduate course syllabi to undergraduate course syllabi, an explanation of the



establishment of curricular content by the graduate faculty, and a review of discipline specific accreditations, SFA's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs. SFA's graduate programs are structured to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline through the completion of literature reviews, required readings of scholarly works, completion and publication of research papers and projects, theses, and dissertations. To ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training, SFA's graduate programs offer opportunities for internships, professional presentations, field instructions, and clinical experience.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Graduate Study - Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Program Psychology, BS -Description.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Program Psychology, MA - Description.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Art 450 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] ART550 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] ENV403 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] ENV503 Course Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] EPS 502.020 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] EPS60220 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Graduate Faculty Spreadsheet.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Graduate Faculty Form and Vitae examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Graduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Research Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] APR Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] APR Approved Schedule.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Music APR 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] ECH 510 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] MUP558 syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] MUP 558 Class Presentation.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] HIS547 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] BIO532 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] PSY526 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] ENG510 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Master's Thesis Requirements20200817.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Graduate Admission.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] RDG 534 Syllabi.pdf](#)

-  [\[27\] PSY585 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Master's Theses.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Graduate Programs English Creative Writing.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Program Publishing, MA.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] 2020 Graduate Research Conference.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] AED591 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] SWK Needs Assessment.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Program Social Work, MSW.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] AED5546 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Program Athletic Training, MS.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] Program Family Nurse Practitioner, MSN.pdf](#)



9.7 The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

(Program requirements)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes requirements for its undergraduate and graduate programs. SFA does not have post-baccalaureate professional programs. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

Publication of Degree Program Requirements

SFA has clearly defined program requirements published in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins. Faculty in the respective departments develop specific and clearly defined requirements for each degree and program offered at SFA. Faculty committees at undergraduate and graduate levels approve the requirements as well as college and university level committees prior to final approval by the Board of Regents during the April board meeting. See the [April Board Meeting Minutes \[01\]](#).

SFA publishes the Undergraduate (Figure 1) and Graduate (Figure 2) Bulletins electronically on the publicly accessible SFA website to give all prospective and existing students easy access to the requirements for successful program completion, as well as general policies and procedures of the institution's programs.



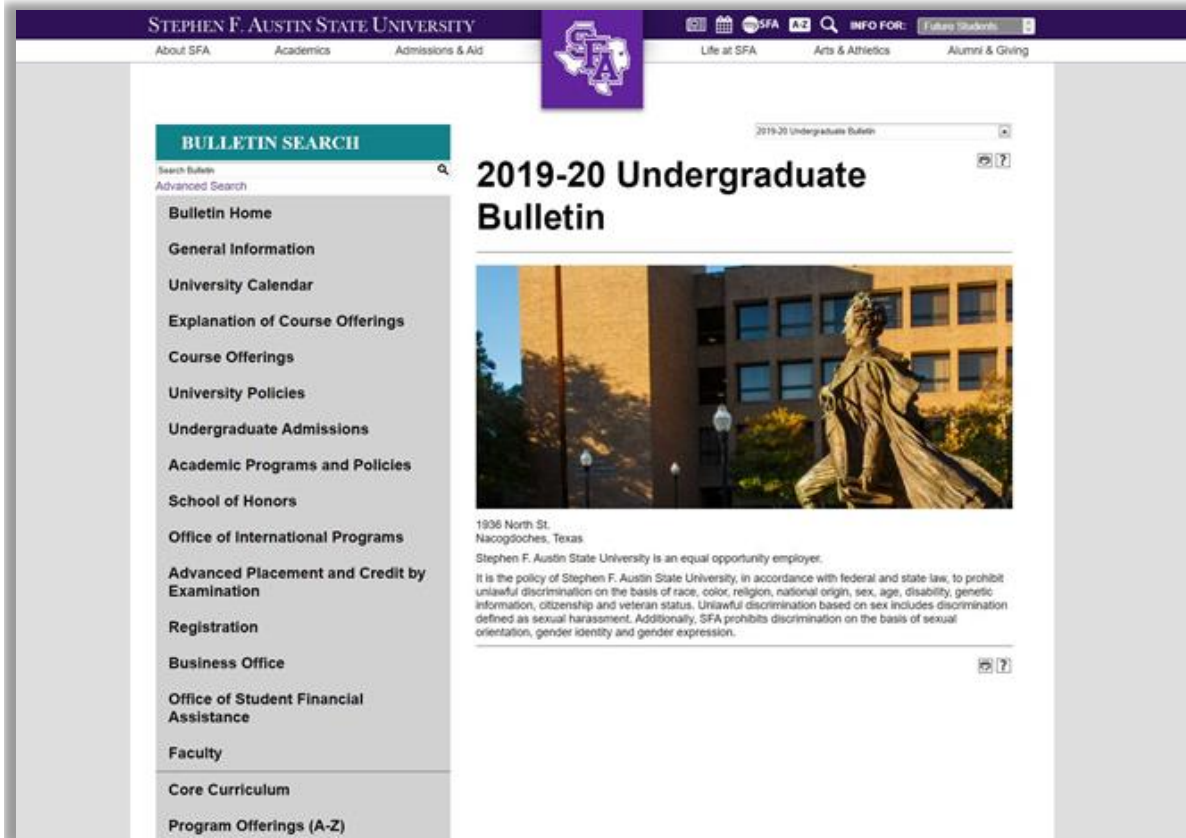


Figure 1 – 9.7 – “2019-20 Undergraduate Bulletin.” Stephen F. Austin University - Acalog ACMS™, 31 Mar. 2020, catalog.sfasu.edu/.

These bulletins detail degree program requirements, pre-requisites, co-requisites, and required semester credit hours. See examples of the [Forestry PhD](#), [Early Childhood MEd.](#), [Nursing BSN](#), [Sociology BA](#), and [Management BBA \[02\]](#).



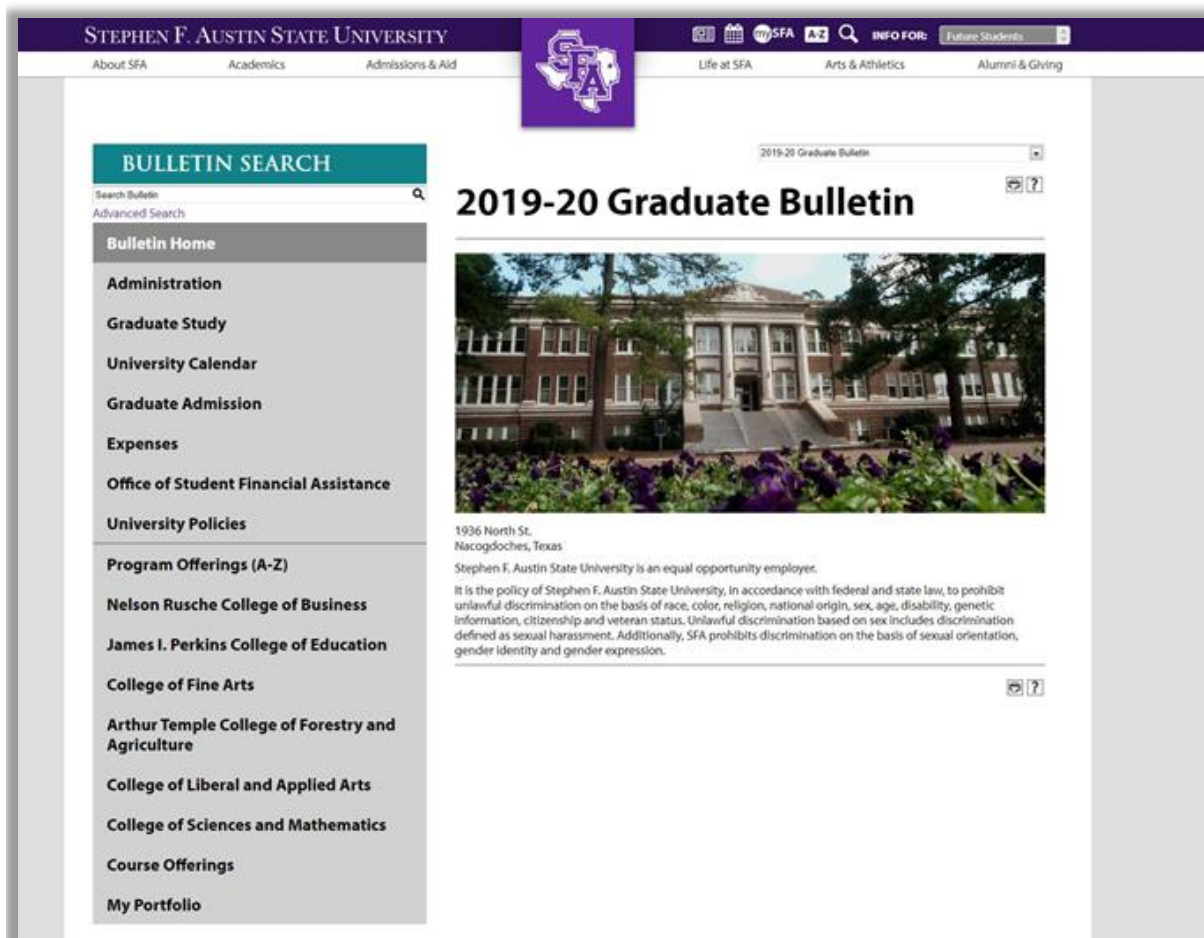


Figure 2. – 9.7 – “2019-20 Graduate Bulletin.” Stephen F. Austin University - Acalog ACMS™, 31 Mar. 2020, catalog.sfasu.edu/.

Degree plans, maintained by the Registrar’s Office, allow currently enrolled students to check on their progress toward degree completion by performing an unofficial [degree audit \[03\]](#). Degree audits provide an unofficial evaluation that students, faculty, and advisors may view. Additionally, students can conduct “What if” analyses to determine additional requirements needed if they were to change their degree programs.

General requirements and guidelines for written and oral comprehensive examinations, theses, dissertations, and exhibitions are published at the SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies website (Figure 3). See the [theses, dissertations, and exhibitions guidelines \[04\]](#).



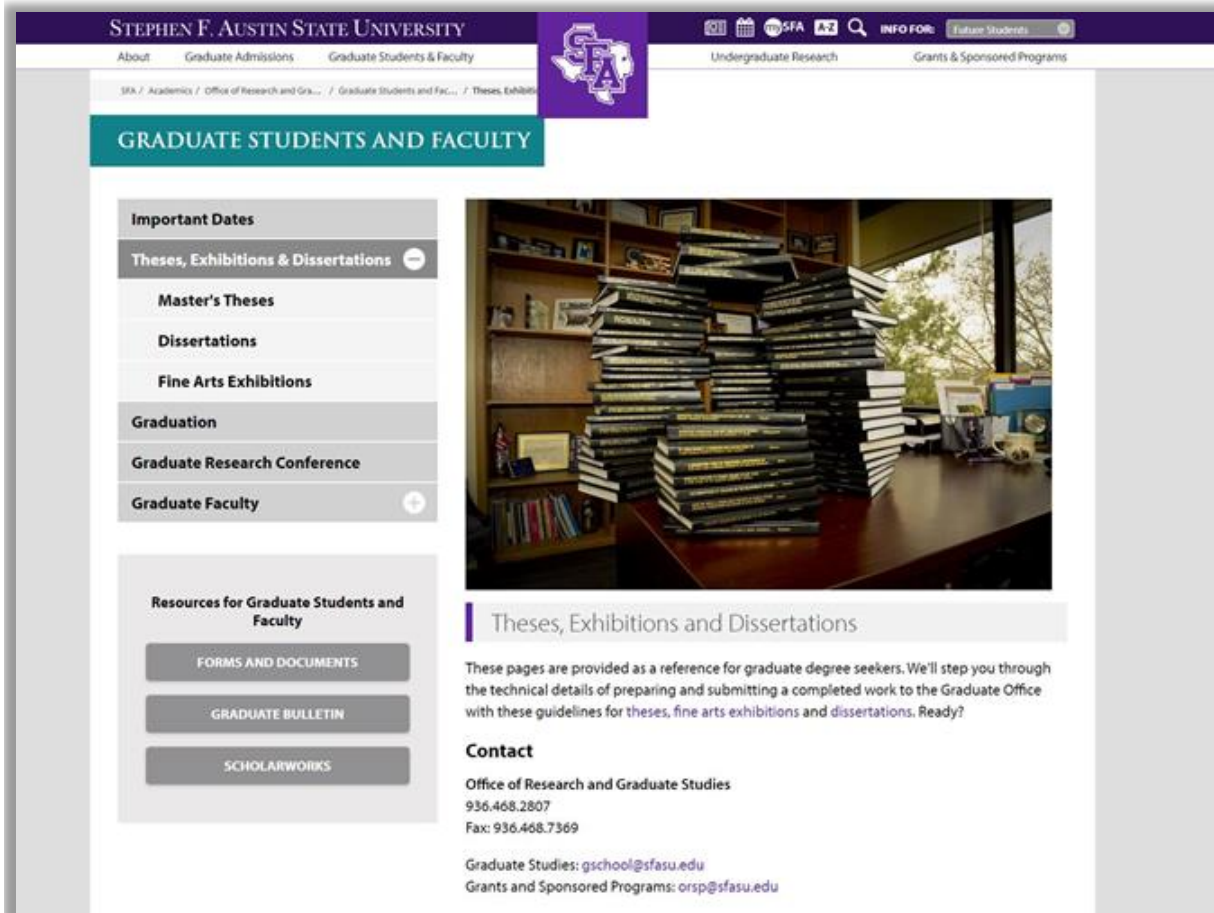


Figure 3 – 9.7 – Theses, Exhibitions, and Dissertations

Conformation to Commonly Accepted Practices

Along with adherence to university policies, state guidelines, and accrediting body standards, SFA ensures that the requirements for its undergraduate and graduate programs conform to commonly accepted standards and practices through rigorous program review and approval processes, program accreditation compliance, and ongoing curriculum review and evaluation. SFA [policy 5.1, Academic Program Review \[05\]](#) requires academic units to evaluate their effectiveness at achieving learning outcomes and other objectives. A major [program review \[06\]](#), which consists of a self-study, external review, and program improvement plan, is conducted at least every ten years, and more abbreviated reviews are conducted annually.



The SFA curriculum review process is conducted annually and guided by SFA [policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[07\]](#). This policy states that,

It is the responsibility of each academic unit of the university to maintain current curricula and engage in continuous review of its curricula. The provost and vice president for academic affairs and appropriate dean will set timelines for the modification and approval process . . .

Where appropriate, approval will then be sought from (and/or notification will be made to) the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Texas Education Agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or other outside agencies and organizations.

Curriculum changes to courses and programs must be approved by the academic unit, the respective college, the appropriate university-level curriculum committee, the Deans Council, the provost, the president, and the Board of Regents, and any other appropriate curriculum body (such as the Core Curriculum Committee, which was formerly called the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, if the change is to the core). Curriculum changes are submitted to the THECB and, when necessary, SACSCOC. Please see the narratives for Standards [6.2.b](#) and [10.4](#) for additional discussion of how SFA policies 5.1 and 5.7 are implemented.

Further, SFA practices strict observance of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) regulations, the [Texas Administrative Code \[08\]](#), and discipline-specific accreditation standards to ensure that program curricula conform to commonly accepted standards and practices.

External agencies and associations accredit many of our academic programs, providing additional assurance that they adhere to accepted standards and practices. These programs and their corresponding accrediting agencies are published online. See the SFA accreditations [website \[09\]](#). The following accrediting agencies, recognized by the US Department of Education, have examined and certified that the degree programs at SFA under their purview meet commonly accepted standards for such programs:



Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)	Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences, BS	2017	2022
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)	Nursing, MSN	2019	2024
	Nursing, BSN Nursing Post-RN, BSN	2013	2021
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	Speech-Language Pathology, BS Speech-Language Pathology MS	2014	2021
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Commission on Accreditation	Art, BA Art, BFA Art, MA Art, MFA Art Education, MA Interior Design, BS Interior Design, MS	2013	2022-2023
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Commission on Accreditation	Music, BM Music, MM	2012	2022
National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), Commission on Accreditation	Theatre, BA Theatre, BFA	2014	2024
American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation (APA)	Doctoral Internship in School Psychology	2019	2020

Table 1 – 9.7 – Department of Education Recognized Accrediting Agency Accredited Programs

Majors and Concentrations












SFA policy does not cite specific criteria for concentrations. However, [policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirements \[10\]](#) states, “All majors consist of at least 30 semester hours in the discipline and must include at least 18 hours of advanced work, of which at least 12 hours must be advanced work completed in–residence. SFA follows the definition of “major” in the THECB online [Glossary of Terms \[11\]](#):

Major is a subject-matter area in which a student may specialize by taking a specified number of courses as a part of the requirements for completion of a program of study.

SFA does not report concentrations to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. As detailed in the response above, SFA publishes requirements for its undergraduate and graduate programs, and these requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Meeting Minutes April 28-30, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Sample program requirements.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Sample Degree Audit.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Office of Research and Graduate Studies website.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 5.1, Academic Program Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] APR Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews Modifications and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Accreditations.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] THECB Glossary of Terms.pdf](#)



Section 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

10.1 The institution publishes, implements, and disseminates academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.
(*Academic Policies*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes, implements, and disseminates academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practices and that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

SFA's Mission and Its Academic Policies

SFA's academic policies--such as [7.13, Faculty Workload \[01\]](#), [7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty \[02\]](#), [7.29 Tenure and Continued Employment \[03\]](#), and [7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty\[04\]](#) — discuss the role of teaching, research/scholarship/creative work, and service in regard to the work of faculty members, in accord with the priority SFA's mission places on "excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service." Implementation of policy 7.13 and 7.22 are discussed in the response to standards [6.2b](#) and [6.3](#), respectively.






























7. Academics-Faculty		
Policy		Revised
7.1.	 Academic and Professional Qualifications	10/28/2019
7.2.	 Academic Appointments and Titles	10/28/2019
7.3.	 Academic Freedom and Responsibility	7/23/2019
7.4.	 Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty	10/28/2019
7.5.	 Administrative Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty Performance	1/28/2020
7.6.	 Faculty Merit Pay	1/28/2020
7.7.	Reserved	
7.8.	 Dead Week	7/24/2018
7.9.	 Distance Education Faculty Competencies and Compensation	7/26/2016
7.10.	 Emeritus	7/23/2019
7.11.	 Faculty Code of Conduct	1/29/2019
7.12.	 Faculty Search	10/28/2019
7.13.	 Faculty Workload	11/2/2015
7.14.	 Final Examination Scheduling	1/29/2019
7.15.	 Guest Lecturers	10/28/2019
7.16.	 Purchased Instructor-Generated Materials	1/28/2020
7.17.	 Library Faculty	1/28/2020
7.18.	 Meeting and Conducting Classes	1/29/2019
7.19.	 Misconduct in Scholarly or Creative Activities	7/23/2019
7.20.	Reserved	
7.21.	 Part-time Faculty	1/28/2020
7.22.	 Performance Evaluation of Faculty	10/28/2019
7.23.	Reserved	
7.24.	 Regents Scholar	7/23/2019
7.25.	 Faculty Disagreements	1/28/2020
7.26.	 Small-Size Classes	4/30/2019
7.27.	 Student Evaluation of Instruction	1/28/2020
7.28.	 Summer Teaching Appointments	10/28/2019
7.29.	 Tenure and Continued Employment	10/28/2019
7.30.	 Terminal Degrees	10/29/2018

Table 1 – 10.1 – Faculty Academic Policies “SFA Policy Manual

Student Outcomes/Success and SFA’s Academic Policies

Policies such as [6.1, Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities \[05\]](#), [6.2, Academic Advising for Undergraduate Students \[06\]](#), [6.7, Class Attendance \[07\]](#), and [7.27, Student Evaluation of Instruction \[08\]](#) enhance student outcomes and success by creating student support systems and practices that help students persist and increase their momentum towards graduation.



6. Academics-Students		
Policy		Revised
6.1.	Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities	4/30/2019
6.2.	Academic Advising for Undergraduate Students	4/25/2017
6.3.	Final Course Grade Appeals by Students	1/30/2018
6.4.	Academic Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement for Undergraduates	10/28/2019
6.5.	Advanced Placement Guidelines	7/23/2019
6.6.	Appeal Procedure Relating to the Provision of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	10/28/2019
6.7.	Class Attendance	1/30/2018
6.8.	Commencement	4/24/2018
6.9.	Concurrent and Dual Credit Enrollment Programs	10/23/2017
6.10.	Course Add/Drop	1/29/2019
6.11.	Doctoral Students: Allowable Credit Hours and Completion Times	1/28/2020
6.12.	Graduate Assistantships	7/25/2017
6.13.	Graduate Student Advising	10/28/2019
6.14.	Military Service Activation	7/23/2019
6.15.	In-Residence Requirement	7/25/2017
6.16.	Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients	1/29/2019
6.17.	Reserved	
6.18.	Second Baccalaureate Degrees	7/23/2019
6.19.	Student Fiscal Appeals	1/28/2020
6.20.	Undergraduate Admissions and Credits	7/26/2016
6.21.	Tuition Rebate	10/23/2017
6.22.	Withdrawal Without Financial Clearance	1/29/2019
6.23.	Prohibition of Enrollment Inducement of Military Service Members	7/23/2019
6.24.	Student Medical Appeal	1/29/2019

Table 2 – 10.1 – Student Academic Policies “SFA Policy Manual.”

The Development of Academic Policies at SFA

Academic policies are developed within a collaborative framework that strives to involve faculty, staff, administration, and students (where appropriate). New policies may originate from individual students, faculty, staff members, administrators, ad hoc or standing committees, groups, or boards. All policies under the Academic Affairs division must be submitted to the provost through a policy review committee, ensuring alignment with state regulations issued by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), as well as with all relevant accrediting body standards. The Policy Committee consists of several full-time faculty members as well as academic department chairs and deans.



Name	Title	College/Dept/Office	Term Ends
Mr. Hans Williams> <i>Chair</i>	Dean	Forestry & Agriculture	2019-20
Dr. Joyce Johnston#	Department Chair	Multidisciplinary Programs	2020-21
Dr. Tim Bisping>	Dean	Business	2020-21
Dr. Stephen Mullin#	Department Chair	Biology	2020-21
Mr. Edward Iglesias	Librarian	Library	2019-20
Dr. Kefa Onchoke*	Professor	Chemistry	2020-21
Dr. Scott Drury*	Associate Professor	Psychology	2020-21
Mr. Todd Barrios	Instructor/Chef	Human Sciences	2019-20
Dr. Chris Talbot#	Director	Art	2020-21

Table 3 – 10.1 – Policy Committee Members 2019-20

This [committee reviews \[09\]](#) policies that establish academic standards on a triennial basis to ensure they remain in compliance with external and internal regulations. The Policy Committee consults with any university office or committee responsible for implementing a given policy. For instance, the Steen Library director and research librarians are consulted whenever [policy 7.17, Library Faculty \[10\]](#) is reviewed.

New or revised academic policies move from the [Policy Committee to Deans Council for approval \[11\]](#), after which they are submitted to the Board of Regents (BOR) by the president, vice presidents, general counsel, or chief audit executive, per [policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format \[12\]](#).

As they are received by the BOR for approval, draft policies are formatted for consistency and posted on the BOR’s website for campus-wide review and input, accessible via the “Policies Under Review” webpage (Figure 1), which includes any policy pertinent to the BOR’s Academic and Students Affairs Committee. Additionally, copies are sent to the president and each of the vice presidents, and all policies are reviewed by the general counsel. Proposed policies or revisions are submitted to the board members in the [agenda book \[13\]](#) 10 days before each regular board meeting.



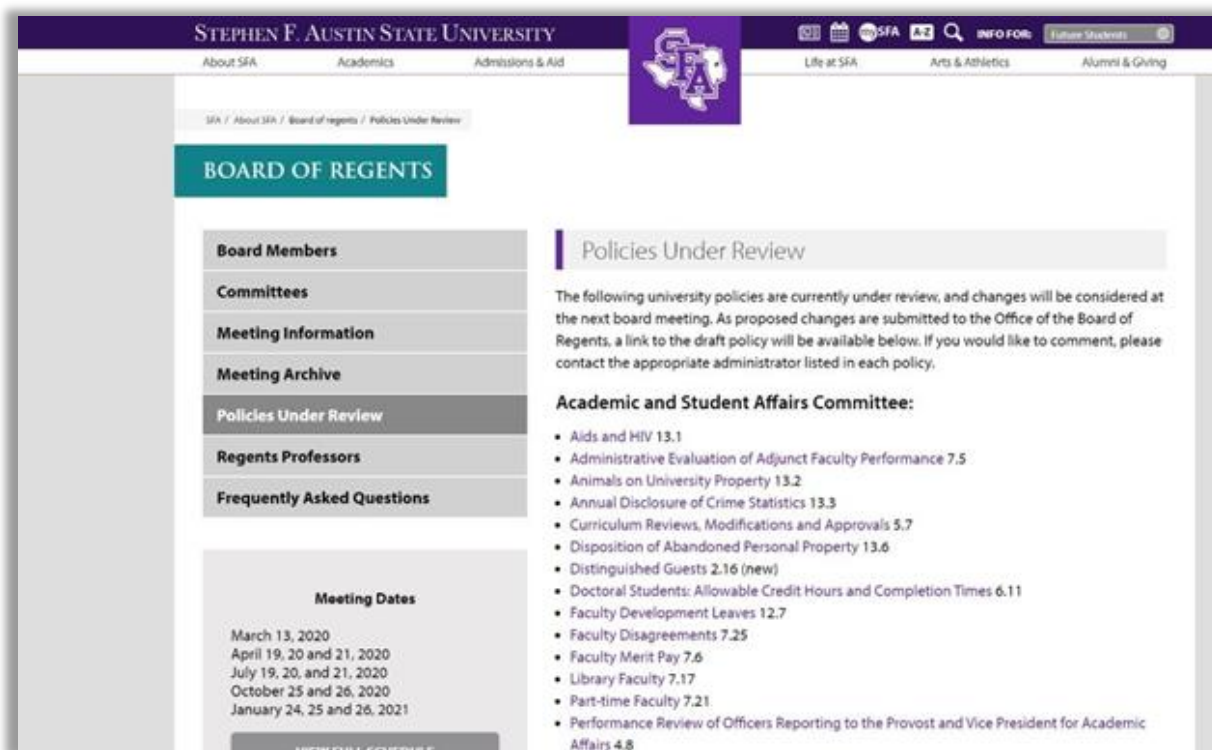


Figure 1 – 10.1 – “Policies Under Review”

The Dissemination and Publication of SFA’s Academic Policies

Following approval of policy changes by the BOR, the SFA president sends out an [email \[14\]](#) to the faculty and staff after every BOR meeting communicating any policy changes -including academic policies. Likewise, the vice president of university affairs sends out a separate [email \[15\]](#) to students each term (fall, spring, and summer) on any “policies of interest” to them, including academic policies. Revised or new policies are available on the SFA website, with the date of “Last Revision” noted.

Policies are published for viewing by students, faculty, staff, and other interested parties through multiple venues, including the SFA online [Policy Manual \[16\]](#), the [General Bulletin \[17\]](#), and the [Graduate Bulletin \[18\]](#). All policies related to academics are grouped into four sections in SFA’s online Policy Manual: Section 4: Academic Affairs; Section 5: Academic Programs and Degrees; Section 6: Academics—Students; Section 7: Academics—Faculty.

The Implementation of SFA’s Academic Policies

SFA develops academic policies that are appropriate to its programs and students and based on good educational practices, which creates an environment that enhances student learning and success. Policies addressing grading, attendance, withdrawals, degree completion requirements, academic misconduct, and syllabus requirements provide a framework for student progress, performance, and expectations.



Course Grades

SFA [Policy 5.5, Course Grades \[19\]](#) and [Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students \[20\]](#), specifically address grading guidelines in determining grade point average calculations; and withheld, repeat, midterm, and final grades. Policy 5.5 requires the grading system for each course to be included in the [course syllabus \[21\]](#). Students are provided a formal appeal process for final grades and determinations of academic dishonesty, as stated in policy 6.3. [Examples \[22\]](#) of student final course grade appeals are provided.

Withdrawals

Policies that detail the process by which a student may withdraw from a course include SFA's [Policy 6.10, Course Add/Drop \[05\]](#), and [Policy 6.24, Student Medical Appeal \[23\]](#). Students are eligible to drop classes through the fifth working day past midsemester or midsession as applicable, according to policy 6.10. After this date, students may only drop classes if they are withdrawing from the university. As stated in policy 6.10, a student may withdraw for medical concerns by following the procedures for a student medical appeal detailed in Policy 6.24. [Examples \[24\]](#) of student medical appeals are provided.

Degree Completion Requirements

In addition to degree requirements listed in the General and Graduate Bulletins, students receive academic advising in accordance with SFA [Policy 6.2, Academic Advising for Undergraduate Students \[06\]](#) and [Policy 6.13, Graduate Student Advising \[25\]](#). According to policy 6.2:

An advising session is mandatory for undergraduate students prior to registration for courses in the following situations:

- Each semester for students with fewer than 60 earned hours of credit;
- Each semester for students on academic probation;
- Annually for students with 60 or more earned hours of credit

Examples of advising for each situation are provided: [fewer than 60 hours \[26\]](#), [academic probation \[27\]](#), [more than 60 hours \[28\]](#).

Academic Misconduct

SFA addresses academic integrity in both the [General Bulletin \[29\]](#) and the [Graduate Bulletin \[30\]](#). The bulletins provide details regarding the actions leading to academic dishonesty, and steps taken by the instructor to address the student and to initiate the procedures outlined in [Policy 4.1, Student Academic Dishonesty \[31\]](#). As stated in policy 4.1, “a student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Final Course Grade Appeals by Students (policy 6.3).” [Examples \[32\]](#) of implementation of policy 4.1 are provided.























In addition to academic dishonesty, SFA [Policy 6.4, Academic Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement for Undergraduates \[33\]](#), provides students with guidelines for maintaining academic good standing, conditions for academic probation and suspension, and the procedures for reinstatement. Examples of implementation of this policy are provided: [Probation \[34\]](#), [Suspension \[35\]](#), [Reinstatement \[36\]](#).


















Syllabus Requirements

Along with grading guidelines and details for each course per [Policy 5.5, Course Grades \[19\]](#), additional syllabus requirements are included in [Policy 4.1, Student Academic Dishonesty \[31\]](#), and [Policy 6.7, Class Attendance \[07\]](#). Examples of [syllabi \[37\]](#) that include statements pertaining to policy 4.1 and policy 6.7 are provided as evidence of implementation of these policies, as well as dissemination of this information to students. Sample syllabi indicating implementation of policy 5.5 are included in the response above.

As detailed above and evidenced in the examples provided, SFA publishes, implements, and disseminates academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and that accurately represent its programs and services.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 7.13, Faculty Workload.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 7.22, Performance Evaluation of Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 7.29, Tenure and Continued Employment.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 7.4, Academic Promotion of Full-Time Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 6.1, Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 6.2, Academic Advising for Undergraduate Students.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 6.7, Class Attendance.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 7.27, Student Evaluation of Instruction.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy Committee Meeting February 14, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 7.17, Library Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Policies to Dean's Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Report to the Board April 17-18, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Newly Revised University Policies.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policies of Interest to Students.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] University Policies - Undergraduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] University Policies - Graduate Bulletin, Academic Integrity.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Policy 5.5, Course Grades.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students.pdf](#)

-  [\[21\] Course Grades Example Syllabi.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Final Course Grade Appeal examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Policy 6.24, Student Medical Appeal.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Student Medical Appeals.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Policy 6.13, Graduate Student Advising.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Advising Example for Students less than 60 hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Probation examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Advising Examples more than 60 hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] General Bulletin - Academic Dishonesty.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Graduate Bulletin - Academic Integrity.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Policy 4.1, Student Academic Dishonesty.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Examples of Academic Dishonesty.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Policy 6.4, Academic Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement for Undergraduates.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Probation.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Suspension Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Reinstatement.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] Attendance and Academic Dishonesty Syllabi.pdf](#)



10.2 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies.
(Public information) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance Non-Compliance Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) makes current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies available to all students and the general public, regardless of course delivery method, on its public-facing website. The academic calendar and grading policies are also made available to students and the public through the publication of the [Graduate Bulletin \[01\]](#) and the [General Bulletin \[02\]](#).

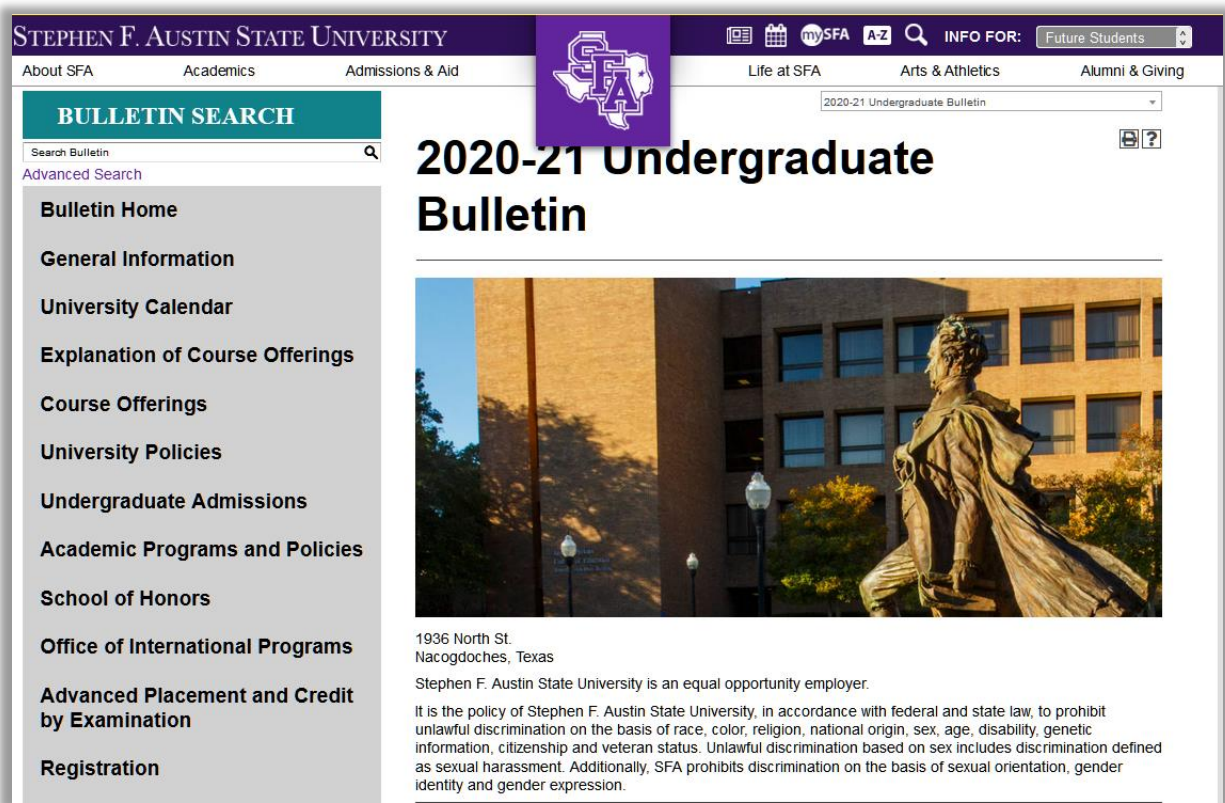


Figure 1 – 10.2 – 2019-20 Undergraduate Bulletin.

The Academic Calendar

The Calendar Committee (Table 1) establishes the academic calendar three years in advance. The committee is comprised of representatives of key administrative offices, such as Registrar, Financial Aid, Residence Life, Faculty Senate, and each of the colleges.



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Compliance Certification

Name	Title	College/Dept/Office
Dr. Keith Hubbard <i>Chair</i>	Professor	Mathematics & Statistics
Dr. Scott Shattuck	Associate Dean	Fine Arts
Dr. Gina Harden	Assistant Professor	Management & Marketing
Dr. David Kulhavy	Professor	Forestry
Dr. Randi-Barnes Cox	Assistant Professor	History
Dr. Kevin Stafford	Assistant Professor	Geology
Dr. Lisa Mize	Associate Professor	Human Sciences
Dr. Ashley Hall	Assistant Professor	Business Communications
Lynda Langham	Registrar	Registrar
Sharon Brewer	Executive Assistant to Provost	Academic Affairs
Karen Hall	Director	Institutional Research
Lori Harkness	Director	Early Childhood Lab
D'Nese Haddox	Associate Director	Residence Life
Jamal Smith	Director	Orientation
Micki Gunter	Program Coordinator	Graduate Studies
Dr. Ray Darville	<i>Chairs' Forum Rep</i>	Anthropology, Geography & Sociology
John Calahan	Director of Assessment	Academic Affairs
Rachele Garrett	Director	Financial Aid
Dr. Marc Guidry	Associate Provost	Academic Affairs

Table 1 – 10.2 – Calendar Committees

The committee meets, as needed, to keep the calendars publicly available two years in advance. When the calendars are approved, the two-year calendars are posted on the Academic Affairs website (Figure 2).



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Academic Affairs Committees Calendars

mySFA A-Z INFO FOR: Future Students

Curriculum Evaluations & Reviews Forms & Links

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Letter from the Provost

Who We Are

New Faculty

Teaching Excellence Awards

Regents Scholar

Emeritus List

Articulation Agreements

Commencement Dates

- Dec. 13 and 14, 2019
- May 9, 2020
- Aug. 8, 2020

MORE INFORMATION

2019-20 Academic Calendar

DOWNLOAD CALENDAR

Academic Affairs

The office of the provost and vice president for academic affairs provides leadership for the academic mission of the university. Our mission is to foster excellence in teaching, research and service, providing support for teaching excellence and for all the academic endeavors that help prepare graduates for success in a global community.

In our role of coordinating and facilitating the university's academic mission, the office of the provost provides leadership for academic initiatives, supports activities for the colleges and other units within academic affairs, allocates resources and assesses progress in achieving the university's academic goals.

COVID-19 Update: [March 26 - Guidelines for Faculty for the Spring 2020 Semester](#)

Figure 2 – 10.2 – Academic Affairs



Deadlines for the current semester are posted on the Registrar’s website (Figure 3).

The screenshot shows the Registrar's website for Stephen F. Austin State University. The page is titled "Registration Dates and Deadlines" and features a navigation menu on the left with categories like "About Us", "Students", "Parents", and "Faculty & Staff". The main content area includes sections for "Registration Dates & Deadlines", "Fall 2020 Registration", "Registration Classification", "Spring 2021 Early Registration Schedule", and "Summer 2021 Early Registration Schedule".

Registration Dates & Deadlines

All Fall 2020 registration deadlines are effective by 5:00 p.m. Central Time, unless otherwise indicated. For further information, e-mail: registrar@sfasu.edu.

Registration Dates & Deadlines

[Fall 2020 16-week Registration Dates & Deadlines](#)

[Fall 2020 8-week sessions Registration Dates & Deadlines](#)

Fall 2020 Registration

Registration for Fall 2020 is currently open!

If you need assistance registering for courses, either locate the registration tutorials on the [Registration and Waitlistin page](#) or contact us.

Registration Classification

Registration priority is based on classification. For classification purposes the following hours earned apply. Students do not earn hours for the current semester until grades are finalized.

Classification	Earned Hours
Freshman	1-29
Sophomore	30-59
Junior	60-89
Senior	90 and up

Spring 2021 Early Registration Schedule

Classification	Date	Day	Time
Graduate, Postgraduate, Special Groups	Monday	November TBD, 2020	7 a.m.
Senior and up	Tuesday	November TBD, 2020	7 a.m.
Junior and up	Wednesday	November TBD, 2020	7 a.m.
Sophomore and up	Thursday	November TBD, 2020	7 a.m.
Freshman and up	Friday	November TBD, 2020	7 a.m.

Summer 2021 Early Registration Schedule

Classification	Date	Day	Time
Graduate, Postgraduate, Special Groups	Monday	March TBD, 2021	7 a.m.
Senior and up	Tuesday	March TBD, 2021	7 a.m.
Junior and up	Wednesday	March TBD, 2021	7 a.m.
Sophomore and up	Thursday	March TBD, 2021	7 a.m.
Freshman and up	Friday	March TBD, 2021	7 a.m.

Figure 3 – 10.2 – Registration Dates and Deadlines.

The academic calendar for the academic year (Figure 4) is located on the main SFA webpage, along with quick links for specific calendars: Entire University, Academic, Around Campus, Fine Arts, and Residence Life.



The screenshot shows the Stephen F. Austin State University website's calendar interface. At the top, the university's logo and name are on the left, and navigation links for home, a grid icon, 'SIGN IN TO EDIT', and 'LOGOUT' are on the right. The main content area is titled 'Entire University' and shows the current date as 'Monday, August 24, 2020'. There are two radio buttons for 'Upcoming Events' (selected) and 'All Events'. The calendar lists several key dates: 'Classes Begin' on Monday, August 24, 2020; 'Last Day To Register (Both Full-Time And Part-Time Students)' and 'Last Day To Change Schedules Other Than To Drop Courses' on Thursday, August 27, 2020, at 1:59 PM; 'Twelfth Class Day' on Tuesday, September 08, 2020, at 2:02 PM; and 'First Day To Apply For Degrees To Be Completed In May 2021' on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 2:02 PM. On the left sidebar, under 'University Calendars', 'Entire University' is selected. Below it are links for 'Academic', 'Around Campus', 'Athletic', 'Fine Arts', and 'Residence Life'. Under 'Other Calendars', there is a dropdown menu with the text 'Please Select a Calendar'. A search bar is also present at the bottom of the sidebar.

Figure 4 – 10.2 – Calendars.


Since all calendars are published online, both face-to-face and online students have easy access to the information. SFA academic calendars are compliant with [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, Rule 4.5 \[03\]](#).

SFA's Grading Policies

The institution's grading policy is established in [policy 5.5, Course Grades \[04\]](#). This policy lists and explains each potential grade and provides parameters for activities such as awarding withheld grades and repeat grades, entering mid-semester grades, awarding final grades, and entering grade changes. The online bulletins also detail the university's grading policy. All university policies may be accessed online in SFA's [Policy Manual \[05\]](#).

Students have the right to appeal final grades as provided in [policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students \[06\]](#), which is also published in SFA's public-facing Policy Manual (Figure 5). Evidence of implementation of these policies is provided in the response to standard [10.1](#).





**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Policy Manual

1. Board of Regents

Policy	Revised
1.1. Reserved	
1.2. Reserved	
1.3. Contracting Authority	7/23/2019
1.4. Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval	7/23/2019
1.5. Naming Guidelines	10/29/2018
1.6. Policy Development and Format	7/23/2019
1.7. Reserved	
1.8. Selection of Vice Presidents, Athletic Director, and Head Coaches	10/29/2018

2. General Administration

Policy	Revised
2.1. Access to University Records	7/24/2018
2.2. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	10/23/2017
2.3. Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness	10/29/2018
2.4. Authority to Act in the Absence of the President	10/28/2019
2.5. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act	7/23/2019
2.6. Ethics	10/29/2018
2.7. Fraud	10/29/2018
2.8. Notary Public	10/29/2018
2.9. Records Management	1/31/2017
2.10. Student Records	7/23/2019
2.11. Discrimination Complaints	1/29/2019
2.12. Compliance	7/23/2019
2.13. Sexual and Gender-Based Discrimination, Violence, Harassment, and Misconduct	7/23/2019
2.14. State Publications	4/24/2018
2.15. Export Control	7/24/2018
2.16. Distinguished Guests	1/28/2020

Figure 5 – 10.2 – Policy Manual.

Cost of Attendance

SFA's estimated cost of attendance is available online for both students and the general public at [SFA's website \[07\]](#).

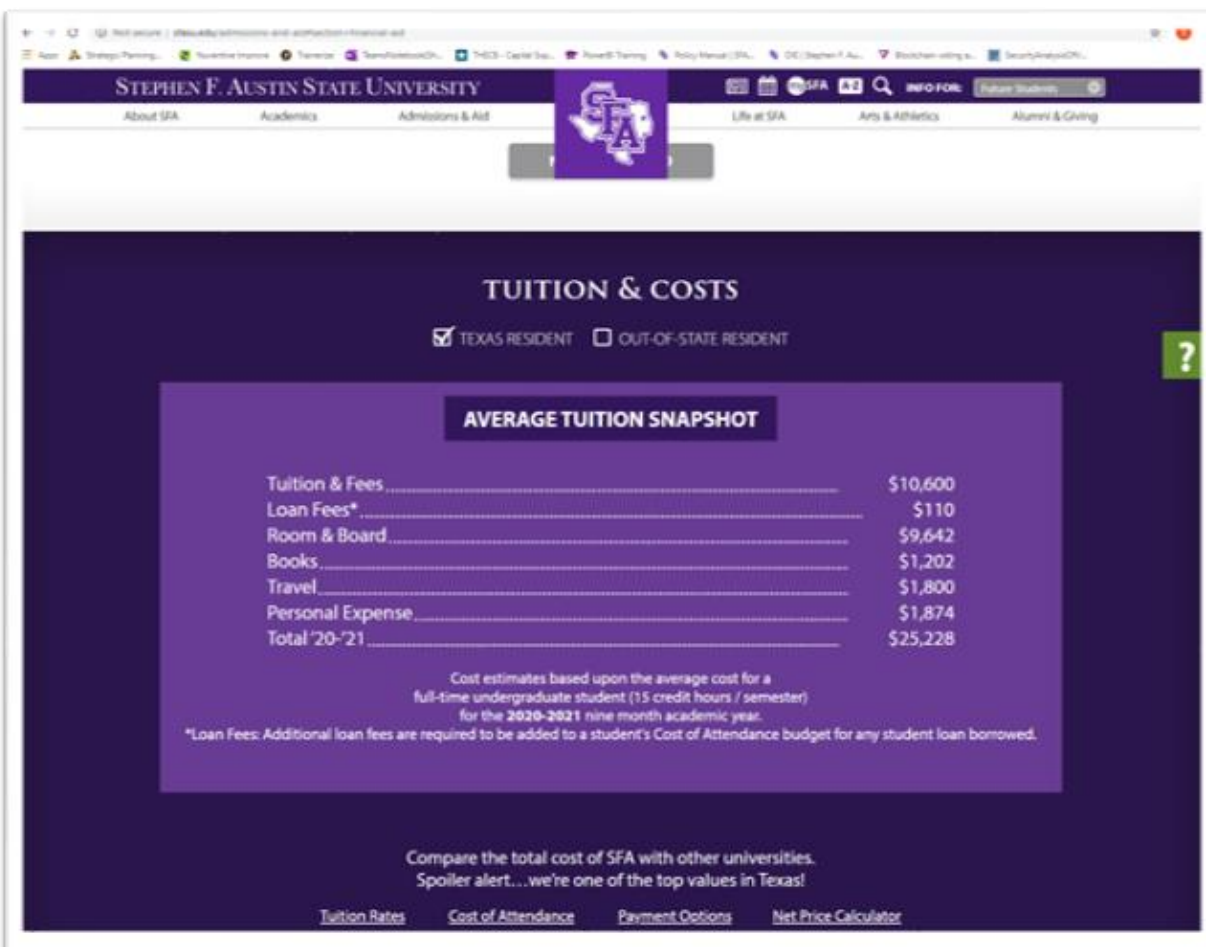


Figure 6 – 10.2 – Admissions & Aid.

Refunds

Refund of tuition and fees is governed by [Sec. 54.006 Tex. Ed. Code \[08\]](#). The withdrawal refund schedule is specifically outlined in the online [General Bulletin \[09\]](#) and in the [Graduate Bulletin \[10\]](#). Additionally, information regarding refunds is accessible on the Controller's public-facing webpages, where the percentages for withdrawals and drops (Figure 7) and the dates and deadlines per term for receiving a refund are addressed (Figure 8).



Refunds

Campus Alert
Hurricanes Laura and Marco. Click here...

View Stephen F. Austin State University's contract with BankMobile, a Division of Customer Bank.

BankMobile Disbursements for Refunds
Stephen F. Austin State University has partnered with BankMobile Disbursements to deliver any refund money we may have for you. Click here for detailed information about the BankMobile Disbursements program and how you select your refund preference.

Cash Advances and Refunds
The University has a commitment to refund eligible credit balances on student accounts in compliance with all applicable regulations in which the credit balance is created.

- definitions and more detailed information on Cash Advances and Refunds

 Cash advance are made available to students beginning on the first class day provided the student has a credit balance on their account. Cash advances are made available to students to cover the cost of books and supplies that are purchased from off-campus vendors. The university will begin refunding credit balances to students approximately two weeks after the term begins and will continue throughout the term.

Refunds for Dropping Courses or Withdrawing

- information on percentages for dropping or withdrawing from class
- information and forms for dropping courses
- information and forms for withdrawing from the university

 Students receiving financial aid should contact the Financial Aid Office before dropping or withdrawing. Dropping credit hours or withdrawing may affect your financial aid that has been previously applied to your account and refunded. Dropping courses or withdrawing from the University does not relieve a student of their financial obligation to the University for any unpaid charges (including financial aid adjustments) incurred for the related semester or term. Refund schedules and reimbursements for Refunds for Withdrawals and Dropped Courses are established pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC) §54.006 Refund or Adjustment of Tuition and Mandatory Fees for Dropped Courses and Student Withdrawals. Refer to the Dates and Deadlines for term specific dates and percentages.

Figure 7 – 10.2 – Refunds - Percentages for Withdrawals and Drops.

WITHDRAWAL
Any student officially withdrawing from the university is eligible for a refund of tuition and certain fees according to the following schedules. |

Full semester courses:

Withdrawal Date	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Aug. 23	100%
Aug. 24 - Aug 28 before 5 p.m.	80%
Aug. 31 - Sept. 4 before 5 p.m.	70%
Sept. 7 - Sept. 11 before 5 p.m.	50%
Sept. 14 - Sept. 18 before 5 p.m.	25%
5 p.m. Sept. 18 or after	0%

Part of term courses:

First part of term:

Withdrawal Date	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Aug. 23	100%
Aug. 24 - Aug. 28 before 5 p.m.	80%
Aug. 27 - Aug. 31 before 5 p.m.	50%
5 p.m. Aug. 31 or after	0%

Second part of term:

Withdrawal Date	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Oct. 13	100%
Oct. 14 - Oct. 16 before 5 p.m.	80%
Oct. 19 - Oct. 21 before 5 p.m.	50%
5 p.m. Oct. 21 or after	0%

DROP
The following refund schedule is applicable provided the student remains enrolled (i.e., does not drop to 0 hours). If the student drops to 0 hours, that is considered a withdrawal and the withdrawal refund schedules above are applicable.

Full semester courses:

Last Day to Drop with Refund	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Sept. 8	100%

Part of term courses:

First part of term:

Last Day to Drop with Refund	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Sept. 1	100%

Second part of term:












Last Day to Drop with Refund	Refund Amount
Before 5 p.m. Oct. 21	100%

Figure 8 – 10.2 – Withdrawal and Drop Refunds and Deadlines

Students are required to read and sign the university's [Student Responsibility Agreement \[11\]](#) at least annually.

As evidenced in this response, SFA makes available to its students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance and refund policies.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Graduate Bulletin - Calendar & Grades.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] General Bulletin - Calendar & Grades.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 5.5, Course Grades.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Admissions & Aid.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Education Code Chapter 54.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] General bulletin - Refunds.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Graduate Bulletin - Refunds.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Student Financial Responsibility Agreement Sample.pdf](#)

10.3 The institution ensures the availability of archived official catalogs (digital or print) with relevant information for course and degree requirements sufficient to serve former and returning students.
(Archived information)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

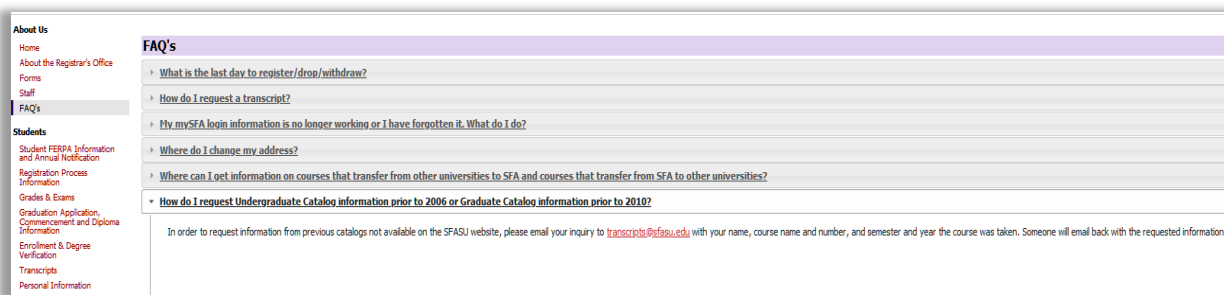
Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures the availability of archived official catalogs, whether digital or print, with relevant information for course and degree requirements to serve former and returning students. These archived catalogs provide students, constituents, and the public information that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear, and sufficient.

The institution's undergraduate and graduate bulletins are available [online \[01\]](#), and the institution maintains electronic archives of undergraduate catalogs beginning with 2006-2007 and graduate catalogs beginning with 2010-2011 to ensure the availability of archival editions sufficient to serve the needs of alumni and former and returning students.

University Marketing Communications ensures that archival versions of electronic bulletins are maintained and available. They publish the graduate and undergraduate catalogs each year at the end of the curriculum cycle. Archived copies of print catalogs are available in the East Texas Research Center in the Registrar's Office archives. This allows former students and graduates to access the catalog of record for when they were enrolled. The Registrar's Office additionally houses archived copies of print bulletins from 1923-24 through 2017-18. Current bulletins are only available in electronic format.

The Registrar's website (Figure 1) contains a FAQ section, which includes the following question:

How do I request Undergraduate Catalog Information prior to 2006 or Graduate Catalog information prior to 2010?



The screenshot shows a website navigation menu on the left with categories like 'About Us', 'Students', and 'Registrar's Office'. The main content area is titled 'FAQ's' and lists several questions. The question 'How do I request Undergraduate Catalog information prior to 2006 or Graduate Catalog information prior to 2010?' is highlighted. Below it, the answer states: 'In order to request information from previous catalogs not available on the SFASU website, please email your inquiry to transcripts@sfasu.edu with your name, course name and number, and semester and year the course was taken. Someone will email back with the requested information.'

Figure 1 – 10.3 – FAQ's.

The process for requesting information from prior catalogs is as follows: [undergraduate bulletins \[02\]](#) from 2006 through 2018 are archived online. [Graduate bulletins \[03\]](#) from 2010 through 2019 are archived online. Print copies of undergraduate and graduate bulletins are available for viewing in the Ralph W. Steen Library and the Registrar's Office. In order to request specific course information from previous catalogs not available on the SFA website, the student should email an inquiry to the Registrar's office with their name, course name and number, and semester and year the course was taken. The requested information is provided by email.







Updates to the online bulletins are made available to the public in the summer prior to the start of the fall semester each year. The institution currently utilizes curriculum and bulletin software to provide accurate information to constituents regarding course and program changes. Information from the curriculum cycle is migrated to the online bulletins to update the curriculum information. Colleges, academic departments, and administrative departments provide updates to their administrative information each cycle to University Marketing Communications for inclusion in the online bulletins. The bulletins are scheduled for update each year prior to summer orientation and include the information relative to curriculum changes effective in the fall semester.

[Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[04\]](#) establishes the curriculum cycle. Curriculum proposals are initiated by the faculty and submitted through the curriculum software, [Curriculog \[05\]](#). Proposals are routed through the prescribed hierarchy, including chair, department curriculum committees, college level curriculum committees, dean, university level curriculum committees, dean's council, provost, and Board of Regents, for approval and then submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and, if a substantive change, to SACSCOC.

SFA maintains 2-year planning guides for all programs that are populated from the degree audit system, CAPP, which is updated each curriculum cycle. These [guides \[06\]](#) are publicly accessible on SFA's website and provide degree requirement information to SFA's constituents.

As indicated in the response above, SFA ensures the availability of archived official catalogs, both digital and print, with relevant information for course and degree requirements sufficient to serve former and returning students.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Bulletins.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Archived Undergraduate Bulletins.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Archived Graduate Bulletins.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Proposal Curriculog.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Community College 2-Year Planning Guide.pdf](#)



10.4 The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.
(*Academic governance*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) have significant authority in academic and governance matters, including the process for awarding academic credit, and the responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Their authority is established in policy and practice, as delineated below. All policies referenced below are published in SFA's online [Policy Manual \[01\]](#), where they are publicly accessible, and all rules of the Board of Regents referenced are also published on SFA's website at the board's [webpage \[02\]](#) and are publicly accessible.

SFA Policies on the Authority of Faculty in Academic and Governance Matters

Committee System for Faculty Governance

The university has an extensive system of academic committees, giving faculty numerous opportunities to share responsibility and authority in academic and governance matters at the institution. Faculty can serve as nominated or elected members on search committees for new faculty, academic unit chairs, deans, and the president, as instituted in the following policies/rules: [7.12, Faculty Search \[03\]](#); [4.4, Academic Unit Head – Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation \[04\]](#); [4.9, Selection of Academic Deans \[05\]](#); and the [Rules of the Board of Regents \(Rule #11\) \[06\]](#).

Policy 4.4 also empowers faculty to evaluate their academic unit head after the first year of service and triennially. Examples of a tenure track faculty [evaluation \[07\]](#) and a non-tenure track faculty [evaluation \[08\]](#) are provided. Based on the specific faculty appointment responsibilities, faculty may also appropriately participate in first service year and triennial evaluations through [policy 4.8, Performance Review of Officers Reporting to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs \[09\]](#). Examples of officers faculty may evaluate per SFA Policy 4.8 include the respective academic college dean [by associate dean \[10\]](#) [by faculty \[11\]](#), the [dean of research and graduate studies \[12\]](#), and the Director of Steen Library. The [Schedule of Academic Affairs Evaluations \[13\]](#) provides the policies and evaluation groups associated with each category of officers.



Additionally, faculty have representation on department committees, which typically create guidelines for how an academic unit will address faculty-related matters, such as the awarding of merit pay, the distribution of professional development funds, and the creation of tenure and promotion standards. The processes for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review of faculty are fully discussed in Standard [6.3](#).

Likewise, faculty have representation on college-wide committees, where they vet curriculum proposals proposed by academic units from within the college (discussed in detail below), and where they can make recommendations to their dean on any policies or issues concerning faculty welfare. These college councils can also forward recommendations to the Faculty Senate (as described below). Concerns particular to the graduate faculty may be addressed in the university-wide [Graduate Council \[14\]](#).

The Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate is one of the most important bodies through which a faculty member can participate in university governance at SFA. Faculty governance is enshrined in the preamble to the Faculty Senate Constitution, which states that the Senate was established “To the end that governing this University shall embody the full freedom of discussion, participation, and examination of ideas by faculty, students, and administrators in the search for truth.” To “formulate and recommend academic policy for the University” and to “consider all other matters of general welfare to the University” comprise the Senate’s functions according to its [Constitution \[15\]](#).

The Senate consists of a representative group of [elected faculty \[16\]](#) from all six colleges and Steen Library. It [meets \[17\]](#) once a month during the fall and spring semesters, and reports results of its deliberations to the Board of Regents at their quarterly meetings ([Regents Rule #19.1 \[06\]](#)). The term of membership in the Senate is three years, and, upon completion of a term, no faculty member is eligible for re-election until the expiration of two academic years.

Recent issues affecting faculty welfare on which the Senate created resolutions to the administration include [Human Resources’ policy \[18\]](#) on children in the workplace and the creation of a [job ladder \[19\]](#) for lecturers.

Another way in which the Faculty Senate ensures faculty input into governance is by holding positions on key administrative committees, such as Academic Affairs Council, Policy Committee, and the [Core Curriculum Committee \(formerly the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee\) \[20\]](#).

SFA Process for Approving Credit-Bearing Curricular Programs

SFA takes great care to ensure that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy. According to SFA [policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[21\]](#), all academic credentials and courses offered by the university at any level (general education, upper division, or graduate) originate with the faculty.



These proposals must then be approved by faculty committees within the originating department and college, as well as at the university-wide level. Once this is achieved, they move forward for administrative and governing board approval. Not only must all new course and program proposals proceed through this faculty-driven approval process, but also all modifications to existing courses and programs and any deletions of existing courses and programs. Changes to only the modality of courses (not to program or course requirements) are not considered curriculum changes and must go through a separate approval process administered by the [Center for Teaching and Learning \[22\]](#). The university maintains separate college- and university-level [curriculum committees \[23\]](#) for undergraduate and graduate [curriculum proposals \[24\]](#)—respectively the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council—but they proceed through the same approval hierarchy on parallel tracks. Any changes to the university’s core curriculum must also be vetted and approved by the [Core Curriculum Committee \[23\]](#), which includes faculty from all six colleges and the Faculty Senate.

After being vetted by faculty at the university level, all viable [curricular proposals \[25\]](#) must be approved by the Deans Council, provost, president, and Board of Regents, before being sent to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for state approval. Any curricular proposals involving a substantive change are then sent to SACSCOC for final approval.

The above-referenced policy (5.7) outlines the general process and procedures used in the curriculum review and approval process. Additional university policies outline the approval processes and procedures for creating certificates ([5.2, Certificate Programs \[26\]](#)) and for reviewing curricular changes to any program that certifies teachers ([5.16, Professional Educators Council \[27\]](#)). Since SFA prepares students for certification as teachers in a number of content areas, all proposals involving teacher certification preparation must be submitted to the Professional Education Council concurrently with or prior to their submission to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council. The [Professional Education Council \[28\]](#) consists of faculty from the Perkins College of Education and from the other colleges offering the academic content in which the students are seeking certification as licensed teachers. Their [recommendations \[29\]](#) on the curricular proposals involving teacher certification preparation programs are submitted to the Dean of the Perkins College of Education for approval before moving on to Deans Council.

All university policies and procedures pertinent to the curriculum are consistent with the statutes of the State of Texas, policies and procedures of the THECB, and the policies and procedures of SACSCOC.

The Role of SFA Faculty in Maintaining the Content, Quality, and Effectiveness of the Curriculum

As members of the academic units, faculty control the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Academic programs defined by the majors are subject to regular review, with a full-scale review normally every ten years, following SFA [policy 5.1, Academic Program Review \[30\]](#). This policy outlines the format for academic program review, which includes a faculty-driven self-study of all programs within a given academic unit, an external review, the academic



unit's response to the external review, and an administrative response provided by the Provost's Office. For programs that have accreditations by professional groups and societies, the timetable for external accreditations is followed if it occurs more frequently than the default ten-year cycle. See the academic program review [schedule \[31\]](#).

In addition to this major decennial program review, beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, academic programs will undertake an abbreviated annual review, where program faculty look at student success markers and unit goals to determine if progress is being made or if action plans are necessary. The faculty members in the academic unit will also begin conducting a more in-depth five-year [review \[32\]](#), where they look at program enrollment, faculty research and teaching production, and relative progress toward unit objectives and learning outcomes.

During the program review, as part of their self-study, faculty analyze longitudinal assessment data to determine where programmatic improvements are needed. These data include program enrollment numbers, average time to degree, graduation rates, semester credit hours generated, student/faculty ratio, and a profile of the faculty in the academic unit (ethnic composition of the unit's faculty, gender, full-time versus part-time status, tenure status, average age by rank, average full-time salary, and graduate faculty status). During the program review, faculty also evaluate the academic unit's objectives and the learning outcomes of each degree program to determine whether student learning and other departmental objectives are being effectively addressed. In addition, faculty look at student success markers disaggregated by such factors as students' classification, ethnicity, gender, and age. Finally, the faculty also review the success rate of their peers in the unit regarding receiving tenure and being promoted to higher ranks. Reviewing these data help determine program needs and identify new action plans. The academic program reviews for the undergraduate and graduate programs in mass communications are provided [here \[33\]](#).

The self-study and external reviewers' evaluation are scrutinized by the academic unit, the dean of the college, and the provost and vice president of Academic Affairs to determine concrete actions to take to maintain and improve programs. Representatives from the academic unit and their dean meet with the provost and associate provost responsible for curriculum development to discuss the self-study and external review and plan for the future of the program(s) at hand. The [reviews \[34\]](#) of all graduate programs must be submitted to the THECB.

In addition to participating in academic program reviews, faculty members in each academic unit regularly assess their courses for quality and effectiveness. These processes include the creation of [student learning outcomes \[35\]](#) for each course. They also include end of course [evaluations \[36\]](#), which are reviewed by the faculty and provide student input regarding the quality of instructional content and delivery.

Academic program assessment is a faculty led process conducted annually to determine the attainment of student learning outcomes and improve student learning. Academic program assessment is discussed in greater detail in section [8.2a](#) of this report.




























Faculty actively maintain the content, quality, and effectiveness of the core curriculum (the general education component of the institution's undergraduate degrees). The [Core Curriculum Committee \(CCC\) \[37\]](#)—comprised mainly of faculty from each college and the Faculty Senate—reviews [syllabi \[38\]](#) from core courses to ensure they reflect the course as originally proposed and approved through faculty led processes. The CCC also directs faculty [scoring teams \[39\]](#) to provide feedback regarding student attainment of core objectives. As discussed above, the CCC vets and votes on any changes to the courses comprising the university's core curriculum. The core curriculum is discussed in more detail in Standard [9.3](#).

Finally, SFA closely involves faculty in the development, implementation, quality assurance, and oversight of distance education courses and programs. This includes a rigorous process to certify online faculty, through which they receive professional [training \[40\]](#) in the best practices for developing online courses. During this process, faculty are responsible for creating online modules for their courses and peer reviewing each other's modules, making faculty themselves an integral part of the online training. This process creates ownership over distance education for faculty, achieves consistency in online course design, and fosters better communication between faculty and students, as faculty are able to create more engaging and interactive online experiences for their students.

To reiterate, faculty at SFA have significant authority in academic and governance matters, particularly the process for awarding academic credit, and the responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Their authority is firmly established in publicly accessible policies.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Board Members Board of Regents.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 7.12, Faculty Search.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head Responsibilities Selection and Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 4.9, Selection of Academic Deans.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] BOR Rules and Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Tenure Track Faculty Evaluation Acad Unit Head.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Non-tenure Track Faculty Evaluation Acad Unit Head.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 4.8, Performance Review of Officers Reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Dean Evaluation Template Assoc Dean 2019 PDF.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Direct Report Academic Dean Eval by Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Direct Report Academic Dean Eval by Faculty.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Fall 2019 Evaluation Groups.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Graduate Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Faculty Senate Constitution.pdf](#)

-  [\[16\] Senate Roster - Faculty Senate.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes April 8, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Children in the Workplace Ad Hoc Committee Resolutions & Revisions \(10.4\).pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Non-tenure Track Pay Ladder \(10.4\).pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Faculty Senate Seats on University Committees.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] CTL Modality Change Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Academic Affairs Committees.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Proposal Curriculog.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Curricular Proposals.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Policy 5.2, Certificate Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Policy 5.16, Professional Educators Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Professional Education Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] PEC Summary Notes November 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Policy 5.1, Academic Program Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] APR Approved Schedule.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] APR Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Mass Comm APR.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] THECB - AAR Graduate Program Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Example Syllabi - SLOs.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Course Evaluations.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] CCAC Meeting Notes.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] CCAC Syllabi Review.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Student Artifact Scoring Rubrics.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Online Instructor Certification — SFACTL.pdf](#)

10.5 The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.

(Admissions policies and practices) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has published policies for admission of students, as well as recruitment and presentation materials that are consistent with its institutional mission. SFA's recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the university's practices, policies, and accreditation status. SFA does not use independent contractors or agents for recruiting students.

SFA's Admissions Policies

Admissions policies, including admissions requirements, are published in the online [Undergraduate Bulletin \[01\]](#), [Graduate Bulletin \[02\]](#), and university [Policy Manual \[03\]](#) ([Policy 6.20, Undergraduate Admissions and Credits \[04\]](#), and [Policy 15.8, University Publications \[05\]](#), [Policy 6.17, Graduate Admissions \[06\]](#)).

Policies relating to admissions and recruitment materials are reviewed every three years at minimum. This is consistent with SFA's guidelines for the revision of policies. For example, policy [15.8 \[05\]](#) was revised, reviewed, and approved by the Board of Regents on April 30, 2019, in accordance with university [policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format \[07\]](#). See [Report to the Board of Regents \[08\]](#). SFA assumes responsibility for all admissions practices, recruitment materials, and presentations.

The Office of Admissions applies all established undergraduate admissions policies.

University admissions requirements for first time freshman are guided by the [Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Subchapter U – Uniform Admission Policy \[09\]](#). Applicants to undergraduate programs are reviewed and considered for admission based on requirements determined by admissions counselors, faculty, and administration members representing the university and its various components. For instance, the [Admissions Appeals Committee \[10\]](#), which makes decisions on whether to admit students who fail to meet regular admission standards and petition for variances, consists of the executive director of enrollment management and a rotating group of college deans.



Current Freshman Admission Requirements

High school class rank	Old SAT (prior to March 2016) (math + critical reading)	New SAT (after March 2016)	ACT
Top 10%	No minimum required	No minimum required	No minimum required
Top 11-25%	850	930	17
2nd Quarter	950	1030	20
3rd Quarter	1100	1170	24
4th Quarter	File Review	File Review	File Review

Table 1 – 10.5 – Current Freshman Admission Requirements

Transfer Admission Requirements

Transfer students must:

- have completed 15 transferable hours with a minimum GPA of 2.0;
- and not be academically suspended from another educational institution.

Undergraduate admission requirements for both freshmen and transfer students are published on the university website, under the [Admissions and Aid webpages \[11\]](#). In addition, all primary undergraduate recruitment publications and official recruitment presentations include SFA undergraduate admissions requirements.

Graduate Admissions

Applicants to graduate programs are evaluated by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the academic departments. Admission to graduate studies is under the discretion of the dean of research and graduate studies and the academic programs. Graduate admission requirements are published on the university website; in the online [Graduate Bulletin \[02\]](#); in University [Policy 6.17, Graduate Admissions \[06\]](#); in university recruitment materials; and via official recruitment presentations. Generally, graduate applicants must have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. Admission requirements vary depending on the program.



Dual Credit

Students enrolled in a high school or home school programs may be eligible to earn credit toward high school graduation by successfully completing college core (SB1091) curriculum courses. SFA's Dual Credit program is in accordance with the [19 Texas Administration Code 4.84 \[12\]](#), open to all eligible high school students in grades 9-12. Eligibility is determined by the [Texas Success Initiative \[13\]](#) college readiness guidelines for reading, writing, and mathematics. Dual credit students must be TSI complete in the subject area(s) in which they wish to enroll. Eligible students wanting to participate in dual credit must complete an ApplyTexas application and a Dual Credit Student Agreement and submit appropriate TSI scores. Currently, TSI waivers or exemptions are determined by PSAT, SAT, ACT, or the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores. In order to make dual credit accessible to all eligible students, there is no application fee required for dual credit applications.

Exceptions to admissions policies are controlled by the university admission requirements. Freshman applicants who do not meet automatic admissions go through an individual file review where a holistic review by an admissions counselor takes place. [File review instructions \[14\]](#) exist in order to provide guidelines for a consistent holistic review. Freshman applicants that are denied have two alternative [admission options \[15\]](#) available to them. Transfer applicants that do not meet the admissions requirements are denied. Transfer applicants also have two alternative [admission options \[16\]](#) available to them. Dual credit applicants must meet the state requirements for being college ready. In order to make dual credit accessible to all eligible students, the state currently provides [TSI waivers or exemption \[17\]](#), which are determined by approved scores on the PSAT, SAT, ACT, or STARR.

Alternative Undergraduate Admissions

For students who do not meet regular undergraduate admissions requirements, undergraduate admissions policies and practices provide a number of alternative undergraduate admissions pathways that provide access to SFA. Alternative Undergraduate Admission programs include the following:

1. [Jacks PASS \[18\]](#): This is a summer entry program designed for first-semester freshman applicants who do not meet the admission requirements. Students may become eligible for admission by enrolling in the Jacks PASS (Pathway to Accelerated Student Success) Summer Admission program. JacksPASS students must take two core curriculum courses (six credit hours) and a one-credit hour freshman orientation course (SFAS 1101) and achieve at least a "C" average (2.0) in the two core courses to continue in the upcoming fall term.
2. The [Academic Opportunity Program \[19\]](#): This is an appeal process designed for first-semester freshmen who did not meet admissions requirements as a result of significant extenuating circumstances. The program is limited to a small number of students who provide adequate documentation with regard to their extenuating circumstance. The AOP does not replace the Jacks PASS; instead, it applies only to a



- very limited number of students who can clearly demonstrate extenuating circumstances.
3. [Transfer – Summer Provisional Program \[20\]](#): This program is designed for transfer students with less than a 2.0 GPA who are not eligible for admission into the fall or spring semester and who are currently not on academic suspension at another institution. These students are required to take nine semester hours of non-development course work over Summer I and II and earn at least a 2.0 grade point average on course work attempted.
 4. [Appeals Program \[21\]](#): The appeals program is designed to identify potential transfer students who appear to have the intellectual and personal characteristics to do successful college work and who experienced educational challenges resulting in the loss of ability to meet standards for regular admission to SFA. A selection committee reviews all completed applications year around. The Transfer Appeals Program is designed for a limited number of applicants that provide documentation that supports they have the ability to do successful college level work. Applicants whose appeals are denied are able to apply for the Transfer Summer Provisional Program.

Alternative admissions programs are published on the SFA Undergraduate Admissions web pages and are included in all official admission presentations.

Admissions Policies Reflect SFA’s Mission

The admissions policies published by SFA are consistent with the institution’s mission statement, which says in part that the “university is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence.” By carefully reviewing the qualifications of each applicant and making sure each is college ready, admissions contributes to the standard of scholarly excellence set by the mission statement.

SFA’s Strategic Plan, SFA Envisioned (Strategic Plan 2015-2023), outlines a specific [initiative \[22\]](#) to increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment. Through this initiative, each department or unit must develop a discipline-specific and interest-based recruitment and retention policy. Recruitment plans for each college are provided [\[23\]](#) [\[24\]](#) [\[25\]](#) [\[26\]](#) [\[27\]](#) [\[28\]](#). Other initiatives within the plan address enrollment, recruitment, and retention issues. The Board of Regents regularly meets and hears an updated recruitment/retention/enrollment report from the executive director of enrollment management. See the Board of Regents agendas for [April 2019 \[29\]](#) and [January 2020 \[30\]](#).

Undergraduate Recruitment

All admissions requirements are communicated or presented by professional admission counselors hired to represent and promote the university to prospective students and other groups (parents and counselors) holding an influential role in the college search and selection process. In order to ensure that university admissions policies and recruitment practices are aligned with institutional mission and enrollment objectives, professional admissions staff are [trained \[31\]](#) on university admissions requirements, college admissions counseling, application file review, strategic recruitment practices, and presentation skills. Professional development is incorporated



into the training and formation of the professional admissions staff, and participation in professional organizations, such as the Texas Association for College Admissions Counseling and the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, is encouraged.

Admissions counselors distribute recruitment publications and offer university presentations in a number of different venues. Recruitment initiatives include off-campus recruitment activities such as visits to high schools, community colleges, graduate fairs, and community and professional events. In addition to off-campus recruitment, the admissions requirements and processes are communicated at all on-campus recruitment activities, which include a regular weekday visit program, selected weekend visit programs, virtual recruitment events, and Showcase Saturdays. Admissions requirements and application information is included in all recruiting materials, such as the General Information [Viewbook \[32\]](#), [Road Piece \[33\]](#), and [Transfer Brochure \[34\]](#). Recruitment materials also include swag items that are branded with the official university logo and colors; these items vary each year but include cups, tote bags, t-shirts, lanyards, and luggage tags.

Recruitment materials are updated annually in the Office of Admissions in consultation with the office of University Marketing and Communications. University [Policy 15.8, University Publications \[05\]](#), applies to publications printed by on-campus or off-campus printers, and departments using desktop publishing or video equipment. Review may include any or all of the following: writing, editing, assisting with layout and graphic design, videotaping, video editing, assessing visual and audio content, scheduling the purchase of advertising placements, preparing specifications required for competitive bidding, and coordinating production schedules and delivery with outside vendors.






































In January of 2020, a [restructure \[35\]](#) was implemented to have the Enrollment Management Division report directly to the president. The [Enrollment Management Division \[36\]](#) includes the Admissions Office, the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office, the Registrar Office, and One Stop Center that is being implemented in 2020. The executive director of enrollment management, who provides leadership to the [Admissions Office \[37\]](#), is responsible for developing, implementing, and supervising the recruitment and admission of undergraduate students; supervising the development of promotional material used for recruiting purposes; and collaborating with university-wide retention efforts.

SFA does not have branch campuses and does not recruit at international sites.

As detailed in the response above, SFA publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent SFA's practices, policies, and accreditation status. SFA also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admissions activities are governed by the same principles and policies as SFA employees.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Undergraduate Admissions - General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Graduate Admission - Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 6.20, Transfer Admission and Credits.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 15.8, University Publications.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 6.17, Graduate Admission.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Report to Board of Regents April 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Subchapter U.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Admissions Appeals Committee.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Admissions and Aid website.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Texas Administrative Code 4.84.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Texas Success Initiative Assessment \(TSIA\).pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] File reviews \(Fall 2019\)- Updated.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Freshman alternative admission options.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Transfer alternative admissions options.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Dual Credit Admissions Exemptions.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Jacks PASS Student Success Center SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Academic Opportunity Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Transfer Summer Provisional Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Alternative Admissions Transfer Appeal.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Foundational Goal SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] CLAA Recruitment Plan & Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] ATCOFA Recruitment Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] COFA Recruitment Plan & Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] COE Recruitment Plans & Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] NRCOB Recruitment Plans & Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] COSM Recruitment Plans & Materials.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] The Board of Regents of Stephen F April 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Board of Regents Agenda January 26-28, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Training Checklist for New Admission Counselors.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] 2019 Viewbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] 2019 Road Piece.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Transfer Brochure.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] SFA Org Charts 2020-08-06.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Organizational Chart EM - July 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] Organizational Chart Admissions.pdf](#)



10.6 An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:

(a) ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.

(b) has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

(c) ensures that students are notified, in writing at the time of registration or enrollment, of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

(Distance and correspondence education) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures (a) that students who register in a distance/correspondence education course or program are the same students who participates in and completes the course/program for credit; (b) that there is a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses/programs; and (c) that students are notified in writing at the time of registration of any projected additional charges associated with the verification of their identity.

Verification of Student Identification

SFA offers distance education courses across a variety of modalities and ensures that the student who registers for a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit. SFA verifies student identity using two-factor authentication (a secure username and password, plus an additional push-based authentication via mobile app, phone, or token), as well as through proctored examinations.

The primary means of student identity verification is the use of a secure username and password. Usernames and passwords are issued by the Office of Admissions upon application to the university. The application process for distance education students is the same as that of face-to-face students. All students, regardless of whether they ever comes to campus, confirm their identity in the application process by submitting identifying information such as a Social Security Number, date of birth, address, and educational history. Test scores and transcripts also serve as corroborating identifying information. Student usernames are created by the university for optimal security. Through communications from Admissions, the student is provided a username and instructions to access mySFA (the university's secure web portal), where the



student establishes a password. Students elect to receive this information in one of two ways, both of which minimize the risk of interception:

- 1) For students who choose to provide an email address and cell phone number on their applications, a username and instructions are [emailed \[01\]](#) to them, and a PIN is sent to their cell phones. Using the username, instructions, and PIN, the student activates their mySFA account.
- 2) For students who provide only a mailing address on the application, a username, temporary password, and account set-up instructions are [mailed \[02\]](#) to them.

Distance education students must use login credentials issued to and known only to them to access all computer systems, including mySFA, the student information system, registration system, electronic mail, library systems, learning management system, and associated instructional content systems. SFA uses a single sign-on authentication system for added security.

SFA [policy 14.1, Information Security Management \[03\]](#), notes that procedure for password management is articulated in the Information Technology Services [Policy Handbook \[04\]](#), which prohibits users from sharing passwords, from allowing others to perform activities with their username, and from using others' account credentials. When a student establishes a password for an SFA username, the student agrees to comply with [policy 14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources \[05\]](#). SFA uses Active Directory to manage access to mySFA, networked computers, e-mail, the learning management system, and other SFA systems. A Thycotic password reset [system \[06\]](#) is used to manage the active directory password for students. Students are encouraged to set up a Thycotic profile that has an added level of security with a phone number for SMS-based password resets. Only an enrolled SFA student can reset their password using Thycotic. Help Desk, SFA's technical support center managed by Information Technology Services, has a standard written [procedure \[07\]](#) to verify identity for anyone requesting a password change that cannot use the Thycotic system.

A student enrolled in a distance or correspondence education course or program may be required (at the discretion of the instructor) to take exam(s) in a remotely proctored environment. Depending on instructor preference, students may have to prove their identity to access a remotely proctored examination. This identity verification process is currently managed by the university's remote proctoring providers, ProctorU and Proctorio. [ProctorU \[08\]](#) is a live, remote proctoring service that requires a visual check of the student's appearance and identification documents at the time of the exam. [Proctorio \[09\]](#) is an automated remote proctoring service that provides faculty with the option to require students to show identification. Additionally, SFA utilizes Turnitin to detect and prevent plagiarism. While this tool does not directly verify a student's identity, Turnitin can compare a student's paper to thousands of other previously submitted papers, as well as internet sources, to detect similarities and potential plagiarism. This tool can be used to encourage academic honesty.



The Center for Teaching & Learning is responsible for the administration of ProctorU, Proctorio, and Turnitin.

Protection of Student Privacy

SFA has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs. This is outlined in SFA [policy 2.10, Student Records \[10\]](#) and complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The policy includes a description of information considered directory information that may be disclosed without prior written consent, unless the student notifies the registrar in writing to the contrary by the twelfth class day of a regular semester or the fourth class day of a condensed semester. The Office of the Registrar provides additional information to faculty, staff, students, and parents to promote compliance with FERPA, and all employees are required to complete FERPA training upon hire. University policy 2.10 requires that all university employees, including student employees, with access to student education records repeat Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training annually. Such training is discussed in greater detail in Standard [12.5](#). The Registrar and Human Resources are responsible for the deployment of this training.

SFA protects the privacy of usernames and passwords via the means listed above.



Notification to Students

SFA ensures that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity. At the time of registration, distance education students are provided a [statement \[11\]](#) that notes that the distance education fee covers “some proctoring.” At present, the institution pays for one proctored exam per student per course section per semester.

As presented in the response to this standard, SFA ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit. SFA has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs. Lastly, SFA ensures students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Email for mySFA setup.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Mailed Letter to Setup mySFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 14.1, Information Security Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] ITS Policy Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Thycotic Password Reset.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Password Reset Instructions.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] ProctorU Identity Verification Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Proctorio Identity Verification Option.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 2.10, Student Records.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] ED fee statement.pdf](#)



10.7 The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies. (*Policies for awarding credit*) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. Persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments oversee the awarding of course credit. All educational programs at SFA are based on credit hours.

SFA has policies and procedures for determining credit hours awarded for courses and programs. SFA utilizes the federal definition of a credit hour, as stipulated in SFA [policy 5.4, Credit and Contact Hours \[01\]](#), to determine the number of contact hours necessary for three hours of credit:

The federal definition of a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates:

1. *Not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, or;*
2. *At least an equivalent amount of work as outlined in item 1 above for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. This definition of credit hours adheres to the guidelines established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, section 4.6 \[02\]](#), and conforms to the SACSCOC policy on [credit hours \[03\]](#).*

For many years, SFA has used its own course numbering system with a three-letter prefix to identify the academic discipline to which the course belongs, and a three-digit course number. The first digit identifies the course level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, master's, doctoral). The second and third digits establish course sequencing and/or distinguish the course from others of the same level, credit value, and prefix.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, SFA has adopted the [Texas Common Course Numbering System \(TCCNS\) \[04\]](#). All SFA courses—undergraduate and graduate—conform to



TCCNS. TCCNS assigns a four-letter prefix to each course identifying the academic discipline to which the course belongs, followed by a four-digit course number. The first digit identifies the course level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, master's, doctoral). The second digit identifies the number of credit hours the course carries. (If it is a variable credit course, the lowest value is used here.) The third and four digits establish course sequencing and/or distinguish the course from others of the same level, credit value, and prefix.

In concert with SFA policy 5.4, the SFA General and Graduate [Bulletins \[05\]](#) define a unit of credit for students:

The unit of credit is the semester hour, defined as one class meeting per week or its equivalent for one semester of 15 weeks. Most courses meet three hours per week and have a credit value of three semester hours. For each hour in class, at least two hours of preparation are expected on the part of the students. Many students should spend more than this amount of time in study.

Per this definition, credit hours for a course—including a laboratory—are proportionately scaled based on the number of contact hours. Under the [Texas Administrative Code rule \[02\]](#), the same logic applies to courses offered during shortened semesters, as they “are expected to have the same number of contact hours and the same requirement for out-of-class learning as courses taught in a normal semester.”

Both the General and Graduate Bulletins indicate the number of credit hours awarded for each course listed in the departmental [course inventory \[06\]](#).

The [Graduate Bulletin \[07\]](#) stipulates that no undergraduate coursework may be used for a graduate degree. All master's coursework must be at the 5000-level. For the [Ph.D. in School Psychology \[08\]](#), SFA adheres to the standards for the level of awarding credit set by the National Association of School Psychologists. For the [Ed.D. in Educational Leadership \[09\]](#), a student must complete at least 66 hours of graduate coursework beyond the level of the master's degree. All credits are assessed by the Doctoral Faculty Council for their appropriateness. For the [Ph.D. in Forestry \[10\]](#), a student must complete a minimum of 36 graduate hours beyond a master's degree; the level and quality of coursework are set by the Graduate Council in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture.

SFA offers distance education courses, which are defined in [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 4, Rule 4.257 \[11\]](#) as “the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction.” SFA offers a variety of distance education options: Interactive Video (ITV), web-based, hybrid (usually a blend of online and face-to-face instruction), and off-campus. All distance education courses taught at SFA adhere to the practices outlined above in relation to the credit hour, in which a 1-credit-hour course must have at least one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit. Course credit hours awarded for asynchronous courses meet the same guidelines as traditionally delivered courses based on



equivalent content. Example [syllabi \[12\]](#) provide evidence that online classes have similar content and require similar amounts of work to earn the credit hours awarded. Graduate programs at SFA that are online also have credit hour standards that are equivalent to the definition in [policy 5.4 \[01\]](#). Additionally, examples of online and hybrid [syllabi \[13\]](#) provide evidence that all types of course delivery follow the credit hour policy. Distance education courses offered at off-campus locations are subject to the same curriculum review and approval process as all courses offered at SFA as stated in SFA [Policy 5.13, Off Campus Credit Courses \[14\]](#). An example of off-campus syllabi is provided for [documentation \[15\]](#).

SFA [Policy 5.11, Extra-institutional Learning Experience in the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences Degree \[16\]](#), was established to provide an approved procedure for students wishing to be awarded credit for learning experiences beyond the institutions of higher education. This policy provides a rationale for the credit awarded and defines significant elements of the process, establishes guidelines for the occupational portfolio, and provides a means for monitoring the policy. The dean of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts is responsible for the review and implementation of this policy.
























Credit hours are assigned to undergraduate and graduate courses respectively based on [curriculum proposals \[17\]](#) and syllabi initiated by faculty within each department that outline course requirements. These proposals are reviewed for approval in compliance with [policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals \[18\]](#). For any new or modified course proposal, the rationale for awarding the credit assigned to the course by the originator of the [proposal \[19\]](#) must be included. Credit hour information is submitted to THECB and is available publicly in the institution's inventory report.

As part of the annual curriculum cycle, the integrity of the proposed courses and programs is reviewed by the department, the college curriculum committee, and the appropriate university [Curriculum Committee \[20\]](#) before recommending approval to the [Dean's Council \[21\]](#) and subsequently to the provost, the president, the SFA [Board of Regents \[22\]](#), and the THECB. The university's response to Standard [10.4 \(b\)](#) of this report details this process. In addition to requiring the rationale for credit awarded in new and modified course proposals, SFA requires the syllabus for each extant course to include a statement specifying the amount of credit awarded for the course. The criteria is relative to the number of weekly contact hours between the instructor and the student and the expectations regarding the volume of weekly out-of-class work to be performed by the student. See examples from sample [syllabi \[23\]](#) of different types of courses (e.g. lecture, practicum, internship, lab).

In summation, SFA both publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery, which awarding of credit is overseen by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 5.4, Credit and Contact Hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Texas Administrative Code, Section 4.6.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SACSCOC Credit-Hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Texas Common Course Numbering System Webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Credit Hour Bulletins.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Course Inventory.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Graduate Study.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Program School Psychology, PhD.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Program Educational Leadership, EdD.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Program Forestry, PhD.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Texas Administrative Code. Rule 4.257.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Online & F2F Course Syllabi - Content.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Hybrid & Online Syllabi.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 5.13, Off Campus Credit Courses.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Off-campus Syllabi.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 5.11, Extra-Institutional Learning Experiences in the BAAS Degree.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Approved Curriculum Proposals.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications, and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Curriculog Form - Credit Hour Justification.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Curriculum Committee.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Deans Council Minutes April 3, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] BOR Agenda April 28-30, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Example syllabi - Credit Hour Statement.pdf](#)



10.8 The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credits not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution's mission.

(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) has published policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from SFA. These policies are published in the online [Undergraduate Bulletin \[01\]](#), [Graduate Bulletin \[02\]](#), and [Policy Manual \[03\]](#) ([policy 6.20, Undergraduate Admissions and Credits \[04\]](#) and [policy 6.17, Graduate Admissions \[05\]](#)). Policies relating to evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit are reviewed every three years at minimum. This is consistent with SFA's guidelines for the revision of policies. For example, Policy 6.20 was revised, reviewed, and approved by the [Board of Regents on July 26, 2016 \[06\]](#) in accordance with university [policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format \[07\]](#). The university assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any coursework or credit recorded on the transcript.

The Office of Admissions evaluates all transfer coursework for the levels, content, and course prefix in comparison to SFA courses, consulting academic unit heads as necessary. Junior/community college courses transfer as lower-level (freshman or sophomore level) credit, except in those cases where the two-year institution has state approval to offer a bachelor's degree, in which case those credits are evaluated on a course-by-course basis. Credits from senior colleges/universities transfer at the same level at which they were taken (lower or upper level).

SFA Ensures the Academic Quality of All Transcribed Credit

Administrative Code for Awarding Credit

These policies are consistent with the guidelines contained in the [Texas Administrative Code - Title 19, Part I, Chapter 4, Subchapter B: Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula \[08\]](#). Under the rules, all successfully completed lower-division academic courses that are identified by the Texas Common Course Numbering System and published in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual must be fully transferable among public institutions and must be substituted for the equivalent course at the receiving institution.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) mandates that students who meet core curriculum requirements at one Texas public institution automatically fulfill the core



curriculum requirements at any Texas public institution. The THECB also mandates Field of Study (FOS) lower-division courses are guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to a university degree program. Only credit earned at regionally accredited colleges and schools will be accepted on a course-by-course evaluation following SFA [Policy 6.20, Undergraduate Admissions and Credit \[04\]](#).

Credit may also be awarded for technical courses as defined in the [Workforce Education Course Manual \(WECM\) \[09\]](#) through articulation agreements, which contain degree maps outlining recommended courses toward a degree at SFA.

Advanced Placement Program & Military Service Evaluation for Awarding Credit

Undergraduate students entering SFA may also earn college credit through various placement programs and national examinations. Under SFA [policy 6.5, Advanced Placement Guidelines \[10\]](#), students can receive college credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement Program (AP) of the College Board, International Baccalaureate Program, and SFA departmental examinations. The rules for each of these options are outlined in the [Undergraduate Bulletin \[11\]](#) and on the [website \[12\]](#) of the Office of Admissions. The [Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services \[13\]](#) is used by the Office of Admissions for evaluating military credit.

Transfer of Credit for International Students

The SFA Undergraduate Bulletin includes information on transcript requirements for undergraduates and international students. Undergraduate students entering SFA must submit official transcripts from all prior institutions attended to the Office of Admissions for review, regardless of whether transfer credit was earned or is desired. An example of transfer credit on a redacted undergraduate transcript can be found [here \[14\]](#). International students must provide the Office of Admissions with certified copies of official transcripts from each college, university, or technical school attended. International students are required to submit certified English translations of all documents. A redacted example of an international student's transcript with transfer credit is provided [here \[15\]](#).

Experiential Learning and Prior Learning Assessment

Undergraduate students pursuing the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) degree can be awarded up to 24 hours of en bloc credit for extra-institutional learning experiences. The College of Liberal and Applied Arts maintains oversight of the BAAS degree and administers the life-experience credit program. The evaluation of noncollegiate credit, including professional certificates, is dependent upon an examination process. Under SFA [policy 5.11, Extra-institutional Learning Experiences in the BAAS Degree \[16\]](#), the measure of equivalency is determined by three factors: (1) the curriculum of the learning experience, (2) the qualifications of the work/life evaluator, and (3) evaluation of student achievement. All requests for extra-institutional credit must be submitted by the student at the time of application to the BAAS degree program. Requests must be accompanied by documentation of the learning experiences.



The director of the Division of Multidisciplinary Programs, or a designee, will review the documentation and make a final determination on the amount of en bloc credit to award. This information will be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. An example of a request and approval for en bloc credit for extra-institutional learning experiences is provided [here \[17\]](#).

Transfer of credit for Graduate Students

Graduate students may transfer from six to 12 semester hours of graduate coursework taken at other accredited institutions, as stated in the [Graduate Bulletin \[18\]](#). The student pursuing a master's degree with thesis may transfer a maximum of six semester hours; a student pursuing a master's degree without thesis may transfer a maximum of 12 semester hours. To transfer any credit from other institutions, however, the student must submit an official transcript of the courses to be considered and have the approval of the appropriate academic department and academic dean. Examples of approvals for transfer of graduate credit are provided [here \[19\]](#). The work must have been taken not earlier than six years prior to the student's first graduate enrollment at SFA. If the student fails to complete work on the graduate degree at SFA before the expiration of the six years, the transfer credit will not be applicable towards a degree at SFA. Any course accepted by transfer will carry credit but not grade point value. Moreover, to transfer graduate credit, the student must have earned a grade of B or higher on the course. An example of a redacted graduate transcript with transfer credit is provided [here \[20\]](#).

SFA Ensures Qualified Academic Oversight for All Transcribed Credit

SFA accepts transfer credit from accredited institutions on a course-by-course basis as determined by the Office of Admissions. All courses are examined in terms of content, level and credit hours awarded. An SFA course prefix and number are assigned when the content of the transfer course is equivalent, and when the course was taught on the same level. General en bloc credit is assigned to a course that is transferable but is not an exact equivalent by level or description. In this case, the credit is awarded on the same level as was attempted at the transferring institution and the appropriate academic dean will determine its acceptability into degree programs per [Policy 6.20, Undergraduate Admission and Credits \[04\]](#). When SFA accepts an en bloc transferable course, if it is coded CORE and there is not a particular course requirement, a substitution is processed to allow the student to meet that core requirement.

If the course does not have the CORE code, a course description or syllabus is provided to the department chair or college of the course. An expert from the subject area determines how the course is used in the degree plan. An [example \[21\]](#) of implementation is provided in which GOVT 2305, Federal Government was transferred in and the student was awarded credit for PSC 141, American Government – Theory and Politics.



SFA Ensures the Comparability with Its Own Courses and Consistency with Its Mission of All Transcribed Credit

Comparability of Transfer Coursework with SFA Coursework

All coursework is examined in terms of content, level, and credit hours awarded by comparing course descriptions, learning outcomes, and syllabi.

Consistency of Transfer Coursework with SFA's Mission

SFA is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. The university's [vision statement \[22\]](#), which is grounded in its mission, commits SFA to "reach . . . students where they are and prepare them for life-long learning." Consistently applying transfer credit allows the completion of degrees in a timely manner, meeting students where they are and enabling them to continue their path to lifelong learning.

Consistently applying transfer credit also advances the [foundational goal \[23\]](#) of the university's strategic plan: meaningful and sustained enrollment growth.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this response, SFA publishes policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit not originating from the institution. SFA ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) that the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with SFA's mission.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Undergraduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 6.20, Transfer Admission and Credits.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 6.17, Graduate Admission.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 24-26, 2016.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 1.6, Policy Development and Format.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Texas Administrative Code - Title 19.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Workforce Education Course Manual Protocols 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 6.5, Advanced Placement Guidelines.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Advanced Placement and Credit by Examination - GB.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Freshman Students Admissions.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] The Military Guide.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Undergrad Transcript with Transfer Work.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] International Student Transcript.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 5.11, Extra-Institutional Learning Experiences in the BAAS Degree.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] BAAS Memorandum - En Bloc Credit.PDF](#)
-  [\[18\] Graduate Admission - Transfer Credit.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Graduate School Transfer Credit.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Graduate Student Transcript.PDF](#)
-  [\[21\] Core Course Substitution.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Vision Statement SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Foundational Goal SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)



10.9 The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcribes courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements.
(*Cooperative academic arrangements*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures the quality and integrity of coursework offered through cooperative academic arrangements, maintains formal agreements with cooperative parties, and regularly evaluates cooperative agreements.

Types of Cooperative Arrangements

SFA has a handful of cooperative academic arrangements where it transcribes courses as its own work. The first such arrangement, the [FCS Alliance \[01\]](#), was established in 2001 between SFA and eight other Texas universities (Lamar, Sam Houston State, Tarleton State, Texas A&M Kingsville, Texas Southern, Texas State, Texas Tech, and Texas Women’s University). The universities participating in the alliance offer programs for teacher certification in Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) education. This agreement was established to address the FCS teacher shortage in the state of Texas. Another cooperative academic arrangement is between [Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance \(RBC\) \[02\]](#) in London, England, where SFA students study in exchange at RBC, and the classes they take there are transcribed as SFA coursework. SFA also has a cooperative academic agreement with the [University of Tasmania Australia \(UTAS\) \[03\]](#) where, likewise, SFA students study in exchange at UTAS and the classes they take there are transcribed as SFA coursework.

Signed Contract Procedures

For all cooperative academic arrangement, SFA has a signed contract that outlines the responsibilities of all parties to the agreement, ensuring quality, and mission evaluation. Approval steps for an agreement are as follows:

1. Meeting with SFA faculty members and department and college administrators to outline the agreement with other parties/institutions;
2. Approval of the draft agreement from executive administration;
3. Meeting with SFA Office of Institutional Research, which includes the Registrar’s Office, the Admissions Office, and the Business Office and results in the submission of a timeline;
4. Work with other party/institution on the formal agreement;
5. Submission through Procurement to [Legal Counsel \[04\]](#);
6. Routing contracts to general counsel, then the division vice president for review;



7. Attaining signature of SFA president, in accordance with SFA [Policy 1.3, Contracting Authority \[05\]](#), and appropriate approver at other location.

SFA's Cooperative Academic Arrangements

The FCS Alliance

SFA has two FCS Alliance steering committee members who evaluate this agreement in relationship to the SFA mission once a year when the FCS Steering Committee meets at the annual [summer conference \[06\]](#). (All parties to the agreement are allowed two steering members who act as liaisons between the FCS Alliance and their institution.) As indicated in the screenshot below (Figure 1) from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) website, in order to certify for teaching in the State of Texas, a candidate must prove to the TEA that they have a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's recognized accreditors.

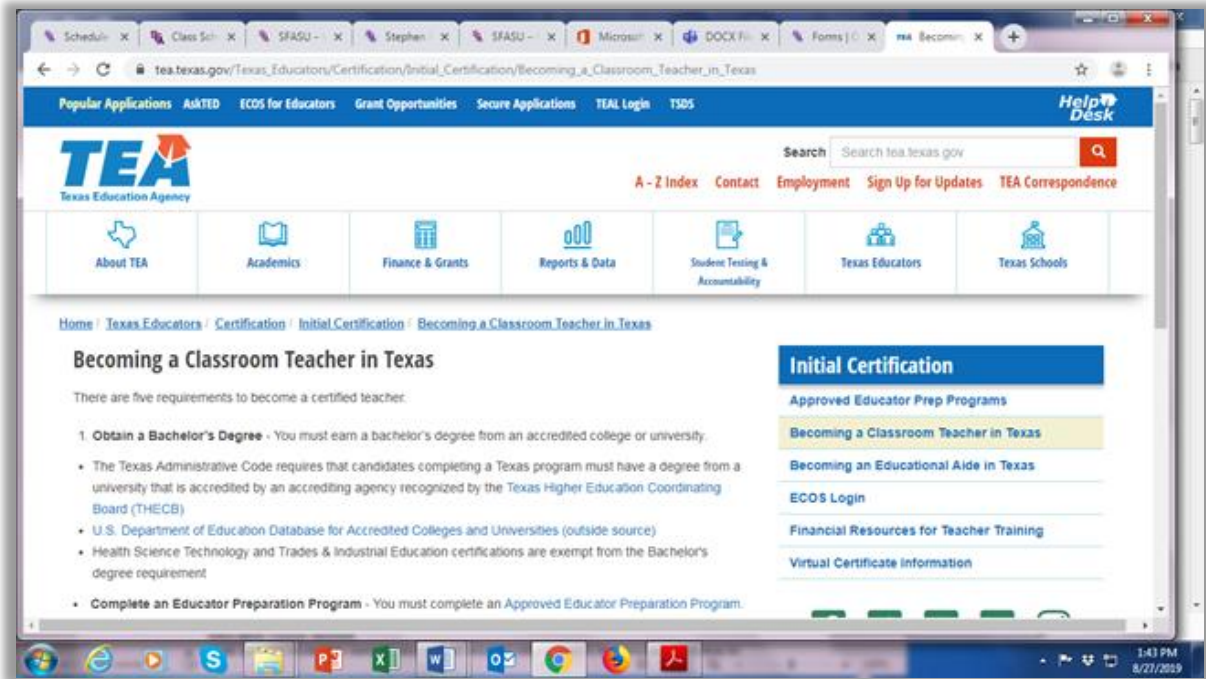


Figure 1 – 10.9 – “Becoming a Classroom Teacher in Texas.”
<https://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=25769812519>

Per the FCS Alliance agreement, only Texas public and private institutions that “currently have programs offering certification to teach family and consumer sciences education” are part of this FCS Alliance. SFA [Policy 4.10, Substantive Change \[07\]](#) requires SFA, as a member of this alliance, to adhere to substantive change provisions for SACSCOC accredited institutions, as administered through the Office of the Provost.



Credit appearance on transcript

As mentioned in the attached [FCS Alliance \[08\]](#), SFA student transcribing is completed by the SFA school/department where the student is housed. In the case of this agreement, the School of Human Sciences (HMS) builds the section (201) in the Banner workflow management system. The student pays SFA and receives a grade at SFA (which does affect the GPA). The other institution gets the semester credit hour production for the course with the State of Texas. To enroll in an alliance course, the SFA student and the student's advisor complete a form, and procedures are followed as outlined in the FCS Alliance [form \[09\]](#). The provider institution gives the advisor at SFA the student's final grade, and the SFA advisor enters that grade into the Banner Grading system at the end of the semester. The credit appears on the student's transcript as an SFA course. See examples of redacted [student transcripts \[10\]](#).

The Rose Bruford College (RBC) Agreement

The [MOU \[02\]](#) for SFA's cooperative academic agreement with RBC notes, "the host institution will provide course descriptions and syllabi to aid in course equivalency evaluation," which are reviewed by SFA faculty to ensure the quality of the program and courses being transcribed as SFA credit. The faculty at RBC who teach the courses are certified as fully qualified through their home institution. Additionally, the program coordinator for the Theater, B.A. is the single contact with SFA faculty for consistency and collaborates with the RBC faculty regularly.

SFA students enroll in THR 451 at SFA and receive a course [syllabus \[11\]](#) from the program coordinator informing students of the expected learning outcomes; grade and attendance policies to adhere to; and other university policies pertaining to student conduct, withheld grades, and student rights. Furthermore, students are required to compile a journal for the duration of the program detailing the learning objectives achieved and submit the journal upon completion of the coursework. An example is provided [here \[12\]](#). As a means of evaluating the obtainment of those objectives, RBC faculty are asked to complete an [evaluation \[13\]](#) of each student midsemester and at the completion of [coursework \[14\]](#). RBC faculty also submit grade [transcripts \[15\]](#) with each course the student took including a breakdown of course content with grades achieved for each content area and for the overall course. SFA faculty transcript the student's grade for the course as pass/fail based on an analysis of the RBC instructor evaluations, the student's completed journal, and the grade transcript from RBC. Upon successful completion of the course, students receive a pass for THR 451 on their transcript and are awarded a block of 8-24 hours based on the coursework completed.

SFA ensures the quality of the cooperative academic arrangement with RBC through collaborating with their faculty, monitoring the student's progression towards course completion, and evaluating the quality of student learning both during the program and at its completion.

As stated in the terms and conditions in the MOU, the agreement "will be effective upon its mutual signing and remain in effect for a period of five (5) years, and may be amended or extended upon written agreement by both parties." Therefore, regular review of the agreement is



required at a minimum of every five years. The agreement was last reviewed and renewed in 2019.

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) Agreement

The [MOU \[03\]](#) for SFA's cooperative agreement with UTAS provides details concerning the specific commitment made by each party:

- promote academic collaboration at faculty levels for research and study;
- act as principal contacts and coordinate all activities within their institutions;
- distribute to each institution information about the faculty, facilities, research, publications, library materials, and educational resources of the other institution; and
- periodically review and evaluate past activities and to explore new ideas for future agreements.

The faculty at UTAS who teach the courses are certified as fully qualified through their home institution. Additionally, the SFA director of the School of Music and the program coordinator collaborate with the faculty at UTAS to ensure the quality of programs offered.

Similar to the procedures with RBC, SFA students enroll in MUS 451 at SFA and receive a course [syllabus \[16\]](#) from the program coordinator with details regarding expected student learning outcomes, attendance and grading policies, and other applicable university policies. During the student's time at UTAS, the program coordinator conducts [check-ins \[17\]](#) with the student to monitor their progress in the program and answer any questions the student may have. Additionally, the program coordinator receives [samples \[18\]](#) of student work throughout the program, and the student conducts a fifty-minute [presentation \[19\]](#) on their experience at UTAS once they return to SFA. Upon completion of the program, the UTAS faculty member submits a [grade transcript \[20\]](#) to be evaluated by the program coordinator at SFA, and grades are converted to the [US equivalency \[21\]](#). Grades are transcribed for MUS 451 as pass/fail. For a passing grade, the student is awarded an 8-24 block of credit hours towards the student's degree requirements and based on the coursework completed.

SFA ensures the quality of the cooperative academic arrangement with UTAS through collaborating with their faculty, monitoring the student's progression towards course completion, and evaluating the quality of student learning both during the program and at its completion.

As stated in the terms and conditions in the MOU, the agreement "will be effective upon its mutual signing and remain in effect for a period of five (5) years, and may be amended or extended upon written agreement by both parties." Therefore, regular review of the agreement is required at a minimum of every five years. Additionally, the MOU states the following guideline for evaluation:

The parties will review this Agreement three (3) years after signature.
























The agreement was last reviewed by both institutions in 2017.

The RBC and UTAS cooperative academic agreements achieve SFA's mission of preparing students "for the challenges of living in the global community" through the opportunity to interact with other international students and faculty and to explore and learn from a diverse culture and surroundings. Evaluation of each agreement occurs according to the guidelines in the MOU and in relation to SFA's mission.

Through the procedures discussed above, SFA ensures the quality and integrity of all coursework offered through cooperative academic arrangements, maintains formal agreements with cooperative parties, and regularly evaluates cooperative agreements to ensure their continuing viability.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] FCS Alliance Overview.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Rose Bruford Agreement 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA-UTAS MOU.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Office of the General Counsel - Contract Administration.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 1.3, Contracting Authority.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] FCS Alliance Summer Conference.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 4.10, Substantive Change.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] FCS Alliance Memo of Understanding.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] FCS Distance Alliance Inter-institutional Registration form.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Redacted Transcripts.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] THR 451 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Bruford Journal April-July_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] RBC Redacted End of Program Evaluation.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Essay for RBC program_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] RBC Grade Transcript_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] MUS 451 Syllabus.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Check in emails UTAS_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Work completed UTAS_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] End of course presentations UTAS_Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Grade Transcripts UTAS.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Grades Conversion Chart UTAS.pdf](#)



Section 11: Library and Learning/Information Resources

11.1 The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission.
(*Library and learning/information resources*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), through the Ralph W. Steen Library, provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for the university's mission.

Library and Learning Information Resources

SFA provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources. The library collections consist of more than 2 million titles (books, journals, etc.), and 276 research [databases \[01\]](#). The entire SFA community--including online students, students at off-campus sites, and all faculty--have access to both print and 192 [online collections \[02\]](#) through the [Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Services \[03\]](#) and [proxy authentication\[04\]](#).

The library's collections are kept relevant to and appropriate for the academic program through the interaction between [Subject Liaison Librarians \[05\]](#) in the Research & Instructional Services (RIS) department and their assigned disciplines and/or academic departments and schools. Library [policy IS-14 - Collection Development \[06\]](#) ensures that necessary informational materials are available "to support instruction, fulfill the research needs of the university community, and support the informational needs of library users." The policy also "governs the acquisition of materials for the collection; other policies explain access alternatives."

As the following examples illustrate, the [collection profiles \[07\]](#) allow the library to demonstrate the implementation of the policy, including how materials are acquired; to share with its constituents the resources that are available for their particular program; and to make sure the library is meeting the disciplinary, undergraduate, and graduate needs. The first example is the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The library provides access to specialized databases such as CINAHL Plus with Full Text, StatRef!, and Nursing Films on Demand Nursing Collection. The second example is the Social Work, M.S.W. The library provides access to another set of specialized databases such as Social Work Abstracts, WestLaw, and Dissertations and Theses to meet the needs to students and faculty at a master's level. The last example is the Educational Leadership, Ed.D. program. The library provides access to Educational Administration Abstracts, Dissertations and Theses, Sage Premier (Electronic Journal Package) and various e-books on the dissertation process and educational leadership.



An additional [policy, IS-9 – Weeding \[08\]](#), ensures that the library maintains a quality collection. The objectives of the policy are to ensure relevancy through an effective weeding program, and to establish a methodology for weeding. Furthermore, the [cost per use \[09\]](#) is part of the review of electronic resources in order to use the collections budget effectively.

Librarians encourage faculty and students to participate in identifying materials for their academic disciplines on the Just-in Time (JIT) concept. This includes:

- Using an online [“Suggest Materials for Purchase” form \[10\]](#) to suggest books, journals, or online resources for purchase. Collection development efforts work in conjunction with academic and research programs to ensure that necessary informational materials are available to support instruction, fulfill the research needs of the university community, and support the informational needs of library users.
- Accessing over [390,000 e-book titles \[11\]](#), which the library does not permanently own.

The University has a [library committee \[12\]](#) consisting of faculty representatives from each college that also provides recommendations.

[Interlibrary Loan Service \(ILL\) \[13\]](#) is available to faculty, staff, and students to obtain materials not readily available at Steen Library. A statewide courier service, TExpress, provides pickup and delivery of materials at Steen Library five times a week for the prompt exchange of interlibrary loan materials in a cost-effective way. [Usage \[14\]](#) is evaluated each year. This service is provided by Amigos Library Services, of which Steen Library is a member. Amigos is a not-for-profit organization that facilitates the leveraging of collective purchasing power of online resources and other services such as TExpress.

Additionally, the library is a member of [TexShare \[15\]](#), a consortium of Texas libraries that reciprocally share print and electronic materials through interlibrary loan and participate in collective selection of databases and professional development training. Through its membership in TexShare, Steen Library can offer access to 50 [research databases \[16\]](#) that otherwise would have been cost prohibitive. Membership in TexShare allows faculty and students to request a TexShare library card, which grants them borrowing privileges at participating Texas public, private, and university libraries.

Steen Library has a cooperative borrowing arrangement and shares an integrated library system through which patrons can request materials from the local public library, the [Nacogdoches Public Library \[17\]](#), which is within walking distance of the campus. Consortia agreements are evaluated each renewal period. Cost, service provided, and usage are used as evaluation criteria.

The library is currently evaluating our [Texas State Consortium Agreement \[18\]](#) with Elsevier concerning a journal package. As part of the analysis, a [cost study \[19\]](#) was done during this service period.



Finally, the library is a [repository library \[20\]](#) for federal and state government documents. As a repository, the library makes these collections available to users according to the guidelines and policies of these agencies.

Adequate and Appropriate Library and Learning Services

The Librarians provide individual or group research assistance and library [instruction \[21\]](#) to demonstrate how to access library [resources \[22\]](#) and search the print and online resources. Faculty may request an instructional session for their classes via a [“Request Library Instruction” form \[23\]](#). Research assistance is also available via “Ask a Librarian,” an [email service \[24\]](#).

Students, staff, and faculty have physical access to Steen Library’s collections and spaces during the 106 hours per week of operation during normal academic sessions. Steen Library encompasses 245,000 gross square feet, is ADA-compliant, and has wireless network access throughout. In partnership with Information Technology Services (ITS), the library provides access to 225 workstations. Steen Library provides group study rooms on the third and fourth floors, a larger multi-purpose room on the first floor, and the [Emerging Technologies Lab \[25\]](#), a space where students and faculty may access Virtual Reality applications and other tools. Access to the [online library catalog \[26\]](#) is freely available, and access to fee-based electronic resources is enabled for SFA students, faculty, and staff through [proxy authentication \[27\]](#) from any Internet capable computer.

The library also creates content for various digital learning spaces such as the [Subject Learning Guides \[28\]](#) and the course management system, [BrightSpace D2L \[29\]](#). This content is created for [course specific assignments \[30\]](#) and used in library instructional sessions. Also, the library subscribes to the [Credo Information Literacy system \[31\]](#), where students can access instructional videos concerning various information literacy concepts. Then, faculty can assess them through the quiz system.

The [East Texas Research Center \(ETRC\) \[32\]](#) collects, preserves, and provides physical and virtual access to East Texas history and culture. In addition to serving as an invaluable resource for faculty and students, the ETRC collections are sought after by community users. The ETRC is managing the development of a [Digital Repository \[33\]](#), which contains digitized archival and primary source materials including manuscripts, photographs, and maps. The ETRC serves as a [Regional Historical Resource Depository for the State of Texas \[34\]](#) and houses the inactive records for eight East Texas counties. In 1959, the ETRC was designated by the Forest History Foundation as an official North American Forest History Repository. In 2009, the ETRC was designated as the Texas State Genealogical Repository. The ETRC also is responsible for managing the [University’s Records Management Program \[35\]](#), providing information through scheduled workshops. In conjunction with multiple university departments, the ETRC helps to facilitate active learning and service learning for SFA students and frequently participates in local events and partnerships with community organizations. Currently, the assessment of the ETRC Programs is through [usage statistics \[36\]](#).



The Center for Digital Scholarship provides access and support to the university's institutional repository, [ScholarWorks \[37\]](#). Various types of scholarship are deposited including [Thesis and Dissertations \[38\]](#), [faculty publications and creative works \[39\]](#), [Undergraduate Research posters \[40\]](#), [Senior Interior Design Capstone Projects \[41\]](#), and many other types of scholarship. Also, the Center provides publishing support to 12 [journals \[42\]](#). This support includes design, training, and the assignment of DOI's to help make the journal accessible to a wider audience. Currently, the assessment of this program is through faculty participation rate, the number of contributed works (faculty and students), and downloads. For example, for [FY 2019 \[43\]](#), there were 8,785 faculty and student scholarship projects and 140,729 downloads.

In 2014, a [LibQual+ Survey \[44\]](#) was done to assess library services. A total of 422 [responses \[45\]](#) were collected, of which 376 were student responses (graduate and undergraduate), 26 faculty, and 20 staff. One of the results was to address the noise issues on the various floors. As a result, the library created a "Group Study" area on the 3rd floor and a "Quiet Zone" on the 4th floor. A new assessment plan is being created in terms of assessing other services including ScholarWorks and the ETRC.

Another survey was implemented between 2011-2015 on instructional services provided by the librarians. [Faculty \[46\]](#) and [students \[47\]](#) were surveyed after the instruction was provided, and the results [\[48\]](#) [\[49\]](#) were tabulated. The results verified the student satisfaction, and faculty were also satisfied with the instruction, but a new assessment plan concerning student learning outcomes is being planned.

Lastly, the [Senior Survey \[50\]](#) has provided the library the opportunity to ask outgoing seniors about the adequacy of library services, staff, and collections. The survey results from 2016- 2019 show satisfaction from seniors on these items. Furthermore, the [2018 Student Satisfaction Survey \[51\]](#), which surveyed 506 full-time undergraduate students during the spring semester, showed students were highly satisfied with the helpfulness given by the staff and how approachable they are. The students were also highly satisfied with the library resources and services.

University Mission Support

Mission Statement: Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

The Ralph W. Steen library provides adequate and appropriate support for the university's mission through the following:








1. Comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. The library fulfills
 1. Procuring and providing relevant [collections \[52\]](#) to the SFA community;
 2. [Collecting and preserving \[53\]](#) the cultural and historical identities of the University and the East Texas community to support teaching, learning, and research.
2. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment. The library fulfills
 1. Creating user-centered physical and digital [learning spaces \[54\]](#) for discovery and reflection to advance student achievement, faculty scholarship, and community building;
 2. Providing transformative student experiences through active and collaborative learning. This includes delivering instruction to promote research and information literacy proficiency and engaging students in the Emerging Technologies Lab through the [Virtual Reality services \[55\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] A to Z List of Library Databases.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Online Catalog.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Distance Education Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Proxy Login.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Subject Liaisons.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Collection Development Policy.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Collection Profiles.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Weeding Policy.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] cost per use.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Suggest Materials for Purchase.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Ebook Titles.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Library Committee.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Request Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] TexPress.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] texshare.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] TexShare Databases.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Nacogdoches Public Library.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Texas State Consortium Agreement.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Texas Negotiating Group Memo.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Federal Depository.pdf](#)



-  [\[21\] Cumulative Instruction Consultations.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Instructions.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Request Library Instruction.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Library Help.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Emerging Technologies Lab.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Online Library Catalog.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Proxy Login.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] researchguides .pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Brightspace D2L.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] ART 390, Exploring Art Scope and Sequence - Research Guides.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Credo Information Literacy System.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Ralph W. Steen Library - ETRC.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] East Texas Digital Archives.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Regional Historical Resource Depositories.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] ETRC Records Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] ETRC Statistics.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] scholarworks.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] ScholarWorks Dissertation.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Faculty and Students Publications ScholarWorks.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Undergraduate Research Posters.pdf](#)
-  [\[41\] Calli Blankenship Senior Interior Design Exhibit 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[42\] ScholarWorks Journal.pdf](#)
-  [\[43\] Center for Digital Scholarships Fact Sheet.pdf](#)
-  [\[44\] LibQual+ Survey Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[45\] LibQual+ Survey Comments.pdf](#)
-  [\[46\] 2011 - 2015 Faculty Survey.pdf](#)
-  [\[47\] 2011 - 2015 Students Survey.pdf](#)
-  [\[48\] Library Assessment Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[49\] 2014 - 2015 Student Survey Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[50\] Senior Survey Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[51\] Student Satisfaction Survey 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[52\] Research Guides.pdf](#)
-  [\[53\] ETRC.pdf](#)
-  [\[54\] Study Spaces.pdf](#)
-  [\[55\] Ralph W Steen Library - Virtual Reality.pdf](#)

11.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution.

(Library and learning/information staff)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The Ralph W. Steen Library maintains an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education and experiences in library and other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

R. W. Steen Library has 13 qualified librarians in faculty status, tenure track positions ([SFA Policy 7.17, Library Faculty \[01\]](#)). The library director is an administrative position. All librarians, including the library director, possess a master's degree from an American Library Association (ALA) accredited institution. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has determined that the master's degree in library science from an ALA accredited institution is the appropriate professional degree for academic librarians. These qualified librarians support the university's mission through teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. Evidence of this support is found in the library faculty [activity report \[02\]](#).

As staff changes, through retirements or pursuit of other positions outside the university, each position is evaluated, and any necessary changes are made to align with the university's mission and the current and future needs. For example, the library had a faculty position that was responsible for government documents. Since there was not a need for a person to oversee that collection, as it is mostly digital now, the library submitted a re-classification in order to repurpose the faculty line to a depository librarian position due to the increase in projects and usage for the university's institutional depository, [ScholarWorks \[03\]](#). Also, each year staffing (professional and nonprofessional) is evaluated, and the library director may request additional staffing in order to meet the university's needs.

Librarians attend the annual [Texas Library Association Conference \[04\]](#), the [American Library Association Conference \[05\]](#), and other conferences and workshops to stay abreast of current technologies and to present their research at these conferences. Library faculty are actively engaged on university and library committees and community and civic committees.

The table below lists library faculty, their assigned department, and the university from which their master's degree in library science was awarded.



Name (Link to CV)	Position Title (link to Job Descriptions)	Department	Degree Granting Institution
Ainsworth, Kyle	Special Collections Librarian	East Texas Research Center	University of Southern Mississippi
Bowman, Shannon	Science Librarian	Research & Instructional Services	University of Oklahoma - Norman
Briles, Morgan	Digital Repository Librarian	Research & Instructional Services	Syracuse University
Clark, Melissa	Student Engagement Librarian	Research & Instructional Services	University of Missouri-Columbia
Cloud, Candice	Head of Access Services	Access Services	University of Southern Mississippi
Iglesias, Edward	Head of Digital Strategies and Content Discovery	Library Administration	University of Texas
Helmke, Jonathan	Library Director	Library Administration	Indiana University - Bloomington
Oswald, Tina	Reference Librarian	Research & Instructional Services	University of South Carolina
Kownslar, Edward	Head of Research & Instructional Services	Research & Instructional Services	University of North Texas
Reynolds, Linda	ETRC Director	East Texas Research Center	University of North Texas
Reynolds, R. Phillip	Scholarly Communications Librarian	Center for Digital Scholarship	University of Kentucky
Richardson, Janie	Reference Librarian	Research & Instructional Services	University of Kentucky
Schutz, Alexandra	University Archives Librarian	East Texas Research Center	University of North Texas

Table 1 – 11.2 – Library Faculty Credentials

Nonprofessional staff positions are integral to the operations of the library. See the library's [organizational chart \[06\]](#). Qualifications are appropriate to and described by the job descriptions. In addition to university and library committee involvement, nonprofessional staff are encouraged to participate in continuing education opportunities that are presented on campus.



The table below lists nonprofessional support staff.

























Name	Job Title (Link to Job Descriptions)	Department	Education	Years of Professional Experience
Anderson-Hayes, Jasmine	Assistant Supervisor of Access Services	Access Services	Associates Degree	7 Years
Stelson, Teresa	Circulation Assistant (Library Assistant I)	Access Services	High school diploma and business school	43 Years
Olds, Barbara	E-Resources and Assessment Manager	Digital Strategies and Content Discovery	BAAS, Business and Sociology	37 Years
Taylor, Alicia	Head of Acquisitions & Interlibrary Loan	Acquisitions & Interlibrary Loan	Completion of at least two years of college coursework	28 Years
Porterfield, Jeanne	OPSCAN Grader (Library Associate II)	Acquisitions & Interlibrary Loan	High School diploma	38 Years
Luna, Lonnie	Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Associate (Library Associate I)	Acquisitions & Interlibrary Loan	Graduation from high school	13 Years
Wisniewski, Zachary	Cataloging Associate	Cataloging and Metadata Services	High school diploma or equivalent	12 Years
Brown, Pamela	Cataloging Assistant (Library Assistant II)	Cataloging and Metadata Services	High school diploma or equivalent	36 Years
Padelford, Sara	Serials/Binding Assistant (Library Assistant II)	Acquisitions & Interlibrary Loan	Graduation from high school with courses in business and typing	6 Years
Gibson, Susan	Senior Program Associate	Center for Digital Scholarship	B.A. History	21 Years
Honea, Will	Records Management & Publications Coordinator	East Texas Research Center	Master's in Public Administration	12 Years
Cotton, Christopher	ETRC Associate (Library Associate III)	East Texas Research Center	B.A., History;	10 Years



Name	Job Title (Link to Job Descriptions)	Department	Education	Years of Professional Experience
Ivy, Janet	Administrative Assistant	Library Administration	High school diploma	34 Years
Breen, Nancy	RIS Associate (Library Associate II)	Research & Instructional Services	High school diploma or equivalent	26 Years

Table 2 – 11.2 – Nonprofessional Library Support Staff Credentials

As presented in the above narrative, Ralph W. Steen Library maintains adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education and experiences in library and other learning/information resources to accomplish the university's mission.

Evidentiary Documents
 [01] Policy 7.17, Library Faculty.pdf
 [02] Annual Faculty Activity Report.pdf
 [03] Institutional Repositories - SFA ScholarWorks.pdf
 [04] Texas Library Association Conference 2019.pdf
 [05] American Library Association Conference.pdf
 [06] Library Organization Chart.pdf
 Job Description - Administrative Assistant.pdf
 Job Description - Asst Library I.pdf
 Job Description - Asst Library II (Acquisitions).pdf
 Job Description - Asst Library III (ETRC).pdf
 Job Description - Asst Library I.pdf
 Job Description - Asst Library II.pdf
 Job Description - Asst Supv Lib Access Svcs.pdf
 Job Description - Cataloging Associate.pdf
 Job Description - E-Resources and Assessment Manager.pdf
 Job Description - Head of Acquisitions and Interlibrary Loan.pdf
 Job Description - Librarian II.pdf
 Job Description - Librarian III.pdf
 Job Description - Librarian IV.pdf
 Job Description - Library Business Manager.pdf
 Job Description - Library Director.pdf
 Job Description - Records Management and Publications Coordinator.pdf
 Job Description - Senior Program Associate (CDS).pdf
 Resume - Candice Cloud.pdf

-  [Resume - Debbie Allen.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Janet Ivy.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Jonathan Helmke.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Alexandra Schutz.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Alicia Taylor.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Barbara Olds.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Christopher Cotton.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Edward Iglesias.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Edward Kownslar.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Janie Richardson.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Jasmine Anderson.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Jeanne Porterfield.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Kyle Ainsworth.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Linda Reynolds.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Lonnie Luna.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Melissa Clark.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Morgan Briles.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Nancy Breen.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Pamela Brown.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Ronald Reynolds.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Sara Padelford.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Shannon Bowman.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Susan Gibson.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Teresa Stelson.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Tina Oswald.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Will Honea.pdf](#)
-  [Resume - Zachary Wisniewski.pdf](#)

11.3 The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

(Library and learning/information access)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

R. W. Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) provides (a) students, faculty, and staff access and user privileges to its services, as well as (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

Physical Collections

Borrowing privileges are delineated in SFA [Policy 4.11.2, Library Borrowing \[01\]](#) and Library [Policy IS-1, Access Services Circulation \[02\]](#). Students enrolled in online and remote site courses, including dual credit, have access to the library's physical resources by requesting delivery through its document delivery services. See the Interlibrary Loan [Request Form \[03\]](#). They receive the same borrowing privileges as on-campus students. Journal articles or book chapters are delivered to students' email addresses, and books and A-V materials are delivered by regular U.S. mail. Guests--including the general public, researchers, etc.--can request a library card to gain borrowing privileges for the physical collections.

Digital Collections

The university provides 24 hour access to its digital collections via the library's [website \[04\]](#) to both on-campus and off-campus library users. Electronic databases, full text journals, and electronic books are accessible remotely via [proxy authentication \[05\]](#) and the university's authentication system. Other collections include the [Institutional Repository \[06\]](#) and [Digital Archives \[07\]](#), which are open to anyone.

Guests--including the general public, researchers, etc.--may request a guest account to access the digital collections within the library building. See Library [Policy IS-1, Access Services Circulation \[02\]](#).

Services

The library building is ADA-compliant with wireless capabilities and is open 106 hours a week during regular sessions. See the Library's [web page \[08\]](#). The librarians and the ETRC are available from 8 – 5 p.m. and by appointment outside those hours. The study spaces, physical collections, and the Virtual Reality/Makerspace are available during open hours. Between semesters, the library observes 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. hours during the weekdays.

When the library is closed, patrons can renew through the [online catalog \[09\]](#) or drop off materials through the book drop. Patrons, including dual credit and distant education students



either online or at a remote site, can use the “Ask the Librarian” [online resource \[10\]](#) or the “ASK ETRC” [website \[11\]](#) services, and a librarian will respond to them within 48 hours.

Library Instruction

Library instruction is presented to all students -- including at remote sites, via online, and in dual credit, through demonstration classes, orientations, workshops, or individual [consultations \[12\]](#) with a librarian via in-person, phone, or e-mail through the [Ask-a-Librarian service \[13\]](#). The librarians also provide [research guides \[14\]](#) and the [Credo Information Literacy tutorials \[15\]](#).

A core objective of the mission of Ralph W. Steen Library is to enhance the educational outcomes of students through library instruction in both face-to-face and online environments. The Research and Instructional Services (RIS) department of Steen Library is comprised of seven reference librarians and one support staff. The departmental mission is to support the research, teaching, and informational needs of the university and the public at large with creative and effective programs. The instructional model that RIS has adopted supports the information literacy competencies endorsed by the Association of College and Research Libraries ([ACRL \[16\]](#)).

Librarians frequently embed library resources and information in D2L (a.k.a. Brightspace, the University’s online course delivery system) at the request of faculty as an immediate resource for students. See the D2L [screenshot \[17\]](#). The library partners with other SFA campus departments, such as Advising and Admissions, and with libraries at community college remote locations to support dual credit students. See the [Lonestar Example \[18\]](#) and the screenshot of a [mySFA Dual Credit account \[19\]](#).

RIS librarians contact faculty in academic departments and schools to arrange classroom or library instructional sessions. As librarians actively promote this service, faculty frequently request library instruction for their classes. These sessions are tailored to faculty specifications in preparation for class assignments. These may be “single-class” presentations at the beginning of seminar classes or core classes, such as ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302; the freshman orientation course, SFAS 1101; freshman orientation in the summer; or during drop-in visits. A list of sessions from the AY 18-19 is located at this [link \[20\]](#).

Table 1 depicts the number of library instruction sessions and the number of individuals participating from AY 2016 through 2019.


Year	Group Instructional Sessions	Individuals Served
AY16	130	2684
AY17	102	2378
AY18	99	2494
AY19	147	3181

Table 1 – 11.3 – Library Instruction Sessions



The library also provides instructional opportunities for faculty development, including new faculty, through new faculty orientation, online training through the [Onboarding process \[21\]](#), and special workshops on various topics including issues concerning [predatory journals \[22\]](#) and [citation managers \[23\]](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 4.11.2, Library Borrowing.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Library Policy IS-1, Access Services Circulation.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Request Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Ralph W Steen Library Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] My Library Account.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] scholarworks.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] ETRC Digital Archives.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Library Hours.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] renewal.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Library Help.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] ASK ETRC Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Cumulative Instruction Consultations.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Request Library Instruction.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Research Guides.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Credo Information Literacy.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] ACRL Framework.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] D2L Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Library & Resource Center - Woodlands.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] mySFA Dual Credit.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Information Literacy Sessions.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Dual Credit Adjunct Faculty Orientation Onboarding.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] A Wolf in Sheeps Clothing Presentation.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] SFAU Scopus Training.pdf](#)



Section 12: Academic and Student Support Services

12.1 The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.

(Student support services) [CR Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities that align with its mission. SFA is committed to providing student support services and resources that promote learning and enhance the development of all students to succeed academically, engage fully in the co-curriculum, and achieve their personal and academic goals.

In pursuit of its mission, SFA's organizational structure provides student support services through the blended efforts of administrative, academic, and nonacademic programs, services, and activities. Curricular support typically derives from the Division of Academic Affairs, and co-curricular and extracurricular support typically derives from the Division of University Affairs. Additionally, student support services provided by administrative units meet all aspects of students' needs (financial, health and safety, academic, and nonacademic support). The sections below detail the organizational structure of each division providing academic and student support.

SFA's Organizational Structure

Office of the President

Reporting to the university president, as referenced in Standard [5.2 a](#), are the following: provost and vice president for academic affairs, vice president for university affairs, vice president for finance and administration, vice president for advancement, government relations director, enrollment management director, information technology services chief information officer, chief diversity officer and intercollegiate athletics director. Divisions that directly provide academic and student support include academic affairs, university affairs, finance and administration, enrollment management, information technology; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and intercollegiate athletics. See [SFA's Organizational Chart \[01\]](#).

Division of Academic Affairs

The Division of Academic Affairs coordinates and facilitates the university's mission. The Provost's Office provides leadership for academic initiatives, supports activities for the six academic colleges and other units within academic affairs, allocates resources, and assesses progress in achieving the university's academic goals. Positions and programs reporting to the provost and vice president for academic affairs are the associate provost, the director of Steen Library, International Programs, School of Honors, Research and Graduate Studies, and



University Partnerships. The six academic colleges include the Nelson Rusche College of Business, James I. Perkins College of Education, College of Fine Arts, Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture, College of Liberal and Applied Arts, and College of Sciences and Mathematics. Each college has one academic dean and at least one associate dean, and the faculty of the six colleges account for more than 736 full-time employees across all instructional areas.

Division of University Affairs

The Division of University Affairs works in partnership with all campus offices and administrators to create a learner-centered environment that encourages student development, growth, and transformative experiences. The division provides transformative experiences through the following:

- Co-curricular programs that create opportunities for students to engage in active and high-impact learning;
- Extracurricular activities that strengthen students' connections to the university and each other;
- Support services that enable everyone in the university community to fulfill their personal and professional goals.

The Division of University Affairs reports to the vice president of university affairs, who oversees the supervision of the director of campus recreation, assistant vice president and dean of student affairs, university police chief, director of student publications and divisional media, title IX coordinator, and director of auxiliary services.

Enrollment Management

The Office of Enrollment Management includes Admissions, the Registrar's Office, and Financial Aid and Scholarships. The [Office of Admissions \[02\]](#) facilitates a student's smooth entry into the university and is directed by the enrollment management executive director. The [Registrar's Office \[03\]](#) is a multi-functional administrative office that houses Registration, Graduation, and SFA Transcripts. The Registrar's Office assists all students in registering for classes each semester, facilitates the transformation from student to Lumberjack alumnus/a, and verifies coursework and degrees through the issuance of transcripts. The office provides assistance for questions regarding registration, dropping and withdrawing, transcript ordering, and graduation year round.

[Financial Aid & Scholarships \[04\]](#) ensures that student aid, whether through grants, scholarships, or loans, is awarded in a timely and appropriate fashion. It requires all first-time loan borrowers to complete entrance loan counseling, which provides students with general information related to loan borrowing and repayment material. The heads of each of these offices meet regularly to discuss and respond to real-time trends in admissions, enrollment, and student success data.



Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics offers a variety of programs and services that directly support all student athletes including Academic Success, Athletic Compliance, Sports Medicine, Student Athlete Services and Strategic Initiatives, and Sports Performance.

Information Technology Services

The role of [IT Security \[05\]](#) at SFA is to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of university data, information, communications, and services. To promote secure information technology systems, IT Security also educates students, faculty, and staff users; assesses and identifies new architectural requirements; and consults in the areas of security risk, practice, policy, and technology. IT Security also provides the coordination of security incident investigation and response. Examples of [other services \[06\]](#) offered to all students, faculty, and staff include device repair, issues with mySFA, passwords, Office 365, and connection issues with SFA's wireless network.

Chief Diversity Officer

As of August 5, 2020, SFA named Dr. Michara DeLaney-Fields, currently the university's assistant dean for student affairs in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, as its first chief diversity officer (CDO). Established as an executive position housed within the Office of the President, the CDO role was created to provide collaborative, strategic, and results-oriented leadership for institution-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

The chief diversity officer is responsible for the conception, development, and implementation of strategies for increasing cultural diversity with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external partners. This new role is meant to build on initiatives and goals that currently exist in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, which houses a number of student service-based areas on campus, including Counseling Services, Disability Services, Veterans Resource Center, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, among others.

SFA's Student Body Profile

As stated in the response to Standard [8.1](#) of this report:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) identifies SFA as a Comprehensive university, which by definition offers "a wide range of excellent baccalaureate programs" with a commitment to graduate education...Additionally, the THECB directs comprehensive universities to "focus on serving the student population within the region," which includes significant portions of underrepresented groups (Hispanic, African American, economically disadvantaged).



SFA's student body profile is consistent with the THECB's definition of a regional comprehensive university. SFA's Fall 2019 [Census Report \[07\]](#) indicates that 87% of enrolled students were undergraduate and 33% were Black or Hispanic. SFA's [Common Data Set \[08\]](#) for the 2019-2020 academic year indicates that over half of SFA's full-time undergraduate students were awarded need-based scholarship or grant aid.

SFA's Academic and Student Support Programs, Services, and Activities

In pursuit of [SFA's mission \[09\]](#) and strategic plan, the Divisions of Academic Affairs and University Affairs develop and provide support services pertinent to a core aspect of the university's mission, to provide "excellence" in teaching and "engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer [them] opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community." This resonates with the overarching goal of the university's strategic vision of providing "transformative experiences" that change the lives of SFA students "one Lumberjack at a time." See SFA's [SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan 2015-2023 \[10\]](#).

Each of the programs, services, and activities listed below exemplify the coordination of people and services that contribute to the success of all Lumberjacks. The information provided for programs, services, and activities discusses the purpose and goal of each of these in support of the university's mission, how students are served according to classification and method of delivery, and how faculty receive support from the programs, services, and activities, where applicable.

SFA maintains teaching sites at [Tyler Junior College \(TJC\) \[11\]](#), [Lone Star College Montgomery \(LSCM\) \[12\]](#), and several regional [high schools \[13\]](#) where we teach a variety of core curriculum courses and introductory career pathway courses as dual credit instruction. At each of these sites, any undergraduate, graduate, and professional student may access all support services to which they are entitled regardless of the format of course delivery (face-to-face, online, dual-credit, off-campus instructional sites, etc.). All SFA students (including dual-credit students) are offered a student ID, allowing them to access SFA's services. Students may utilize available resources and services on campus or remotely when appropriate and requested. All students at SFA's offsite locations (TJC and LSCM) receive advising from qualified faculty members, usually in person at the site but also accessed remotely through email, phone, or Zoom. Additionally, SFA's academic and student programs, services, and activities are delivered either to students at all levels, or, as appropriate, to certain levels or groups within the student population.

Division of Academic Affairs

The associate provost oversees the Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC), the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Student Success Center (SSC), Institutional Effectiveness, and Institutional Research. The AARC, CTL, and SSC provide direct academic and student support services to faculty and students.



Academic Assistance and Resource Center

The [Academic Assistance and Resource Center \(AARC\) \[14\]](#) serves as the tutoring center for students at SFA and provides free peer tutoring for many entry-level courses as well as online services for all students. These services are provided in a variety of ways by using online resources, assistance at walk-in-study tables, one-on-one appointments, and supplemental instruction groups. Four program directors are also in place to assist students and faculty with identified subject areas such as writing, science, business, math, and computer science, and liberal arts areas. [Online resources \[15\]](#) such as the Online Writing Lab (OWL), basic grammar and punctuation guides, citations and reference assistance, and subject-specific course references are available to all students regardless of location or student status, including dual credit students and those at TJC and LSCM.

The [mission of the AARC \[16\]](#) is to provide services “through the personal attention of the staff who engage and empower SFA students via tutoring and mentoring services in an innovative and collaborative environment.” Through the personal attention of their tutors, AARC services meet students “where they are” (part five of SFA’s [vision statement \[17\]](#)) by providing services both face-to-face and online. Faculty are provided services from the AARC to support the university’s commitment to engage students in a learner-centered environment. These services include requesting a class to visit the AARC, requesting a specific workshop, or requesting a tour of the AARC facilities to inform students about the services provided by the AARC.

Center for Teaching & Learning

The [Center for Teaching & Learning’s \(CTL\) \[18\]](#) primary functions include distance education administration and support, professional development programs for faculty, and standardized classroom technology. The CTL offers support to any enrolled student, regardless of classification (undergraduate and graduate), for using the university’s learning management system, [Brightspace \[19\]](#). The CTL works to help increase students’ GPAs, persistence, and graduation rates. Additionally, all online students and students at off-site locations can access the services of the CTL through multiple means (phone, email, virtual lab).

In pursuit of SFA's mission, the CTL provides support in two primary ways: (1) by collaborating with faculty to create quality learning experiences for students (the "...excellence in teaching..." portion of the mission); and (2) providing technical support to faculty, staff, and students to support teaching and learning (the "engage students in a learner-centered environment" portion of the mission).

Furthermore, the CTL supports SFA faculty by providing [educator development \[20\]](#) sessions grounded in research and best practices; consulting with faculty on ways to improve the learning experience design of individual courses, content, and assessments; and supporting faculty in the selection, implementation, and or use of digital instructional tools (e.g. Brightspace, Zoom, Flipgrid, Quizziz, etc.).



Student Success Center

Through the various programs housed in the Student Success Center (SSC), including [Generation Jacks \[21\]](#), [Jacks PASS \[22\]](#), and SFAS 1101, the SSC focuses its efforts on helping undergraduates, especially freshmen and sophomores. Its chief purpose is to increase the success through these programs and provide [academic advising \[23\]](#) to students who are underrepresented and at-risk, such as first generation students, students who do not receive clear admission to their undergraduate program, and undecided students who have not chosen a major. Additionally, the SSC provides academic advising for any SFA dual credit student, also available virtually through Zoom, email, or by phone.

Faculty support is provided by the SSC for professors/instructors who teach SFA's student [success courses \[24\]](#): SFAS 1101-Freshmen Success Seminar, SFAS 3101-Transfer Success Seminar, SFAS 1110-Gen Jacks Career Readiness, and SFAS 2150-Gen Jacks Linked Practicum.

Generation Jacks

Generation Jacks, better known as GenJacks, is a program designed to serve first-generation students by providing them with an extended learning community through their first three semesters at SFA. A first-generation student is defined as one whose parents or guardians did not graduate from a four-year institution. During this time, they take specially designated sections of core curriculum courses as cohorts; receive training in study skills, metacognitive skills, and career and professional development techniques; and participate in internships or orientation to graduate/professional program pathways. Additionally, SFA's GenJacks are exposed to social and service activities that assist them with skills leading to college success and career/professional development.

Through the GenJacks program, students receive success coaching from SFA faculty and staff. This is in keeping with the [foundational goal \[25\]](#) in SFA's strategic vision of meaningful and sustained enrollment growth, as well as the [overarching goal \[26\]](#) of providing students with transformational experiences. Through the completion of service projects and participation in residential learning communities in the program, SFA impresses upon its students the mission of excellence in service and creative work.

JacksPASS

The JacksPASS program at SFA serves as a summer bridge for first-semester freshman applicants who did not meet the initial admissions requirements. During the Summer II semester, JacksPASS students enroll in seven semester credit hours (two three-hour core courses and a one-hour freshman orientation course). Students who successfully complete the semester with a 2.0 or better GPA may continue into the fall semester. Academic advisors from the Student Success Center are assigned to assist these students with course scheduling, tutoring assistance, and one-on-one mentoring.



Commitment to excellence in learning begins with "meeting student where they are," and the JacksPASS program is another example of SFA's commitment to its mission.

SFAS 1101 – Freshman Success Seminar

SFAS 1101 is a course designed to help first-semester freshmen navigate through the many adjustments necessary for their college success. This one-hour course provides students with topics that address adapting to a new environment, active learning strategies, metacognitive skills, wellness and healthy lifestyle choices, SFA traditions, marketable skills, career planning, and financial planning, thereby promoting academic and personal growth and development. This course provides first generation students the skills and preparedness to advance in their college careers and meet the challenges of living in a global community. Over the past three years, more than 3,000 students have enrolled in the course.

Academic Advising

Professional Academic Advising Council (PAAC)

Professional advisors within the Student Success Center lead the Professional Academic Advising Council (PAAC). PAAC consists of professional advisors representing each academic college and various academic departments. PAAC provides professional development opportunities and updates on the latest information about policy and services on campus pertinent to advising undergraduate students. All professional advisors are encouraged to attend PAAC monthly meetings and to join the PAAC email distribution list, and faculty advisors are also invited to attend.

The Professional Academic Advising Council promotes student success by providing information, resources, professional development, and networking opportunities to undergraduate advisors. PAAC empowers and educates the university community to better serve undergraduate students while supporting the mission of SFA.

As mentioned above, the SSC provides academic advising for first generation students, undecided/exploratory students who have not chosen a major, and students without clear admission to an academic program. For students who do not fall within these categories, academic advising is performed within the college of their major, as discussed below.

Nelson Rusche College of Business (NRCOB)

The NRCOB uses a split model employing four full time advisors. Faculty advise all students, with the exception of accounting majors in good standing, new freshmen, and probation students. Professional advisors advise new transfer students and students on probation, and are backup advisors for faculty. Only a professional advisor advises accounting majors. For online students and students at off-site locations, advising services are identical to on campus services, albeit depending more heavily on email/phone/zoom.



James E. Perkins College of Education (COE)

The COE uses a self-contained model employing six full time advisors with one advisor dedicated to freshman advising. Additionally, the freshman advisor coordinates freshman events and learning opportunities such as financial aid, counseling services, AARC resources, *how to study* presentations, and a newly implemented Freshmen Rescue for mid semester freshmen with low GPAs.

The other five full time professional advisors advise all other undergraduate COE students by major with each advisor having specific majors assigned to them. This makes them experts for that major, which is a huge benefit to both faculty and students. Faculty turn to the advisor to assist with sending messages to students, etc., and students have one advisor they can turn to for assistance.

For online students and students at off-site locations, dedicated online advisors continually communicate with students to ensure their progress within their chosen major. A director of advising also generates degree plans, substitutions, petitions, final audits, and other administrative tasks related to advising.

College of Fine Arts (COFA)

The College of Fine Arts has one professional advisor. They use a faculty-only advising model. The COFA faculty advise all students on a semester-to-semester basis. Probation students are advised by the director of their respective school (Art, Music, or Theatre), and suspension students are seen by the associate dean.

The professional advisor is responsible for graduation audits, all course substitutions (with special attention paid to transfer students), degree plans, petitions, and other administrative tasks related to advising.

Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture (ATCOFA)

The ATCOFA employs two full time professional advisors for environmental science, forestry, and geospatial science students and one advisor for all agriculture majors. They use a self-contained model of advising with students having the same advisor through graduation. The two advisors for forestry, environmental science, and geospatial science advise all students in addition to recruiting activities and in-house retention activities for freshmen and sophomores. The academic advisor for agriculture is also a lecturer with a teaching assignment in the Department of Agriculture.

College of Liberal & Applied Arts (CLAA)

The College of Liberal and Applied Arts employs two full time professional advisors in the CLAA Advising office. They use a split model of advising. Professional advisors advise students up to 45 hours in the departments of Communication Studies, English, History, and



Psychology. The remaining 10 majors in the college utilize only faculty advisors from orientation through graduation. The CLAA Advising office also serves the college's entire undergraduate probation/suspension population. It employs a full-time graduation specialist who prepares the graduation audit package for all majors in the college when they apply for graduation.

CLAA Advising supports online students and students at various sites by providing information and advising upon request and/or opportunity regarding the programs offered by the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, as well as the college experience in general.

College of Sciences & Mathematics (CoSM)

The College of Science and Math Advising and Student Services office employs four full time professional advisors and uses a collaborative model of advising, utilizing faculty advisors and mentors. Professional advisors advise students who are **not** TSI complete/college ready. One of the advisors is dedicated to advising probation students. All advisors create degree plans and make substitutions. All students that are TSI complete/college ready are advised by faculty in the various departments.

CoSM Advising and Student Services provide personal attention to assist all undergraduate students, including online students and students at off-site locations, for success in a learner-centered environment. They support students by preparing degree plans and graduation checkout for all undergraduates in CoSM.

The Academic Success Program for students on probation has helped many students get back in good standing. Additionally, they take care of all alerts issued for CoSM students and maintain a resource room where students can study, eat lunch, use a desktop computer, and print materials.

CoSM professional advisors are invited to each academic unit each year to provide updates on trends in advising, promote their services, and answer questions. They have a collaborative relationship with all academic units to assist in student success and serve as a resource for all faculty. They support faculty advisors by providing students information about how to navigate college, explaining university policies and procedures and informing students about degree requirements (majors, minor, concentrations, core, attributes, etc.).

Re-Imagining the First Year of College

In December 2015, forty-four institutions of higher education were selected, including SFA, to participate in the [Re-Imagining the First Year of College \(RFY\) \[27\]](#) project initiated by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The goals of the project were to “dramatically improve the quality of learning and student experience in the first year, increase retention rates, and improve student success.” RFY centered its strategies and approaches on four focuses (known as “buckets”): institutional intentionality, curriculum, students, and faculty. RFY resulted in several actionable steps for SFA directly related to student success an targeted towards undergraduate students: a *15 to Finish* semester credit hour [initiative](#)



[28], the completion of degree maps for academic programs, and a re-examination of student success in gateway courses.

Graduate Studies Program

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies handles graduate school admissions, offers [support \[29\]](#) for graduate students from admission to graduation, facilitates the annual Graduate Research Conference, provides faculty [membership recommendations \[30\]](#), and initiates and facilitates the periodic review of faculty on the [Graduate Council \[31\]](#).

During completion of graduate studies, graduate advisors are assigned to assist students with the expectations and assignments of the program. Online students receive assistance from graduate advisors by video conferencing technology or email.

Additionally, students have the opportunity to apply to become [graduate assistants \[32\]](#). Through these assistantships, students are involved with active research projects, teaching opportunities, and field-experiences. For their work in the areas of research, teaching, and administrative duties, they are provided financial aid and assistance through scholarships, participation in a work-study program, and possible involvement with a grant.

Graduate Research Conference

The [Graduate Research Conference \[33\]](#) offers an opportunity for graduate students to practice presenting data, public speaking, and communicating with others about theory and innovative research strategies. This annual conference is open to all graduate students enrolled at SFA. Graduate students are encouraged to submit any work that represents academic/scholarly activity that is appropriate for the graduate program from which they are submitting. All graduate students, whether online or face-to-face, are able to participate in the Graduate Research Conference. A faculty representative from each academic college participates as a judge on the Graduate Research Conference committee.

International Programs

The Office of International Programs (OIP) serves as a facilitator for international activities and exchanges at SFA. OIP serves students, faculty, and administrators in disseminating information about [study abroad \[34\]](#), encouraging and facilitating the organization of [faculty-led study abroad programs \[35\]](#), and administering study abroad [scholarships \[36\]](#) and international programs scholarships. In addition, OIP assists students in securing exchange opportunities or programs offered by other academic institutions. Study abroad programs are available to all SFA students as long as they meet program requirements (GPA, course prerequisites, application deadlines, etc.), and includes distance education, off-site, and dual credit students. In AY 18-19, 170 students participated in 12 faculty-led study abroad programs. An additional 16 students participated in 16 independent study abroad opportunities.



In support of the university's mission, contributions by the OIP to the campus community raise awareness of international issues and studies so our students are better prepared for living in a global community. An example of these contributions includes two [programs \[37\]](#) offered by the OIP, Cultural Experience Presentations and International Student Organizations. Both programs foster understanding among SFA students from all nations and a greater appreciation for diverse cultural, religious, and political philosophies, thereby supporting the university's mission of preparing students for the challenges of living in a global community.

The OIP also assists faculty with teaching exchanges. The unit oversees the negotiation of cooperative agreements between SFA and foreign universities for the exchange of students and faculty and for the development of joint research projects.

School of Honors

Undergraduate students accepted into the [School of Honors \[38\]](#) at SFA exemplify excellence in academics and leadership abilities. Student support is provided through faculty assistance with research endeavors, study-abroad opportunities, and professional conference attendance. Additionally, students in the Honors Program at SFA are financially supported and can apply for a series of [scholarships \[39\]](#) to continue their academic achievements.

SFA prides itself on the small classroom setting that it provides. It believes this setting allows for more in-depth discussions and bonding between students and the professor. The School of Honors takes that desire for one-on-one instruction a step further in providing Honors sections with professors who place much emphasis on the development of the student-teacher working relationship—once again, emphasizing SFA's commitment to its mission of engaging students in a learner-centered environment through the personal attention of the faculty.

All undergraduate students, whatever their major, are eligible to apply for admission to the School of Honors.

Undergraduate Research Conference

In connection with SFA's strategic plan to provide transformative experiences for students, the School of Honors conduct the [Undergraduate Research Conference \(URC\) \[40\]](#) "that celebrates excellence in undergraduate scholarship." The conference is held every year and invites other East Texas regional institutions to take part. Students from all six colleges at SFA are invited to participate in the event. Mentoring faculty assist the students with research skills, data collection, and analysis, as well as instructions on how to have a successful presentation. This program is offered to all undergraduate students.

Ralph W. Steen Library

The [Ralph W. Steen Library \[41\]](#) offers all students, faculty, and staffs the ability to access library materials; acquires new resources; transacts interlibrary loans; binds dissertations and theses; maintains digital archives; mends and repairs library materials; and provides research and



instructional services. The library is discussed in detail in the responses to Standards [11.1](#), [11.2](#), and [11.3](#) of this report.

The six research librarians serve as liaison librarians for different schools and departments on campus. These Librarians work to build solid relationships with the departments, supporting the faculty and students in receiving the instruction and navigating and utilizing the Steen Library resources. Additionally, through assistance from liaison librarians, students receive one-on-one research consultations. The liaison librarians also assist faculty, staff, and students with technology services.

All students have access to the question point [portal \[42\]](#) to use the *Ask-A-Librarian* services and receive a response within 24-hours. The staff and faculty of the library further student engagement by participating in the library convocation, transfer orientation sessions, Lumberjack orientation sessions, and Showcase Saturdays (family event on the SFA campus).

Division of University Affairs

Units within the Division of University Affairs include Auxiliary Services, Campus Recreation, Student Affairs, Lumberjacks Care Team, University Police Department, and Student Publications & Divisional Media.

Auxiliary Services

Dining Services

As SFA is a residential campus, dining services for students is a key element of student wellness and satisfaction. SFA students have a choice of multiple [meal plans \[43\]](#), which include access to two “all-you-care-to-eat” dining halls, each serving a student housing zone on campus. Good nutrition is essential to overall student success, so SFA students have access to a full-time registered [dietitian \[44\]](#) to help them craft healthy eating plans and solve issues related to food allergies. ARAMARK also provides free emergency meals to students who are struggling with short-term food insecurities. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs administers this program.

Residence Life, Department of

The Residence Life department manages fourteen [residence halls \[45\]](#) and provides student programming within these halls with both professional staff and students involved in the [Residence Hall Association \[46\]](#). Additionally, to enhance the educational experience, a variety of [Residential Learning Communities \(RLCs\) \[47\]](#) are offered that allow students with common social or academic interests to engage with one another. Not only are RLCs a great way to enhance the university experience, but they can also help students better understand their classes’ subject matter while getting to know faculty and staff.

Other Auxiliary Services



Auxiliary Services offers many other student service areas, including the [Graphics Shop \[48\]](#), [Card Services \[49\]](#), the US Postal Office, and the Barnes & Noble Bookstore. The Graphic Shop is a service available to all SFA faculty, staff, organizations, and students to produce high quality large format prints, banners, vinyl, and full color copies. Card Services offers students, faculty, and staff an ID card that can be used to access residence halls, meal plans, and Dining Dollars for those who live on campus or have a meal plan. A valid ID card will provide access to regular season home football, basketball, baseball, and softball games as well as the Student Recreation Center, Norton Health, and Physical Education complex, and the Wellness Center. Additionally, students, faculty, staff, and community members may reserve spaces for displays, programs, and activities through Auxiliary Services.

Testing Services

[Testing Services \[50\]](#) promotes SFA's mission by providing opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and community members to develop self-knowledge concerning academic and professional goals. Through local, state, and national testing programs, individuals may take a variety of tests related to placement and certifications.

Campus Recreation

Program areas within the Campus Recreation department include: [Fitness & Wellness \[51\]](#), [Intramural Sports \[52\]](#), [Outdoor Pursuits \[53\]](#), [Sport Clubs \[54\]](#), [Aquatics and Safety \[55\]](#), and [Employee Wellness \[56\]](#).

All students who pay the Recreational Sports Fee are able to participate in the services. Online and dual credit students do not pay the Recreational Sports Fee in their tuition and fees, but have the opportunity to become a member of the Student Recreation Center [SRC]. The SRC averages almost 12,000 visits per week during the long terms. During the Spring 2019 semester, over 5,000 participants engaged in at least one of 32 fitness classes per week. For a fee, SRC members can sign up for personal training and massage therapy.

Faculty and staff are able to utilize the employee wellness services, which include the Kick Axe Wellness Challenge, the Lumberjack Fitness Academy, Fitness Classes, a Wellness Fair during long semesters, various wellness seminars, and tobacco cessation resources. Additionally, benefits-eligible faculty and staff can participate in Wellness Release Time, which provides 30 minutes of release time up to three times a week for participation in physical exercise and wellness activities.

The robust wellness program available to faculty and staff shows the university's commitment to providing attractive quality-of-life support and incentives that reflect a professional environment (SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan, [Supporting Goal: Attracting and Supporting High Quality Faculty and Staff \[57\]](#)) to current and new faculty and staff.

Health Services/Health Clinic



The [Student Health Clinic \[58\]](#) is an outpatient medical facility offering preventive and medical services to all currently enrolled students. Licensed doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, support staff, and laboratory personnel staff the clinic.

Medical services are available to dual-credit and online students as well. When appropriate, consultations are available via video conferencing software or telephone. Health Services are available to dual-credit students; however, all students under 18 years of age are required to complete a consent form signed by their parent or guardian.

Health Services regularly offers flu shots to the campus community, including faculty and staff.

Office of the Dean of Student Affairs

The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (DOSA) provides guidance to students who need assistance understanding how to access services available to them across campus. DOSA oversees the Student Emergency Aid Fund, provides support for students who become ill or injured, assists students with medical withdrawals, serves as a resource for students who wish to file complaints, and oversees case management for students suffering from mental and physical illness. SFA Student Government is advised through DOSA, and on-line [financial literacy training \[59\]](#) is supported by this office. [Services \[60\]](#) for distance learners are also coordinated through this office. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs provides resources to support faculty and staff, including providing training on student support resources, assisting faculty and staff in dealing with troubled and troubling students, and providing support for faculty and staff in crisis through a Behavioral Intervention Team.

DOSA strives to fulfill the university's mission through personal connections with students, creating engaging and dynamic learning opportunities, and providing programs and services designed to help students meet their personal and academic goals. The Dean oversees the [Center for Career and Professional Development \[61\]](#) and [Student Affairs Programs \[62\]](#).

Career and Professional Development, Center for

The [Center for Career and Professional Development \(CCPD\) \[63\]](#) guides the creation, cultivation, and implementation of career plans through individualized assistance, innovative programming, and dynamic professional development opportunities. Opportunities and resources provided both on campus and [remotely \[64\]](#) assist students in the process of career exploration, choosing a major and a career, and obtaining rewarding employment. Numerous [career fairs \[65\]](#) are conducted throughout the year in addition to career development workshops and class [presentations \[66\]](#). Employment opportunities are posted to [Handshake \[67\]](#), and students can access information about part-time, full-time, and internship positions. The CCPD also maintains a [Career Closet \[68\]](#), which loans professional dress clothes to students for interviews with prospective employers.

The Center for Career and Professional Development interacts with faculty in a variety of ways to support students' career development journeys. Faculty members can request that their



students work with CCPD to complete a variety of class assignments – in-person mock interviews, virtual mock interviews using InterviewStream, career fair attendance, professional document critiques, and workshop attendance. CCPD works with faculty members to determine a timeline and any customization of the assignment needed for a specific course or discipline, and then tracks students who are completing the assignments. Faculty can also request presentations, delivered in person or virtually on Zoom, on a wide variety of career development topics. CCPD also encourages faculty members to attend career fairs to make connections with employers and show support for their students in attendance.

Additionally, for students in satellite programs, all CCPD services are available virtually – these students can have their resumes and cover letters critiqued, or take part in a career coaching appointment or mock interview using Zoom. A section on the CCPD website has been dedicated to promoting virtual services since early Spring 2020. Furthermore, beginning in Fall 2020, career fairs will have a virtual component as well, so online students or students in satellite programs will be able to interact with recruiters using video and chat technology live during CCPD fairs.

Counseling Services

In keeping with its philosophy of promoting positive mental health and safety, [Counseling Services \[69\]](#) assists SFA students in overcoming obstacles to their personal and academic goals. This is accomplished through individual and group counseling for students; telemental health counseling for distance learners; and outreach, presentations, training, and consultation for the campus community. Training is provided for students, faculty, and staff throughout the year, which supports the university mission by offering “a learner centered environment.”

Counseling Services offers in-person counseling services to local students or students willing to come to campus. These services are available to dual-credit students; however, those who are under 18 years of age are required to complete a consent form signed by their parent or guardian. In most cases, distance learners may access counseling via video conferencing software or telephone. When licensure prevents the ability to serve these students, students are referred to local resources including other institutions of higher education, who agree to temporarily treat the student free of charge.

Student Affairs Programs

The Office of Student Affairs Programs is dedicated to student involvement, student leadership, and student engagement. Student Affairs supports the mission of Stephen F. Austin State University with the development of programs and services geared toward enhancing student learning, involvement, retention, and civic responsibility. The assistant dean for student affairs programs oversees the Offices of Orientation Programs, Spirit Programs, and Student Engagement Programs.



Orientation Programs

The [Orientation Programs \[70\]](#) department aides all new first-year and transfer students and their families in the transition process from high school or junior college to university life at SFA. These programs inform students of the educational and engagement opportunities, strategies for academic success, and student services available to them.

For [first-year students \[71\]](#), there are five two-day sessions conducted during the summer months, and three one-day sessions are for [transfer students \[72\]](#). Additionally, orientation programs are offered for students enrolling for the first time in spring and summer semesters. An online orientation exists for first-year students who are unable to attend one of the required two-day sessions. These orientation programs are a campus-wide collaboration between academic colleges and departments, university affairs programs and services, and the finance and administration division.

Office of Student Engagement

The Office of Student Engagement is home to a variety of programs and services that provide engagement opportunities for all SFA students. With more than two hundred registered student [organizations \[73\]](#), students have the chance to interact with others who share common interests. For example, [Jack Camp \[74\]](#) is a three-day extended orientation program for incoming students that connects new students to each other and provides them with upper-class mentors to help make their first year transition more successful.

The [Student Involvement Center \[75\]](#), a program run by the Office of Student Engagement, is a peer advising service offered to all SFA students but is targeted to new students on campus. The mission of the center is to connect students quickly with involvement opportunities that match their interests. The Involvement Center supports the SFA mission by offering students “a learner centered environment” and “opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.” By recommending students to get involved in various student organizations, students learn leadership training and development as well as the application of soft skills such as problem solving, time management, and communication. Students have the option of having a peer involvement advising appointment either online or in person.

The Office of Student Engagement also oversees various service-learning programs and student leadership and service programs.

Service Learning Programs

Jacks Give Back is a service initiative that includes programs such as [Dance Marathon \[76\]](#), [The Big Event \[77\]](#), and [Alternative Breaks \[78\]](#). Service Programs provide opportunities for all students to engage in the community and across the campus in ways that impact their own development while helping others.



Programs such as The Big Event engage over 1000 students annually in a day of service to the local community. In addition to the day of service, members of this organization work year-round to plan, organize the event, and connect with each community participant through on-site visits and an adopt-a-resident program in which they service residents. Alternative Breaks completed service in nine different states in a single week, working with non-profits in each town they visited. Dance Marathon participants work year-round to fundraise dollars that directly support local children's hospitals.

Through the interaction of students with off-campus communities both near and far, SFA adheres to its strategic plan supporting goal of increasing connections to build relationships with constituents who can assist the university to fulfill its academic, research, and service missions.

Student Leadership and Service Programs

SFA provides a variety of targeted leadership development programs for all students across campus. Although these services are numerous, several are incorporated into a framework that aligns with the strategic goal of providing transformative experiences for SFA students.

Overarching all of these services is the [Certified Student Leader Program \(CSLP\) \[79\]](#). A collaboration between the Leadership and Services unit and the Center for Career and Professional Development, the CSLP helps students to develop, recognize, and articulate their proficiency in skills most sought by employers as determined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The CSLP is open to all students regardless of major, classification, or method of involvement on campus.

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion departments generally focus on student support and development for all Lumberjacks. Individual departments include the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Counseling, Disability Services, Office of Community Standards, and the Veterans Resource Center.

Office of Multicultural Affairs

The SFA [Office of Multicultural Affairs \(OMA\) \[80\]](#) exists to create a campus environment where all students, staff, and faculty feel welcome and included. In pursuit of the SFA mission, the OMA develops and provides support services that engage our students in a "learner centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living." Additionally, OMA works with student organizations to host cultural celebrations and activities that are educational and enhance our students' abilities to succeed in a global community.

Most recently, the OMA launched the SFA [Diversity and Inclusion Certification Program \[81\]](#) for faculty and staff. The certification program was designed to expose participants to critical



issues in diversity, multicultural education, and social justice. At the completion of fall 2019, over 100 faculty and staff members participated in the certification.

Disability Services

[Disability Services \[82\]](#) at SFA is committed to providing equal opportunities in higher education to students with disabilities through the collaboration of the student, faculty, and staff. Specialized support services and accommodations for students with disabilities are determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the individual student's documented needs. Disability Services ensures that all students receive equitable and appropriate accommodations for disabilities regardless of the format of the course (face-to-face, online, or dual-credit).

Disability Services works with students and faculty to facilitate accommodations and support services for courses taken outside of SFA's main campus. The department's online application and accommodation portal allows students remote access to request assistance and notify faculty of approved accommodations.

To support the university's mission of "excellence in teaching," Disability Services provides guidance and resource referrals to faculty and staff who receive and/or provide access to facilities, programs, activities, and services for persons with disabilities.

Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities (also known as Community Standards)

The mission of the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities \[83\]](#) is to guide student conduct in a manner that provides a foundation for success, a commitment to responsible citizenship, and a desire to make positive lifestyle choices based on the core SFA Way values of respect, responsibility, caring, unity, and integrity. In addition, Student Rights and Responsibilities supports the [early-alert system \[84\]](#) to which faculty and staff can submit alerts for a variety of reasons such as behavioral, medical, and family concerns; class attendance; low participation; poor performance on course work; or other reasons. The OCS provides courtesy [absence notifications \[85\]](#) for students missing classes for legitimate reasons other than university-sponsored trips. Notifications and services are available for all classifications.

Veterans Resource Center

The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) at SFA provides a space for veterans, their dependents, and ROTC students to gather, socialize, and form relationships with like-minded individuals that may provide networks of support leading to feelings of inclusion at SFA. The VRC offers free printing, free testing materials, a complimentary coffee and refreshment bar, access to résumé creation materials, and advisement from the university's career services staff members. This space is a hub for veterans programming efforts that can include connections with veteran faculty members and access to veterans' resources provided by the university and outside agencies.



Lumberjacks Care

The [Lumberjacks Care team \[86\]](#) consists of the Title IX Office, Office of Violence Against Women Grant, the Family Crisis Center of East Texas, and the Student Wellness Advocate Team (SWAT). This team is dedicated to providing an educational and work environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex that affirms the rights and dignity of each member of the Lumberjack community, including students, faculty, staff, and third parties in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Violence Against Women Act, and the Campus SAVE Act.

Title IX oversees investigations into complaints of discrimination, harassment, domestic violence, and sexual violence by promptly organizing an impartial administrative review and investigation in order to stop the behavior, prevents its recurrence, and remedies its effects. Ongoing [training \[87\]](#) is offered to all faculty, staff, and students.

Student Publications and Divisional Media

The department of [Student Publications and Divisional Media \[88\]](#) produces a weekly newspaper, [The Pine Log \[89\]](#), and a yearbook, *The Stone Fort*, which meet their readers' needs for information and provide a campus forum for discussion of relevant issues. Publications are produced entirely by student staff, and the department's quality educational and vocational experiences are consistent with the educational mission of the university. All students, faculty, and staff have access to *The Pine Log* and have the opportunity to purchase a *Stone Fort* yearbook.

Student Government Association

The [Student Government Association \(SGA\) \[90\]](#) at SFA is made up and administered entirely by students and is the representative body of SFA students. The Student Government Association strives to be the voice of the student body at SFA by representing student needs, concerns, and initiatives. While SGA does not pass legislation that is binding to university policy, it does have a significant influence. By participating in the election process, developing legislation, and being the voice of the students, the members establish themselves as campus leaders and provide service to their fellow students. All students have the opportunity to be elected to serve in SGA.

University Police Department

The SFA [University Police Department \(UPD\) \[91\]](#) provides community oriented policing, parking services, parking enforcement, safety technology, and emergency management services to promote a safe campus environment for students. The [JackAlert \[92\]](#) emergency notification system provides immediate notification to students and employees via text messages, phone calls, e-mails, and campus siren/speakers about critical situations as they arise. UPD offers an evening [shuttle service \[93\]](#) to assist students in moving safely around the campus during night hours. UPD also provides several educational and crime prevention programs.



Enrollment Management

New Student Orientation – Advising Sessions

New Student Orientation at SFA provides students and their families information about programs that will “aid families in the transition process, that will inform students of the educational opportunities [at SFA], and that will integrate students and families into the life of Stephen F. Austin State University.” The two-day program facilitates involvement with academic deans and faculty members from the six colleges and provides academic advising. Through academic advising sessions, students are introduced to department advisors, receive information on various programs and degree plans, and create schedules for the academic semesters. These efforts are in keeping with SFA’s mission of striving towards excellence in teaching and learning while engaging students in a learner-centered environment.

Additionally, several Transfer Lumberjack Orientation sessions are available for students coming to SFA from other universities or colleges. This provides transfer students with their “first steps towards connecting with SFA” as they meet with their respective academic department staff and faculty.

Students who are taking all online course may utilize the in-person and online orientation opportunity to aid in their transition into the university. New Student Orientation does not offer programs for dual credit students or graduate students. Dual credit students work with Admissions to transition into the university. Graduate Assistant orientation is offered through Human Resources and the Graduate School.

Information Technology Services

As mentioned previously, Informational Technology Services (ITS) offers a variety of services that directly support all students. In addition to safeguarding and maintaining the university’s technology systems, ITS offers services such as password reset assistance, device repair and support, mySFA and email support, connectivity support with SFA’s wireless network, and security related incident support. The ITS website also provides access to the ITS Help Desk and a knowledge base with articles offering solutions to common IT issues. ITS supports online and distance-learning students through the Help Desk, via email, via telephone, on social media, and over Zoom. ITS also maintains systems used by online students such as email, D2L, mySFA, and Banner, which are used either directly or indirectly by students in their academic career at SFA.

ITS supports faculty by providing academic and administrative systems and tools to manage their courses and grading, by providing assistance with distance learning technologies like Zoom, and by servicing dedicated Zoom classrooms that allow the faculty member to instruct students both on and off campus simultaneously.



Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics offers many programs and services that assist all student athletes by providing academic and student support. For example, [Academic Success \[94\]](#) facilitates advising, tutoring, study hall, and internship placement, and assists coaches and players to remain compliant with NCAA and university academic standards. Additionally, [Student Athlete Services and Strategic Initiatives \[95\]](#) coordinates a number of services, including but not limited to: Health and Human Performance Care Team, Diversity Task Force, the Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC), Community Service, Southland Conference Initiatives, internship placement, the implementation of a peer mentoring program, and the external mentoring program called JacksGRO. This area is also responsible for the leadership development of student athletes and facilitating student athlete-specific curriculum using online education, mental health, nutrition, and career services for all student athletes.

Conclusion

Through the collaboration of these divisions to provide the academic and student support detailed in this response, SFA provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Office of Admissions.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Registrar's Office SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Financial Aid SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Information Security.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Student Support IT Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Fall 2019 Census Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Common Data Set 2019-2020 SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Mission SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan 2015-2023.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Tyler Junior College Dual Credit MOU concerning facilities.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Lone Star - SFASU - Lease Agreement - Fully Executed 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Concurrent Dual Credit Students Admissions.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] AARC.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Online Resources AARC.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] AARC mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Vision Statement SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] SFA CTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Brightspace — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Educator Development — SFACTL.pdf](#)



-  [\[21\] Generation Jacks Student Success Center SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Jacks PASS Student Success Center SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Academic Advising SSC.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Student Success Courses SSC.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Foundational Goal SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Overarching Goal SFA Envisioned.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Re-Imagining the First Year of College \(RFY\).pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] 15 to finish Momentum Year one pager for professional advisors.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Graduate Support ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Graduate Faculty Membership ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Graduate Council ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Graduate Assistantships & Employment ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] 2020 Conference ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Study Abroad Options - Office of International Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Faculty-led Study Abroad - Office of International Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Study Abroad Scholarships - Office of International Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] International Events and Activities at SFA OIP.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] Advantages - School of Honors.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Scholarships - School of Honors.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Undergraduate Research Conference ORGS.pdf](#)
-  [\[41\] Ralph W Steen Library Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[42\] Ralph W Steen Library Help.pdf](#)
-  [\[43\] Meal Plans.pdf](#)
-  [\[44\] Dietitian.pdf](#)
-  [\[45\] Residence Halls.pdf](#)
-  [\[46\] Residence Hall Association.pdf](#)
-  [\[47\] Residential Learning Communities.pdf](#)
-  [\[48\] Graphic Shop.pdf](#)
-  [\[49\] Card Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[50\] SFA Student Testing Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[51\] Fitness & Wellness Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[52\] Intramural Sports Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[53\] Outdoor Pursuits Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[54\] Sport Clubs Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[55\] Aquatics Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[56\] Employee Wellness Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [\[57\] Attracting and Supporting a High-Quality Faculty and Staff Supporting Goals S.pdf](#)

-  [\[58\] Health Clinic Health Safety.pdf](#)
-  [\[59\] Financial Literacy Training Initiatives Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[60\] Virtual Jacks Initiatives Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[61\] Student Affairs for Support Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[62\] Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[63\] Center for Career and Professional Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[64\] Virtual Services Center for Career and Professional Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[65\] Career Events Details Center for Career and Professional Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[66\] Presentations & Assignments Center for Career and Profession.pdf](#)
-  [\[67\] Handshake Center for Career and Professional Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[68\] Career Closet Center for Career and Professional Development.pdf](#)
-  [\[69\] Counseling Services SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[70\] First Year Students Orientation and Transition Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[71\] First-Year Student Orientation Dates.pdf](#)
-  [\[72\] Transfer Student Orientation Dates.pdf](#)
-  [\[73\] 200 student organizations.pdf](#)
-  [\[74\] Jack Camp - Traditions Council.pdf](#)
-  [\[75\] Student Involvement Center.pdf](#)
-  [\[76\] SFA Dance Marathon Service Programs Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[77\] The BIG Event Service Programs Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[78\] Alternative Breaks Service Programs Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[79\] Certified Student Leader Program \(CSLP\).pdf](#)
-  [\[80\] Office of Multicultural Affairs.pdf](#)
-  [\[81\] Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Certification Flyer 20.pdf](#)
-  [\[82\] Disability Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[83\] Office of Community Standards.pdf](#)
-  [\[84\] Early Intervention.pdf](#)
-  [\[85\] Absence Notification Request.pdf](#)
-  [\[86\] Lumberjacks Care Team.pdf](#)
-  [\[87\] Lumberjacks Care Trainings.pdf](#)
-  [\[88\] Student Publications Divisional Media University Affairs.pdf](#)
-  [\[89\] The Pine Log.pdf](#)
-  [\[90\] Student Government Association Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[91\] University Police Department SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[92\] JackAlert Emergency Notification System.pdf](#)
-  [\[93\] Evening Shuttle Service.pdf](#)
-  [\[94\] Athletic Academic Student Services.pdf](#)

 [\[95\] ChampsLife Skills - Athletics.pdf](#)



12.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of academic and student support services staff with appropriate education or experience in student support service areas to accomplish the mission of the institution.

(Student support services staff)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

SFA ensures an adequate number of academic and student support services staff with appropriate education or experience in student support service areas to accomplish the university's mission.

Programs and Resources Dedicated to Academic and Student Success

As described in Standard [12.1](#), the Divisions of Academic Affairs and University Affairs provide a variety of student-centered programs and services that support the university's mission to "engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community." Institution-wide student support services include:

- Academic Assistance and Resource Center;
- Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture advising offices;
- Auxiliary Services;
- Campus Recreation;
- Center for Career and Professional Development;
- College of Fine Arts Academic Advising & Student Services;
- College of Liberal & Applied Arts advising offices;
- College of Sciences and Mathematics Advising Center;
- Counseling Services;
- Department of Public Safety;
- Disability Services;
- Enrollment Management;
- Health Services;
- Information Technology Services;
- James I. Perkins College of Education, Student Services and Advising Center;
- Lumberjacks Care – Title IX;
- Office of the Dean of Student Affairs;
- Office of International Programs;
- Office of Multicultural Affairs;
- Orientation and Transition Programs;
- Ralph W. Steen Library;
- Registrar;
- Residence Life;
- Rusche College of Business, Office of Student Services;
- Student Engagement Programs;



- Student Affairs Programs;
- Student Publications & Divisional Media;
- Community Standards;
- Student Success Center;
- Testing Services;
- Veterans Resource Center.

[Organizational charts \[01\]](#) for the Divisions of Academic Affairs and University Affairs highlight the placement of programs and services, as well as the delegation of leadership responsibilities.

Training and Professional Growth Opportunities

To ensure the continued development and performance of employees, departments follow the [Training Procedures for University Employees \[02\]](#). The university has established the myTraining portal for employees to review and complete required and supplemental trainings. Training subjects include accounting and finance; human resources; customer service; management and leadership; and technical, legal, and information technology. Staff have year-round access and receive email notifications to complete annual and bi-annual mandated trainings. Additionally, a supplemental form of cost-effective professional development and training is available through the university's partnership with [Go2Knowledge \[03\]](#). Enrollment and completion of online developmental webinars are voluntary and are self-paced. Staff members can sign in and select webinars related to such topics as student success, Title IX, campus safety and security, special student populations (veterans, first-generation, students of color), and mental health issues.

SFA's mission statement states that we are a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. To ensure the university continues to fulfill our mission statement, the [SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan \[04\]](#) was created. This multi-faceted strategic plan identifies four supporting goals, one of which is "fostering academic and co-curricular innovation." This [goal \[05\]](#) indicates the need for offering professional development for faculty and staff. To that end, the Division of Academic Affairs provides training and resources for staff through the [Center for Teaching and Learning \[06\]](#), such as Safe Space Ally Training, Introduction to Zoom, and Solving the Mystery of Student Engagement: Harnessing the Potential of Experiential Learning. A full list is [here \[07\]](#).

Professional academic advisors annually attend the TEXAAN conference, a state advising organization, as well as the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) annual conference. Professional advisors within the Student Success Center lead the [Professional Academic Advising Council \(PAAC\) \[08\]](#), a committee of professional advisors representing each academic college and various academic departments. PAAC periodically provides additional professional development opportunities through webinars and guest speakers dedicated to student success and academic advising trends and research. Lastly, the interim director of the student success center worked with the associate provost and Human Resources to



develop the academic advising [career ladder \[09\]](#), allowing for upward mobility and advancement for professional advisors at SFA.

The [Academic Assistance and Resource Center \[10\]](#), which provide tutoring and supplemental instruction for SFA students, engages its staff in continual training through the following activities:

- Attendance at four to five webinars annually hosted by National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA);
- Participation in at least one conference annually (usually NCLCA and/or the College Reading and Learning Association);
- Involvement in a summer book club, where staff read and discuss current books on such topics as learning science, growth mindset, and one-on-one or small group pedagogy (e.g. *Small Teaching Online* by Flower Darby was the book club selection for summer, 2020).

The Division of University Affairs also encourages its staff to participate in professional development, namely through University Affairs [Professional Development Series \[11\]](#) workshops and presentations. Each semester, staff members facilitate this open series of presentations. Recent topics include supporting students of color and improving customer relations in respective departments. The SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan details how SFA will carry out our mission. Our mission specifically states that we “engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.” Therefore, it is critical we train our staff on equality, diversity, and inclusion in order to prepare our students for the challenges of living in a global community. Most recently, the [Office of Multicultural Affairs \[12\]](#), reporting to the assistant dean of student affairs for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, launched the SFA [Diversity and Inclusion Certification Program \[13\]](#) for faculty and staff. The certification program was designed to support the SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan’s supporting goal of [“Redefining University Culture” \[14\]](#) and “expose them to critical issues in diversity, multicultural education, and social justice.” The program offers professional development at no cost while facilitating relationships and cross-campus learning opportunities through workshops developed by campus facilitators. At the completion of spring 2020, over 148 faculty and staff members participated in the certification.

In addition to the individual training and development offerings, SFA offers Leadership SFA, a new initiative that came into fruition as a part of the SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan, pursuant to the supporting goal of “Redefining University Culture,” which focuses on increasing employee engagement. As described in the [Employee Leadership Development \(Leadership SFA\) charge \[15\]](#) “the guidance and support of leadership is a key element in an engaged culture, which is a fundamental component of our strategic plan. We must invest in the development of our campus leaders.” Leadership SFA cohort members are nominated by supervisors and peers within the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, University Advancement, and University Affairs. The leadership development program spans over the academic year and includes topics related to servant leadership, conflict resolution, active learning, finance and operations, and promotion and advancing at the university.



Performance Evaluation of Academic and Student Support Services Staff

To ensure the quality in programs and services delivered by the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of University Affairs, all staff are evaluated following the university's policy for conducting staff performance evaluations, [11.20, Performance Management Plan \[16\]](#). The staff performance management plan is governed by Human Resources. According to Policy 11.20, the purpose of evaluation is as follows:

To maximize employee work efforts to achieve university, organizational and individual objectives through the active participation in the goal-setting process; to ensure that all employees receive a timely and objective review of their job performance each year; to identify employees whose job-related performance and conduct does not meet established objectives or contribute effectively to the university; and to ensure that job performance is measured effectively for compensation purposes.

The university's performance management plan consists of an annual performance evaluation to ensure that all employees receive a timely and objective review of their job performance each year. Through the active participation in the goal-setting process, supervisors identify employees whose job-related performance and conduct does not meet established objectives or contribute effectively to the university. Evaluations ensure that job performance is measured effectively for compensation purposes. Evaluations are also linked to staff promotions, for example, the advising career ladder positions (Advisor I, II, and III).

The evaluation of directors in Student Affairs includes completion of the [Must List \[17\]](#). The Must List was created spring 2020 as a checklist to provide clearer expectations to senior leadership within Student Affairs regarding expected performance in the role. The list contains the minimum expectations for every individual at the director level or above. The list ensures directors complete the following:

- set annual measurable goals;
- complete program assessment annually;
- establish learning outcomes;
- measure; student satisfaction;
- offer professional development for staff;
- offer activities that create a positive working environment; and
- ensure student employees receive an annual performance review.

To ensure the continuance of quality in programs and services of departments across the university, several assessments and program satisfaction inventories are administrated throughout the year. The latest (2018) [Student Satisfaction Inventory \(Ruffalo-Noel Levitz\) \[18\]](#) indicates how SFA student satisfaction and experience values are overall significantly higher than national four-year public universities. Topics measured on this report include college experience and expectations, overall satisfaction with experiences, and a question asking, "If you had to do it over, would you enroll at SFA again?" Highlighted strengths from the Strategic Planning Overview section on the inventory focus on academic and student support services to



demonstrate adequacy with higher satisfaction compared to other institutions. Some areas worth noting in the inventory that SFA scored statistically significantly higher than the national average are:

- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major;
- My academic advisor is approachable;
- Library resources and services are adequate;
- Tutoring services are readily available;
- SFA provides adequate technical support to students using computers;
- Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students;
- There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career;
- New student orientation services help students adjust to college.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) [2019 Engagement Indicators Report \[19\]](#) shows how the SFA Campus Environment (including Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment) is either significantly higher or no different from other institutional comparison groups for both first year and senior populations. Seniors show significantly higher engagement with quality and support compared to national NSSE groups in 2018 and 2019. The [Beyond the Classroom \[20\]](#) survey sent to all students in the spring offers additional data supporting that SFA has adequate staff. Students selected agreed they were able to schedule an appointment within a reasonable time with a counselor, and students agreed they are able to see a clinician or doctor in a reasonable amount of time. Annual assessment of functional and improvement objectives as part of the institutional assessment process allows university leadership, at all levels to gauge mission accomplishment. The results of this assessment process described in our response to Standards [7.3](#), [8.2.a](#), [8.2.b](#), and [8.2.c](#) informs staffing requirements and decisions with regard towards mission accomplishment.

Professional and Experiential Qualifications

In the Division of Academic Affairs, all eight senior staff have doctoral degrees. Among the Division of University Affairs, two senior staff have doctoral degrees, one is currently pursuing a doctoral degree, and four hold master's degrees. Table 1 provides a list of all relevant experience and educational credentials of all non-classified (professional) staff in student support roles within the Divisions of Academic Affairs and University Affairs. In addition to professional development, University staff maintain active memberships, participation, and officer positions in national, state, regional, and local professional organizations and associations as outlined in the table below, which links to job descriptions and qualifications.



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Academic Affairs Advising				
<u>Emily Payne</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> - ATCOFA; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student’s interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.S. in Speech Communication/ Agriculture, Stephen F. Austin State University M.S. in Agriculture, Stephen F. Austin State University	Over 19 years of experience teaching/ working in the agriculture and forestry department	
<u>Brandy Bishop</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> - ATCOFA; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student’s interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.S. Agriculture Development Production, Stephen F. Austin State University M.Ed. Secondary Education, Stephen F. Austin State University Ph.D. Forestry (In progress), Stephen F. Austin State University	7 years of experience in academic advising. Over 15 years of experience in teaching forestry/ agriculture related classes.	National Academic Advising Association Professional Academic Advising Committee
<u>Courtney Flynn</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> - College of Fine Arts; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student’s interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	BBA, Stephen F. Austin State University MBA, Stephen F. Austin	3 years of academic advising experience	National Academic Advising Association Texas Academic Advising Network Professional Academic Advising Committee



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Academic Affairs Advising				
<u>Jessica Boone</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> - CLAA; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student's interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.S. in Social Science, Texas Wesleyan University M.S. in Academic Advising, Kansas State University	18 years of experience working in higher education; 4 years of experience in academic advising	Member of NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Member of TEXAAN (Texas Academic Advising Network) Chair-elect of the East Region of TEXAAN Member of PAAC (Professional Academic Advising Council/SFA)
<u>William Harris</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> - CLAA; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student's interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.A. in English Education, University of Central Oklahoma M.A. in English, University of Arkansas	Ten years of experience in academic advising, 23 years of experience in teaching as adjunct faculty.	National Academic Advising Association Texas Academic Advising Network
<u>Anna Jefferson</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> -COSM; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student's interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.S. in Mass Communication, Stephen F. Austin State University M.A. in Human Development and Family Studies, Stephen F. Austin State University	Three years of experience working in the COSM Advising Center	Professional Academic Advising Committee
<u>Trina Menefee</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> -COSM; a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student's interests and abilities. Supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	B.A. in Criminal Justice/Sociology, SFASU M.A. in Student Affairs and Higher Education, SFASU	Over 20 years of experience in higher education. 11 years of experience in academic advising.	National Academic Advising Association Texas Academic Advising Network Professional Academic Advising Committee



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Academic Affairs Advising				
<u>Laura Turner</u>	<u>Academic Advisor</u> -COSM; This is a professional position responsible for advising undecided, prospective, and enrolled students in course selection and academic program planning consistent with each student’s interests and abilities. Primarily supports one academic school, department, or assigned group of students.	BBA in Marketing, Stephen F. Austin State University Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies, Stephen F. Austin State University	Over nine years of experience in academic advising. Overall, 23 years of experience working in higher education.	PAAC – Professional Academic Advising Council TEXAAN – Texas Academic Advising Network NACADA – National Academic Advising Association
<u>Lisa Stone</u>	<u>Director of Student Services and Advising</u> for COE; This is a professional position responsible for directing and providing oversight for student services and advising center operations within the College of Education. Responsible for oversight of degree plan processing; major and minor degree changes; grade-level changes; course substitutions; transfer credit evaluations; and graduation requirement reviews.	Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences, Stephen F. Austin State University Master of Interdisciplinary Studies, Stephen F. Austin State University	14 years of experience in academic advising. 38 years of experience working for SFA	Texas Academic Advising Association Literacy Research Association International Literacy Association American Association of College of Teacher Education (AACTE) American Research Association Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities (TECSCU)
<u>Raquel Skidmore</u>	<u>Director of Student Success Center</u> ; This is a full-time position related to the operation of the Student Success Center. Responsible for providing administrative oversight of and leadership to the center, including establishing and maintaining a visionary direction and standards for the center and supporting the development and continual improvement of student services, activities, and programs designed to enhance student success, retention, and achievement.	BBA with concentration in Management, University of Oklahoma M.A. in Student Affairs and Higher Education, Stephen F. Austin State University	Over 10 years of experience working at SFA. Nine years of experience working in the Student Success Center and advising students.	National Academic Advising Association Texas Academic Advising Network Professional Academic Advising Council



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Academic Affairs				
<u>M.E. McWilliams</u>	<u>Director of the Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC)</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for overseeing the operations of Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC), including the development and delivery of tutoring services.	B.A. In English, Baylor University M.A. in English, Stephen F. Austin State University	35 years of experience working in the field of education. 32 years of experience working at SFA, 12 of which have been as the director of the AARC	National College Learning Center Association
<u>Hans M. Williams</u>	<u>Dean of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources	B.A. in Forestry, Purdue University M.S. in Forestry, Clemson University Ph.D. Philosophy, Auburn University	Over 21 years of experience working in the forestry department at SFA.	<i>Member:</i> Texas Forestry Association Society of American Foresters International Society of Arboriculture <i>Leadership Role:</i> 2020 President-Elect, Texas Forestry Association (2021 President) Chair, Southern Group of National Association of University Forest Resources Programs
<u>Addison C. Himes</u>	<u>Dean of the College of Fine Arts</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources	Ph.D., University of North Texas	Over 25 years of experience in the field of fine arts.	Council of Texas Arts Deans International Council of Fine Arts Deans National Association of Schools of Music



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Brian Murphy</u>	<u>Dean of the College of Liberal and Applied Arts</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources	B.A. in Political Science, University of Dayton M.A. in Political Science, Miami University Ph.D. in Political Science, Miami University	25 plus years administrative experience in higher education.	European Union Studies Association Texas Association of Deans of Liberal Arts & Sciences East Texas Historical Association
<u>Kimberly Childs</u>	<u>Dean of the College of Sciences and Mathematics</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources	B.S. in Mathematics, Dallas Baptist University M.S. in Mathematics Teaching, Stephen F. Austin State University Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction/Mathematics Education, Texas A&M University	Ten years of experience as Dean of College of Sciences and Mathematics. 42 years of experience in teaching mathematics.	See Vitae.
<u>Judy Abbott</u>	<u>Dean of the James I. Perkins College of Education</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources .	B.S. in Education, University of Oklahoma M.S. in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, University of Oklahoma Ph.D. In Curriculum and Instruction, University of Texas at Austin	30 years of experience working at an institution of higher education. 10 years of experience being Dean and professor of COE	Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education Texas Education Agency Texas Association of College of Teacher Education



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Timothy Bisping</u>	<u>Dean of the Nelson Rusche College of Business</u> ; Full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for leadership within the college, representing the college and university in administrative matters, overseeing graduate and undergraduate education; promoting teaching, research, and other professional activities; facilitating planning and development of new programs; supervising the budget; and soliciting funds from external sources	BBA, Wichita State University M.A. in Economics, Wichita State University Ph.D. in Philosophy, Oklahoma State University	25 years of experience working in higher education. Six years of experience as Dean of COB	See Vitae
<u>Jonathan Helmke</u>	<u>Director of Ralph W. Steen Library</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for the development and operation of university library functions, including planning, organizing, and directing library service programs in support of the educational and research goals of the university. Responsible for coordinating employment and directing performance of library staff; developing and recommending library policy with the assistance of the Library Committee; preparing, submitting, and administering the library budget.	B.A in Political Science and Business Administration, Wartburg College Master of Library Science, Indiana University	25 years of progressive responsibility in working with library services.	Texas Library Association College and University Libraries Division American Library Association
<u>Katelyn Childress</u>	<u>Student Success Center Coordinator</u>	B.S. Psychology, Stephen F Austin State University M.A. Student Affairs and Higher Education, Stephen F. Austin State University	Six years of experience working in the field of student affairs.	NACADA – The Global Community for Academic Advising TEXAAN - Texas Academic Advising Network



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Michael Tkacik	<p>Director of the School of Honors; This is a full-time, twelve-month, faculty position responsible for serving as the chief administrator of the School of Honors while exemplifying those faculty qualities most valued by the academic community: teaching excellence, scholarly and creative activities, and a commitment to university and community service. Responsible for the development and implementation of school policy; setting the tone of the school through daily interaction with colleagues and school staff; and serving as advocate for the school's needs to the administration and an interpreter of administrative policy to faculty and students. The director is an administrator, the quality of whose performance has fundamental impact on the success of the institution in attaining its specific goals.</p>	<p>B.A. in Political Science, University of Maryland J.D. Law, Duke University School of Law M.A. in Political Science, Columbia University Ph.D. in Political Science, University of Maryland</p>	<p>Over 23 years of experience working as an instructor in the field of political science. 12 years of experience working as the director of the school of honors.</p>	<p>Project on Nuclear Issues Philippine Political Science Association National Collegiate Honors Council Great Plains Honors Council</p>
Lynda Langham	<p>Registrar; This is an executive position responsible for the operation and development of the Office of the Registrar as a support service to the academic function of the university. Prepares all registration materials, maintains software tables, and oversees registration. Initiates a student's final graduation plan, prepares deficiency lists, and tabulates honor rolls and rank in class.</p>	<p>BBA, University of Texas at Tyler MBA, Stephen F. Austin State University</p>	<p>Over 22 years of experience working at SFA. 10 years of experience working as registrar</p>	<p>American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers East Texas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers</p>



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Heather Catton</u>	<u>Director of International Programs</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for overseeing the operation of the Office of International Programs (OIP). Responsible for supervising, coordinating, planning, organizing, compiling and processing activities assigned to the OIP: independent study abroad for SFA students, faculty-led study abroad programs/classes, and recruitment of international students, international student support services, and operation of English Language Institute (ELI) and contractual agreements with international universities for joint research and faculty and student exchanges.	B.A. in Political Science and French, Ohio University M.A. in French Language and Literature, Ohio University M.A. in International Studies, Ohio University	Overall, 29 years of experience working in higher education. 11 years of experience working in the office of International Programs	National Association of Foreign Student Advisors
University Affairs				
<u>Adam Peck</u>	<u>Dean of Student Affairs</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for the overall development and management of the Office of Student Affairs; including counseling, careers services, testing, disability services, student rights and responsibilities, student engagement, orientation programs, veteran’s affairs, and multicultural affairs. counseling and career services, disability services, health services, student rights and responsibilities, veteran’s center, student engagement programs, multicultural affairs and orientation. Assists Vice President of University Affairs in developing, implementing, and assessing division-wide projects and programs.	B.A. in Theatre, Lewis University M.A. in Speech Communication, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, The University of Texas at Austin	23 years of progressive responsibility in the field of student affairs.	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators National Association for Campus Activities Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Hollie Smith	Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for Programs ; This is a managerial position responsible for supporting the Dean of Student Affairs and the overall development and management of assigned functions within the Office of Student Affairs; including Leadership, Service Learning/Community Service, Spirit and Traditions, Student Activities/Student Involvement, Greek Life, Student Organizations, Orientation Programs, and Multicultural Affairs.	B.S. in Psychology, Stephen F. Austin State University M.A. in Psychology, Stephen F. Austin State University Ed.D. Higher Education Administration, A&M University-Commerce	15 years of experience in the field of higher education.	Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators (TACUSPA) Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) NASPA Law and Policy Certification
Jill Milem	Director of Counseling Services ; This is a managerial position responsible for directing and providing leadership to the Office of Counseling Services. Responsible for overseeing the management of the counseling center; managing the clinical staff; and working with internal and external constituencies to promote mental health and wellness on campus.	B.A. in Visual Arts, Eckerd College M. Ed. In Counseling, Stephen F. Austin State University Licensed Professional Counselor Certified Approved Supervisor	28 years in university counseling; total 34 years of experience in counseling including psychiatric inpatient, private practice, 31 years Licensed Professional Counselor.	Piney Woods Counseling Association Texas Counseling Association Texas University and College Counseling Directors Association American University and College Counseling Center Directors
Amy Roquemore	Director of Student Publications and Divisional Media ; This is a managerial position responsible for overseeing publications and divisional websites, collaborating with divisional staff to establish a consistent and functional online presence in adherence with university standards. Provides professional journalism advice to students. Manages the departmental budget.	B.A. in Communication, Stephen F. Austin State University M.A. in Communication Studies	Over 15 years of professional experience in newspaper journalism, freelance writing and public relations; 13 years in higher education marketing, teaching and student publications	Texas Intercollegiate Press Association College Media Association



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Compliance Certification

Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Lacey Folsom</u>	<u>Director of Student Engagement Programs</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for developing and implementing the services, activities, and programs of the Office of Student Engagement Programs, including Student Organization Services, Greek Life, Student Activities, and Leadership and Service.	B.S. in Human Science, Stephen F. Austin State University Masters of Interdisciplinary Studies, Stephen F. Austin State University	12 years of experience in student programming.	Campus Critical Response Team-Conduct Chair Graduate of Mid Managers Institute Coordinator of Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators National Association for Campus Activities Student Government-West Institute Coordinator (2013) Student Government-West Institute Staff Member (2011, 2012)
<u>Winston Baker</u>	<u>Director of Residence Life</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for the total on-campus housing operation, which consists of fiscal operations, facilities management and residence life. Responsible for training, developing and managing approximately 80 full-time staff and over 275 student workers through appropriate managers and supervisors.	B.S. in Recreation and Leisure Services, Springfield College M.S. in Counselor Education, Hofstra University Graduate Certificate in Public Management, Indiana University	46 years of progressive responsibility in higher education administration . This includes 40 years of experience in residence life management.	National Association of Campus Auxiliary Services Association of College and University Housing Officers National Association of College and University Food Services Society for College and University Planning
<u>Brittany Beck</u>	<u>Director of Orientation and Transition Programs</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for directing and managing orientation. Responsible for overseeing the planning, development, marketing, implementation, and evaluation; establishing unit goals that support the university's mission and strategic objectives; and supervising staff, providing professional development opportunities as appropriate.	Associate of Arts, Trinity Valley Community College B.S. in Communication Studies, Stephen F. Austin State University M.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences, SFASU	10 years progressive responsibility in the field of student affairs.	Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Texas Association for College Admissions Counselors



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Janice Ledet</u>	<u>Director of Health Services</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for serving as the general public health officer for Stephen F. Austin State University. Responsible for serving as administrative head of the Student Health Clinic and supporting the academic mission of the university by providing vision, leadership, and strategic direction for healthcare and medical programs, services, and initiatives.	University of Louisville School of Medicine, M.D. 1983; Internship at University Hospital Jacksonville Florida, 1984; Undergraduate - BS Degree, Centre College of Kentucky, 1979	Over 34 years of Physician experience	American College Health Association Honorary Staff at Medical Center Hospital
<u>John Fields</u>	<u>Department of Public Safety- Chief of Police</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for planning and directing the activities of the Department of Public Safety. Responsible for establishing, directing, administering, and monitoring the development and operations of the department and promoting a safe and secure educational and work environment for the university community through the communication and enforcement of university policies and federal, state, and local laws and the development and implementation of effective crime prevention strategies.	B.A Political Science, Albany State University M.P.A. Public Administration, Albany State University M.S. Criminal Justice, Albany State University Military- US Army; Ammunition Specialist, Military Security Specialist, Desert Shield/Storm	27 years of Police experience. Nine years of university police experience	Public Admin Organization International Chief's Association Police Executive Research Forum
<u>Dennis Mosley</u>	<u>Coordinator of Community Standards</u> ; This is a professional position responsible for the day-to-day conduct issues, investigations, and hearings. Works under moderate supervision, with limited latitude for the use of initiative and independent judgment.	B.S. in Sociology, Jarvis Christian College M.S. in Higher Education Administration, Texas A&M University-Commerce	4 years of experience working in higher education. 2 years of experience working in the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities	National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Admin Association for Student Conduct Admin



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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Daphne Curl</u>	<u>Manager of testing- Testing Services</u> ; This is a supervisory position responsible for coordinating, scheduling, expanding, administering and supervising testing programs for Stephen F. Austin State University. Responsible for developing and maintaining contracts and agreements with testing companies; coordinating with academic departments to development specialized testing services, as well as communicating changes to testing requirements and/or services; supervises and trains testing staff; and stays abreast of testing trends/changes and implements changes to testing procedures as needed.	B.A in Mass Communication, Stephen F. Austin State University M.A. in Communication and General Business, Stephen F. Austin State University	16 years of experience in higher education, 8 years of experience in Support Services	Texas Association of Collegiate Testing Personnel Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Ed. National Collegiate Testing Association
<u>Carrie Charley</u>	<u>Director of Auxiliary Services</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for the overall operation and management of student services and auxiliary functions for Stephen F. Austin State University including residence life, printing services, graphic shop, ID card services, summer camps and conferences, post office, testing services, and the Baker Pattillo Student Center.	B.S. in Education, Ohio University M. Ed. In Higher Education Administration, Ohio University	11 years of experience working in the field of higher education	National Association of Catering and Events (NACE) Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) - National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS)
<u>Ken Morton</u>	<u>Director of Campus Recreation</u> ; Responsible for the planning, development, and implementation of all campus rec programs.	B.A in Recreation Administration, Hardin-Simmons University; M. Ed in Sport and Recreation Management, Hardin-Simmons University	Over 28 years of experience in managing recreational programs and facilities in a variety of settings. Over 20 years in Student Affairs and Campus Recreation.	National Intramural Recreational Sports Association



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Jamie Bouldin</u>	<u>Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for directing and providing leadership to the primary campus office responsible for assisting students in their career and professional development.	B.A. In Journalism, Stephen F. Austin State University M.S. in College Student Personnel, University of Tennessee	Over 19 years of teaching experience and over 13 years of administrative experience in higher education.	Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators (TACUSPA) National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Southern Association of Colleges and Employers (SoACE) Houston Area Consortium of Career Centers (HACCC) National Career Development Association (NCDA)
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion				
<u>Michara Delaney-Fields</u>	<u>Chief Diversity Officer</u> ; This is an executive position in the Office of the President responsible for providing collaborative, strategic, and results-oriented leadership for institution-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Responsible for playing a major role in the conception, development, and implementation of strategies with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external partners. Responsible for the overall development and management of assigned functions including Title IX, Disability Services, and Office of Multicultural Affairs. Serves as a member of the President’s Cabinet. Works under minimal supervision, with extensive latitude for the use of initiative and independent judgment. Reports to the President.	B.S. Health Studies, Texas Southern University M.S. in Health Education and Human Performance, Texas Southern University Ph.D. Educational Leadership in Higher Education, Prairie View A&M University	12 years of experience in the field of higher education.	American Association of University Women (AAUW) American Council on Education (ACE) American Educational Research Association (AERA) National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) National Academic Advising Association (NAAA) National Association for College Auxiliary Services (NACAS) Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Compliance Certification

Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Veronica Beavers</u>	<u>Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for the overall administration of the Multicultural Center with the goal of enhancing the experience of Stephen F. Austin State University's diverse student population. Responsible for addressing relevant issues of multicultural education; encouraging the awareness of the university community regarding issues involved with living in a global society; and encouraging students to gain new perspectives regarding diversity of thought and people	B.S. in Psychology and Biology, Stephen F. Austin State University M. Ed. In Educational Leadership, Stephen F. Austin State University Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership (candidate), Texas A&M University Commerce	12 years of progressive experience in higher education including Campus Recreation, Residence Life, Library Information, and Orientation Programs. Served as an SFA Orientation Leader, Orientation Supervisor, and Graduate Assistant since 2008.	National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Texas Association of College & University Student Personnel Administrators National Association Campus Activities Association for Orientation, Retention & Transition
<u>Tiffany Rivers</u>	<u>Director of Disability Services</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for leadership of the primary campus office responsible for advocacy and servicing the accommodation needs (academic, housing, etc.) of students/staff with disabilities pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation ACT and ADA.	Associate Degree of Applied Arts and Sciences, Angelina College BBA, Stephen F. Austin State University M.P.A Public Admin, Stephen F. Austin State University	23 Years of progressive experience in higher education and Disability Services	University Professional Women University Women's Club Association of Higher Education and Disability
<u>Amanda Pruitt</u>	<u>Coordinator of Title IX/Lumberjacks Care and Director of Community Standards</u> ; Responsible for Title IX investigations. Responsible for Title IX compliance and ensuring that SFA's constituents are aware of their legal rights under Title IX and that the school and all of its employees, through its policies, procedures, and practices, complies with its legal obligations under Title IX.	B.A in Psychology, University of Memphis M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling (CORE), University of Memphis	Overall, 18 years of experience working in the field of counseling. 4 years of experience working at SFA.	State of Missouri Committee for Professional Counselors Licensure Supervisor American Counseling Association Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
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Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
<u>Alex Cambron</u>	<u>Coordinator of the Veterans Success Center</u> ; This is a professional position responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Veteran’s Resource Center (VRC), including planning, organizing, and coordinating support services and programs for student veterans. Responsible for assisting veterans with transition into college, planning veteran events, guidance on VA benefits, and financial aid processes.	B.S. in Psychology, Loyola University-Chicago Masters of Higher Education Administration, University of Louisville (In progress)	15 years of experience working in the military and with service members. Over 2 years of experience working at SFA.	Faculty Advisor SFA Student Veterans Association US Commissioned Officer Captain US Army Reserve University of Louisville Master Educator Fellowship
Informal Technology Services				
<u>Anthony Espinoza</u>	<u>IT-Chief Information Officer</u> ; This is an executive position responsible for overseeing information resources for the university to ensure information resources are being used effectively to further the university’s mission and strategic goals. Responsible for directing Information Technology Services including the project management office, enterprise resource planning system, telecommunications, networking, and technical support services.	B.A. in History, The University of Texas at San Antonio M.A. in Education Concentration Instructional Technology, The University of Texas at San Antonio	23 years of experience dealing with IT, and other forms of technology within an institution of higher education.	Resume linked here.
<u>Timothy Lewallen</u>	<u>IT-Assistant Director of Customer Support</u> ; This is a managerial position responsible for overseeing technical support operations and identifying opportunities to align the department to provide support for the university community’s technology needs while promoting customer service principles.	BBA in Computer Science, Hardin-Simmons University	26 years of experience working in a technology-based field. 12 years of experience working in a university setting dealing with technology.	







































STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Compliance Certification

Name	Title and Duties	Education	Relevant Experience	Professional Development
Athletics				
Ryan Ivey	Athletic Director ; This is an executive position responsible for the overall management of the intercollegiate athletics programs within the policies, procedures, and guidelines established by Stephen F. Austin State University, the Southland Conference (SLC), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Regularly exercises discretion and independent judgment when performing work.	B.S. in Sports Management, University of Memphis M.S. In Sports and Leisure Commerce, University of Memphis	Over 15 years of intercollegiate athletic administrative experience	<i>Memberships:</i> NACDA (National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics) NACMA (National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators) FCS ADA (Football Championship Subdivision Athletic Directors Association) <i>Committee/Positions:</i> President-NACMA (term ends September 1, 2020) Executive Committee-FCS ADA (terms ends September 1, 2023) NCAA FCS Football Committee (term ends September 2023) Southland Conference Advisory Council
Enrollment Management				
Erma Brecht	Executive Director of Enrollment Management ; This is an executive position responsible for providing direct leadership for the Office of Enrollment Management, including overseeing the offices of Admissions, the Registrar, Financial Aid & Scholarships, and the One Stop Shop. Responsible for leading the university's efforts in integrating these functions and other affiliated efforts to create a proactive program of recruitment, enrollment, retention, and student success.	B.A.in Speech Communications , University of Houston M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration, University of Houston	31 years of experience working in the field of higher education.	Texas Association for College Admission Counseling Texas Association for College Registrars and Admissions Officers National Association for College Registrars and Admissions Officers Texas Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals





















Table 1 – 12.2 – Academic Affairs and University Affairs Student Support Services Staff Qualifications



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] University Training Procedures.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Go2Knowledge.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] SFA Center for Teaching & Learning.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] sfa envisioned fostering academic and cocurricular innovation.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] CTL Master Session Descriptions List.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Professional Academic Advising Council \(PAAC\).pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Academic Advising Career Ladder.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Faculty Resources AARC.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] UA Professional Development Series.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Office of Multicultural Affairs SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Diversity & Inclusion Certification Flyer 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Leadership SFA Team Charge.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] sfa envisioned redefining university culture.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] The Must List.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Student Satisfaction Inventory 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] NSSE 2019 Engagement Indicators.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Beyond the Classroom Spring 2020 Data \(1\).pdf](#)
-  [CV Abbott.pdf](#)
-  [CV Beavers.pdf](#)
-  [CV Bishop.pdf](#)
-  [CV Bisping.pdf](#)
-  [CV Catton.pdf](#)
-  [CV Childs.pdf](#)
-  [CV Espinoza.pdf](#)
-  [CV Harris.pdf](#)
-  [CV Helmke.pdf](#)
-  [CV Himes.pdf](#)
-  [CV Ivey.pdf](#)
-  [CV Langham.pdf](#)
-  [CV McWilliams.pdf](#)
-  [CV Minafee.pdf](#)
-  [CV Murphy.pdf](#)
-  [CV Pruit.pdf](#)



-  [CV Skidmore.pdf](#)
-  [CV Smith.pdf](#)
-  [CV Tkacik.pdf](#)
-  [CV Williams.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Academic Advisor III.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Academic Advisor I.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Assistant Director ITS Customer Service.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Chief Diversity Officer.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Chief Information Officer.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Chief of Police.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Coordinator of Community Standards.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Coordinator Student Success Center.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Coordinator Veterans Resource Center.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Dean of Students-Assistant VP University Affairs.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Dean.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director AARC.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Athletics.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Auxiliary Services.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Campus Recreation.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Center for Career and Professional Deveopment.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Counseling Services.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Disability Services.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Health Services.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director International Programs.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Library.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director of Student Affairs Programs \(Multicultural Affairs\).pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Residence Life.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director School of Honors.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Student Affairs Programs \(Orientation-Transition Programs\).pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Student Engagement.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Student Publications and Divisional Media.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Student Services and Advising.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Director Student Success Center.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Executive Director of Enrollment Management.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Manager Testing Services.pdf](#)
-  [Job Description Registrar.pdf](#)



 [Job Description Title IX Coordinator.pdf](#)

 [Resume Beck.pdf](#)

 [Resume Boone.pdf](#)

 [Resume Bouldin.pdf](#)

 [Resume Brecht.pdf](#)

 [Resume Cambron.pdf](#)

 [Resume Charley.pdf](#)

 [Resume Childress.pdf](#)

 [Resume Curl.pdf](#)

 [Resume Fields.pdf](#)

 [Resume Flynn.pdf](#)

 [Resume Folsom.pdf](#)

 [Resume Jefferson.pdf](#)

 [Resume John Fields.pdf](#)

 [Resume Ledet.pdf](#)

 [Resume Lewallen.pdf](#)

 [Resume Milem.pdf](#)

 [Resume Morton.pdf](#)

 [Resume Mosley.pdf](#)

 [Resume Payne.pdf](#)

 [Resume Peck.pdf](#)

 [Resume Rivers.pdf](#)

 [Resume Roquemore.pdf](#)

 [Resume Stone.pdf](#)

 [Resume Turner.pdf](#)

 [Resume Winston.pdf](#)



12.3 The institution publishes clear and appropriate statement(s) of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement(s) to the campus community.
(*Student rights*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. [Policy 10.4, Student Code of Conduct \[01\]](#) and [policy 2.13, Title IX \[02\]](#) are the primary policies pertaining to student rights and responsibilities at SFA. Both policies are reviewed annually by the SFA Board of Regents, the governing board of the university. On the day following the census date each semester (fall, spring, and summer), all students are notified of these and other important policies via an [email \[03\]](#) from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (also called Community Standards), which is sent by the Office of Vice President for University Affairs. This notification highlights critical university policies and provides a link to the university's electronic [policy manual \[04\]](#), which contains all university policies relating to critical rights and responsibilities. In addition, a summary of important policies can be found in the [Student Handbook \[05\]](#), which is distributed to all students attending summer orientation and is available online at the Student Affairs Programs [website \[06\]](#).

Another means of dissemination is required training. During the first week of class, incoming students are required to complete a 30-45 minute training, Get Inclusive: Voices for Change. This course is part of the primary prevention efforts to address both substance use and gender discrimination (including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual harassment, and stalking) and provides information regarding prevention and response to sexual assault on campus. When students register for courses for the first time (usually this would happen during orientation), an [email invitation \[07\]](#) to complete the course is triggered. Students are also informed of the training during orientation. An automatic [registration hold \[08\]](#) is placed on a student's account if the student does not complete the training within the first twelve days of the first semester of enrollment.

A listing of policies can be found in the university [General Bulletin \[09\]](#), which is distributed online to all students and referenced numerous times during new student orientation and during academic advising. Policies in the General Bulletin include:

- [14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Resources](#)
- [2.2, Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [2.5, Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act](#)
- [2.11, Nondiscrimination](#)
- [2.13, Title IX](#)
- [10.4, Student Code of Conduct](#)



- [10.3, Hazing](#)
- [13.11, Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse](#)
- [4.7, Financial Aid Code of Conduct](#)
- [2.10, Student Records](#)
- [10.12, Student Travel](#)

In addition, academic policies are maintained on the university website. Academic policies are also included in the [Graduate Bulletin \[10\]](#) under university policies.

Each year, student athletes receive a [Student Athlete Handbook and Planner \[11\]](#). This document outlines expectations and policies for student athletes, including a Code of Conduct each student athlete is expected to follow. Students who are participating in sport clubs receive a [Code of Conduct \[12\]](#) governing their participation in this activity.

Students dual enrolled at both SFA and another institution fall under the codes of conduct of each school. Determinations regarding which policy predominates in each instance are made based on the capacity with which they are operating at the time of the conduct violation. For example, SFA allows certain Angelina College (AC) students to reside in residential facilities. These students are also required to be enrolled in at least one course at SFA. During the time they are in classes at AC, their conduct is under the auspices of the policies of AC. During their time in the SFA residence halls or in SFA courses, their conduct is under SFA's [Code of Conduct \[01\]](#). Dual-credit high school students taking classes on their own campus are primarily regulated by their high schools. When these students are taking classes on campus, their conduct is primarily regulated by SFA's Code of Conduct. Any conflicts in policy would be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the institutions in question.

Each student organization is required to send four officers to [risk management training \[13\]](#) in compliance with [Texas Education Code \(TEC\) Section 51.9361 \[14\]](#). This training reviews [policy 10.4, Student Code of Conduct \[01\]](#); [policy 13.19, Risk Management \[15\]](#); and other relevant university policies and procedures. These students are also made aware of the online availability of the Student Handbook. Additionally, the training has been uploaded to the university's learning management system (D2L) so that the training may be accessed remotely by students. Students are provided copies of the training to share with the general membership of their organization. TEC 51 requires that officers of recognized student organizations be trained in 7 different areas of risk management annually. These areas include:

1. Possession and use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs, including penalties that may be imposed for possession or use;
2. Hazing;
3. Sexual abuse and harassment;
4. Fire safety and other safety issues, including the possession and use of a firearm or other weapon or of an explosive device;
5. Travel to a destination outside the area in which the institution is located;
6. Behavior at parties and other events held by a student organization;
7. Adoption by a student organization of a risk management plan.



The details on university compliance with TEC 51 are codified in university [policy 10.10, Student Organization Risk Management Training \[16\]](#). While it is not required by law, advisors of registered student organizations are invited to attend the training each year and are supplied a copy of the training for review. Policies pertaining to students taking part in registered student groups can be found on the website on the Student Affairs Programs [website \[17\]](#).

SFA strives to ensure that all students are treated equitably and in accordance with university policies. When a student asserts that SFA has not followed university policies or wishes to file a complaint that is governed by an existing SFA policy, that student is afforded the opportunity to file a formal written complaint with the institution. SFA defines a written student complaint as a statement where a student finds something to be unsatisfactory and alleges that the dissatisfaction arises from a violation or disparate application of a university policy or written procedure. A formal written complaint must meet the following thresholds:

1. The complaint alleges a violation of a written university policy or procedure; or the complaint alleges a written university policy or procedure has been arbitrarily, capriciously, or unequally applied; and
2. The complaint has been unsuccessfully resolved through informal resolution strategies; and
3. The complaint has been communicated in writing and asserts a formal complaint is being filed (e.g., letter, memo, email).

SFA's policies and procedures for both formal, written complaints and informal complaint resolution do not differ for face-to-face and online students. All students have the opportunity to submit written student complaints via in-person delivery, hard copy mail, email, or fax. University Affairs publishes on its website the formal written student [complaint process \[18\]](#). An example of a formal complaint that was received and resolved within the past 30 days can be found [here \[19\]](#). For further discussion of SFA's formal student written complaint process, see the narrative to Standard [12.4](#).

































Students who would like their voices to be heard without going through the formal written complaint process may use [Tell Jack \[20\]](#). This program is designed for students to express any concern they may have regarding their experience at SFA. They can also use it to recognize those individuals or departments that have provided them with excellent customer service. Students may remain anonymous if they wish; however, any follow-up cannot be provided without contact information. Students who prefer to meet personally with the dean of student affairs are encouraged to call and schedule an appointment or may visit during one of the dean's weekly open office hours. It is the goal of the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs that all complaints be resolved in a timely manner. Every effort is made to acknowledge the receipt of all concerns within 48 hours. In most cases, issues are resolved within 30 days.

Other outlets for grievances include a [Hazing Hotline \(936-468-8888\) \[21\]](#) where students may report hazing incidents anonymously; a number for Human Resources where students may report



Employment Issues (936-468-2304); and [Ethics Point \(1-866-294-9539\) \[22\]](#), where students may report fraud and other ethical issues.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 10.4, Student Code of Conduct.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 2.13, Title IX.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policies of Interest Summer I 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] 2019-20 Orientation Guide.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Student Affairs Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Get Inclusive Invite.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] OIE Hold email Redacted.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Academic Programs and Policies -General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] University Policies - Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] 2019 -20 Student Athlete Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Sport Club Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Risk Management Training.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Texas Education Code Chapter 51.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policy 13.19, Risk Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 10.10, Student Organization Risk Management Training.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] SFA Policies Pertinent to Student Organizations.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Student Complaints University Affairs SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Student Complaints - Closed.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Student Complaints and Grievances - Tell Jack.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Hazing Hotline](#)
-  [\[22\] Fraud and Ethics Reporting.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 10.12, Student Travel.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 10.3, Hazing.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 13.11, Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.10, Student Records.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.13, Title-IX.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.2, Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.5, Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 4.7, Financial Aid Code of Conduct.pdf](#)



12.4 The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.

(Student complaints) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints; we follow these procedures when resolving student complaints; and we maintain a record of student complaints, accessible upon request.

Published Procedures

SFA treats all students equitably and in accordance with university policies. When a student asserts that SFA has not followed university policies or wishes to file a complaint governed by an existing SFA policy, the student has the opportunity to file a [formal written complaint \[01\]](#) with the institution. SFA defines a [written student complaint \[02\]](#) as a statement that a student finds something to be unsatisfactory and alleges that a violation or disparate application of a university policy or written procedure created the dissatisfaction. A formal written complaint must meet the following thresholds:

1. The complaint alleges a violation of a written university policy or procedure; or the complaint alleges a written university policy or procedure has been arbitrarily, capriciously, or unequally applied; and
2. The complaint has been unsuccessfully resolved through informal resolution strategies; and
3. The complaint has been communicated in writing and asserts a formal complaint is being filed (e.g., letter, memo, email).

SFA's policies and procedures for written formal complaints do not differ for face-to-face and online students. All students have the opportunity to submit written student complaints through their mySFA portal. The online form link is located on the mySFA home tab, under the university policies [section \[03\]](#). The link is included at the bottom of SFA's [homepage \[04\]](#), and on the [A-Z webpage \[05\]](#). University Affairs publishes on its website the formal written student [complaint process \[6\]](#). In addition, we notify students of complaints process through the [policies of interest email \[07\]](#) sent at the beginning of every semester.

Many policies at SFA contain formal procedures for handling student complaints. We review and revise these policies as needed every three years. All policy changes require Board of Regents approval. Formal SFA policy statements govern the vast majority of student complaints and



appeals. The following policy and procedures statements govern most formal written student complaints:

- [2.11, Nondiscrimination Policy \[08\]](#)
- [6.3, Final Course Grade Policy \[09\]](#)
- [6.19, Student Fiscal \(Financial\) Appeals Policy \[10\]](#)
- [Intercollegiate Athletics Student Grievance Procedures \[11\]](#)
- [6.6, Appeal Procedure Relating to the Provision of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy \[12\]](#)
- [2.13, Title IX Policy \[13\]](#)
- [2.10, Student Record Complaints Policy \[14\]](#)

Students filing a complaint related to situations governed by one of these policies can refer to the procedures and expectations outlined within the relevant policy statement for the appropriate steps to take. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached between the student and the university representative, or if circumstances prevent direct communication between the student and the university representative, the student can pursue the issue through the appropriate university channels.

Numerous academic policies outline grievance and/or appeal procedures for academic complaints, including, but not limited to, disputes over [academic probation and suspension \[15\]](#), [academic dishonesty \[16\]](#), [grades \[17\]](#), [satisfactory academic progress \[18\]](#), and [disability accommodations \[12\]](#). For formal written complaints not governed by SFA policy, students may file a formal written complaint by submitting a Formal Written Complaint Form located on their [mySFA portal \[03\]](#). General Counsel triages the complaints, directs them to the appropriate campus official or office for review, and directs the student to the relevant policy or procedure governing the issue of concern. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs assists students by helping them determine the nature of the complaint and/or the appropriate faculty or staff member or department to receive the [initial complaint \[02\]](#).

Prior to submitting a formal written complaint, any student who can demonstrate that they have been subject to adverse treatment due to a lack of adherence to university policy or procedure by university personnel may express dissatisfaction and seek resolution. As a first step, the student must seek to resolve the issue directly with the aggrieving university representative (e.g., staff member, faculty member, or administrator). If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached between the student and university representative, or if extenuating circumstances prevent direct communication between the student and university representative, the student should contact the university representative's direct supervisor (e.g., office supervisor, department chair, college dean). For academic matters, it may be necessary to seek resolution first with the instructor, then to the department chair, and lastly to the academic dean. For issues dealing with staff, it may be necessary to discuss the matter with the staff member, and then progress to coordinator, director, and ultimately to the divisional vice president as appropriate.

Students must file formal written complaints for grievances not specifically addressed by a policy within 30 business days of the university action creating the student's concern. Upon



submission, the formal written complaint is routed to the appropriate administrator for review. Upon receipt of the complaint, the administrator has 20 business days to notify the student in writing of its receipt. For complaints filed at the end of or between semesters, additional response time may be necessary to allow for availability of the relevant parties. When additional time is necessary, students are advised in writing of the estimated time for response within 20 business days of receipt of the complaint.

Other Complaint Channels

SFA students are also afforded complaint resolution opportunities through the EthicsPoint website. The [EthicsPoint system \[21\]](#) allows students and/or staff to make anonymous complaints that are received by the Office of Audit Services and the Office of the General Counsel.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) may investigate student complaints concerning compliance with state statutes and regulations administered by the THECB. According to THECB guidelines, prior to filing a complaint with them, SFA students must exhaust all grievances and appeal procedures established by SFA related to the [grievance \[02\]](#).

Students who would like their voices to be heard without going through the formal written complaint process may use [Tell Jack \[22\]](#). This program is designed for students to express any concern they may have regarding their experience at SFA. They can also use it to recognize those individuals or departments that have provided them with excellent customer service. Students may remain anonymous if they wish; however, a follow-up cannot be provided without contact information. Students who prefer to meet personally with the dean of student affairs are encouraged to call and schedule an appointment, or may visit during one of the dean's weekly open office hours.

Dissemination of Policies and Procedures

SFA disseminates policies and procedures relating to student complaints through a variety of venues:

A dedicated Formal Written Student Complaints [website \[01\]](#) provides guidance to students, as well as links to related policies. This website links to prominent student-accessed portions of the institutional website, including the SFA [homepage \[04\]](#), the [A-Z page \[05\]](#), the [Office of the Dean of Student Affairs page \[23\]](#), the [Tell Jack page \[22\]](#), and the University Affairs [page \[06\]](#).

All students may submit written student complaints through their mySFA portal. The online form link is located on the mySFA home tab under the university policies [section \[03\]](#).

- University Affairs publishes on its website the formal written [student complaint process \[02\]](#). A link is included at the bottom of the SFA [homepage \[04\]](#) and on the [A-Z webpage under complaints \[05\]](#).



- Each semester, all students receive an [e-mail \[24\]](#) from the Office of Community Standards providing information about relevant policies and including information about the formal written complaint process.
- Each semester, all students receive an [e-mail \[25\]](#) from the vice president for university affairs with information about the university's non-discrimination statement and sexual harassment policy, as well as instructions on how to file a complaint.
- The [Student Handbook \[26\]](#), which includes pertinent policies and procedures, is available both in print and online and disseminated on the University Affairs [website \[06\]](#). It is also available on the [Office of the Dean of Student Affairs website \[23\]](#) and the [Orientation Programs Guide \[27\]](#) located on the [Orientation webpage \[28\]](#).
- All university policies with prescribed complaint procedures are available online via the [University Policies website \[29\]](#).
- Both the [Undergraduate \[30\]](#) and [Graduate \[31\]](#) General Bulletins reference specific policies.

Student Written Complaint

The following [examples \[19\]](#) of written student complaints demonstrate that SFA follows university procedures all the way through to resolution. A graduate student submitted the complaint example using our Formal Student Complaint web page. This complaint concerned a perceived violation of SFA [Policy 13.14, Parking Services Regulations \[20\]](#). The student had problems associated with obtaining a university-parking permit in a timely manner, which resulted in the student receiving a traffic ticket. After becoming frustrated and not following all of the procedures described in SFA Policy 13.14 and being unsatisfied with the results of the first appeal, the student filed a formal written complaint using our online formal complaint web page [\[01, 02\]](#) to resolve the grievance. Following established procedures, once the student completed the online form, the General Counsel received the complaint and electronically routed it to the Chief of Police for action. The Chief of Police investigated the matter and was able to resolve the complaint by approving the citation appeal and discussing improvements to parking processes and procedures with the aggrieved student. The case was resolved nine days after submission.

The second example involves a student's appeal of a final course grade (SFA [Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Policy \[9\]](#)). The student initially appealed the grade with the instructor of record. The instructor denied the appeal. Our policy states that if the dispute is not resolved, the student may appeal to the academic unit head. In this case, the student did not contact the department chair, but the student's mother did. (The student has a FERPA release on file with the Registrar - see [Example 2 \[19\]](#).) The department chair spoke with the student about the circumstances and contacted the associate dean of the college. The associate dean sent the student an email explaining the final course grade appeal process in accordance with SFA Policy 6.3 and informed the student that if the student interpreted the department chair's correspondence with the mother as a denial of the appeal, the student could appeal that decision with the associate dean. Subsequently, the student submitted a formal final grade appeal with the associate dean. The associate dean started the investigation upon receipt of the student's appeal and rendered a final decision eight days after the student's initial appeal.




















Both examples demonstrate that SFA not only follows procedures to resolve complaints, but also assists students in filing their complaints when the students inadvertently skip a procedural step when seeking redress of complaints.


















Maintenance of Complaint Records

We currently compile a [log \[33\]](#) of relevant data associated with written complaints that is stored on our secure servers. The General Counsel reviews the log to confirm that issues have been resolved and identify any patterns or trends related to complaints. General Counsel sends potential concerns to the department head and/or division vice president for review. Records retention at SFA is decentralized. According to SFA [Policy 2.9, Records Management \[32\]](#), unit heads manage university records, including correspondence and evidence associated with written complaints. Retention of student complaints documentation is governed by our [Records Retention Schedule \[34\]](#) and varies by type. The consolidated log and unit level records are both available to SACSCOC as required. As our formal written complaint portal matures, we will maintain the written complaints, associated documentation, and responses in the database associated with the portal. Currently, we are in a transitional state and the log consists of a combination of workflow entry from the portal and manual archival entry generated by annual data submissions.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Complaint homepage screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Formal Written Complaint website screenshots.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] mySFA location of complaint form.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Bottom of SFA Homepage.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] A - Z Webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] University Affairs Homepage with Complaint Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policies of Interest Spring 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 6.19, Student Fiscal Appeals.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] SFA Athletics Policy Manual 2019 20v 2.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 6.6, Appeal Procedure Relating to the Provision of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 2.13, Title IX.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 2.10, Student Records.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policy 6.4, Academic Probation Suspension and Reinstatement for Undergraduates.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 4.1, Student Academic Dishonesty.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Policy 6.3, Final Course Grade Appeals by Students.pdf](#)



-  [\[18\] Policy 6.16, Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Student Complaints - Closed.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Policy 13.14, Parking Services Regulations.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Ethics Point.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Tell Jack.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Dean of Student Affairs Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Policies of Interest Spring 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Student Sexual Harassment Information Email.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Student Handbook Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Orientation Guide-web.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Orientation Webpages.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Policy Manual Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Undergraduate Bulletin Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Graduate Bulletin Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Policy 2.9, Records Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Student Complaint Log.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] SFA Records Retention Schedule.pdf](#)



12.5 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data.
(*Student records*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. To ensure compliance with state and federal laws, the university grants to students the right of access to their education records, protects students from illegal use of their education records, and restricts the disclosure of the social security account number of students. The university is required by the State of Texas to comply with [Texas Administrative Code Section 202 \(TAC 202\) \[01\]](#), which establishes security standards. SFA also follows all regulations regarding the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) \[02\]](#) to protect the privacy of student education records. The policies, procedures, and details regarding the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records in this response apply to all students, including dual credit, distance education, and off-site location students.

Types of Student Records and Custodians

Access to student records is subject to the approval of the custodian of records in each department. The university registrar and executive director of enrollment management serve as the custodians of academic records for the university.

The table below outlines the types of student records maintained by the university and the custodial responsibility for specific records.

Type of Record	Content	Custodian
Academic	Grades, classification, academic standing, application for admission and admissions scores.	Registrar, Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Financial	Amount of financial assistance given by university and type of assistance.	Director of Financial Aid, Controller
Disciplinary	Nature of offense and type of university action.	Director of Community Standards
Placement	Academic record and documents of recommendations.	Director of Center for Career and Professional Development
Health	Medical history to include all treatment by university physicians.	Director of Health Services
Counseling	Counseling sessions.	Director of Counseling Services

Table 1 – 12.5 – Student Record Custodians



The following policies specifically apply to the keeping of student records:

- [Student Records \(2.10\) \[03\]](#)
- [Access to University Records \(2.1\) \[04\]](#)
- [Records Management \(2.9\) \[05\]](#)
- [Gramm Leach Bliley Act Required Information Security \(14.4\) \[06\]](#)
- [Information Security Management \(14.1\) \[07\]](#)
- [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources \(14.2\) \[08\]](#)
- [Identity Theft Protection \(14.5\) \[09\]](#)
- [Information Security Incident Response and Reporting \(14.14\) \[10\]](#)

Inspection of Education Records

According to university [policy 2.10, Student Records \[03\]](#), each student has the right to

- receive a list of the types of education records maintained by the university;
- inspect and review the contents of his/her records, excluding the exceptions included in this policy;
- obtain copies of his/her records at personal expense if failure to provide such copy would effectively prevent the student from inspecting or reviewing the record;
- receive explanations and interpretations of his/her records; and,
- request a hearing to challenge the contents of his/her records.

Students should submit to the record custodian or an appropriate university staff person a written request that identifies as precisely as possible the record or records the student wants to inspect. There are multiple record custodians, including the Registrar's Office, faculty, department administration, and college administration. The record custodian or an appropriate university staff person—defined by [policy 2.10 \[03\]](#) as a person employed by the university in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position—makes the needed arrangements for access as promptly as possible and notifies the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Access must be given in 45 days or less from the receipt of the request.

When a record contains information about more than one student, the student may inspect and review only the records that relate to him/her.

Disclosure of Education Records

According to [policy 2.10 \[03\]](#), the university will disclose information from a student's education records only with the written consent of the student, except in certain situations as outlined in the policy (i.e., school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the records; officials of another school, upon request, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll; certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the comptroller general, and state and local educational authorities, in connection with certain state or federally supported education programs; etc.). All students are



subject to this policy, including dual-credit students, who are required to sign an additional FERPA form [11].

[Proof of status \[12\]](#) from the requesting individual or organization is required to gain access to education records.

Protection of Confidential Student Records

Access to information is governed by template approval to ensure that the employee only has access to the information that is required for their function. University [policy 2.10 \[03\]](#) requires that all university employees, including student employees, with access to student education records will annually complete Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) [training \[13\]](#). Initial training must be completed no later than thirty (30) days from the start of employment. The Registrar's Office conducts additional trainings for departments that are particularly involved in student information areas, such as Residence Life and Orientation. All staff of the Registrar's office must review FERPA and sign a [statement \[14\]](#) acknowledging their understanding of the issue.

In addition to FERPA training and in accordance with TAC 202, all SFA faculty, staff, student workers, and business partners with access to SFA's IT systems are required to take SFA's Security and Awareness training. SFA's Information Technology Services' (ITS) Policy Handbook, [Policy 14.1.4 Security Awareness and Training \[15\]](#), states that the training "addresses roles, responsibilities, management commitment, coordination among organizational entities, and compliance. The training also includes general information security training, role based training, system specific training, and general awareness."

According to the policy, "All Faculty/Staff employees are automatically enrolled in the 'Security Basic' training located under the Employee tab in mySFA. Training must be completed each calendar year, with a minimum passing score of 80 to be considered complete." All students are enrolled in the training. However, only student employees that are "actively employed" by SFA as a Graduate Assistant, Work Study, or student worker are required to complete the training.



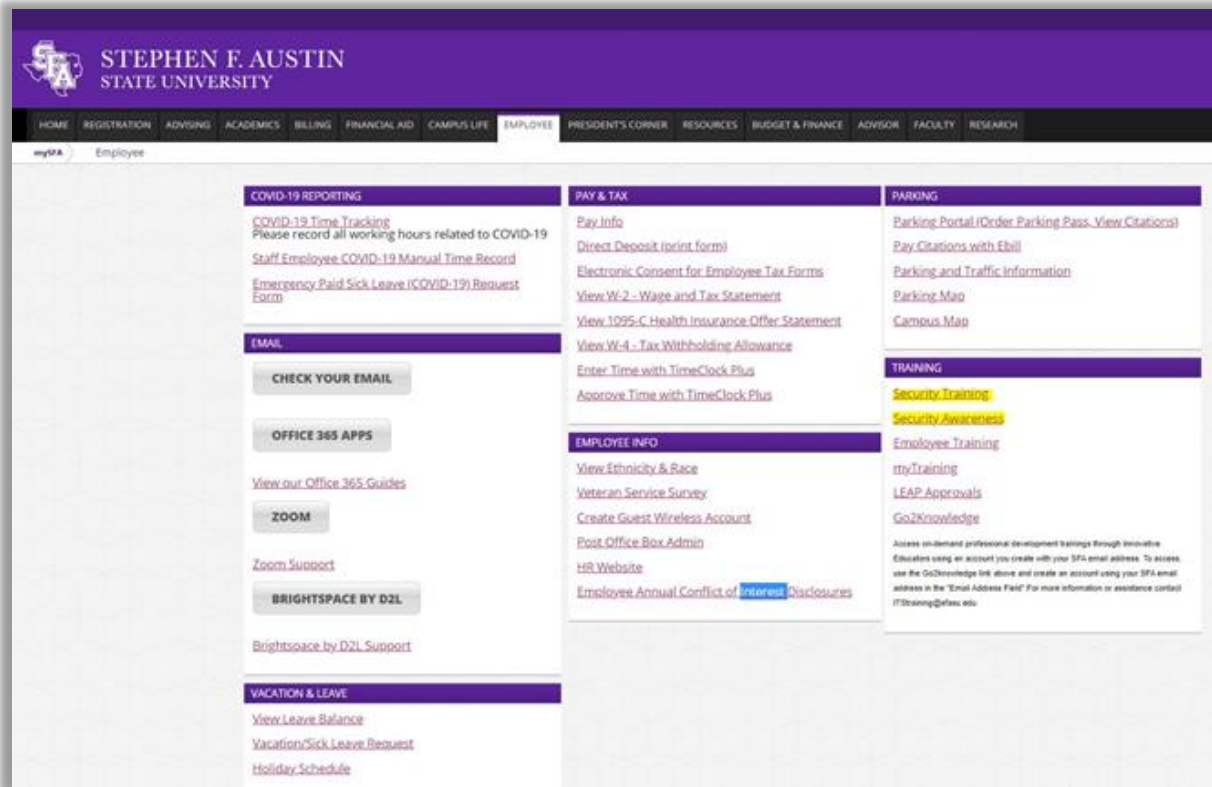


Figure 1 – 12.5 – “mySFA Employee Training Tab.”

Directory Information

According to [policy 2.10 \[03\]](#), the university designates the following items as public directory information:

- name;
- all addresses, including university issued email addresses;
- all telephone numbers;
- major field of study;
- academic classification;
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- dates of attendance and enrollment status;
- degrees and awards received;
- previous schools attended;
- photograph; and
- class roster.



Integrity of Student Records

The integrity of student records is ensured by maintaining the records as originally submitted by the originator. Grades are entered by faculty through the student information system (SIS). Any change to the original grade is initiated by the professor, approved by their chair and dean, and noted in their record in the SIS. Original documents signed by the students, such as add/drop and withdrawal forms are scanned and housed with the students' records in the university's imaging system.

Disclosure of Social Security Account Number

Most transactions on the SFA campus and through the university's on-line services can be completed using a Campus Identification Number (CID), which is a unique number assigned to students by the Office of Admissions. This number is also imprinted in the student identification card in lieu of a social security number. Use of social security account numbers (SSAN) is normally for confirmation of identity.

Under the mandatory category, the SSAN is used to verify the identity of the student, and as an identifier to record necessary data accurately for activities such as admissions; housing and food services; determining and recording eligibility for student financial assistance to include loans, scholarships, and grants; student employment; recording entitlement to and disbursement and repayment of loans; recording entitlement to and payment of scholarships, grant allowances, and official student travel and per diem; determining and recording eligibility for and participation in athletic and similar events; and other related requirements which may arise.

Student Records Audit

The university is required by the State of Texas to comply with [Texas Administrative Code Section 202 \(TAC 202\) \[01\]](#), which establishes security standards, including measures to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of university records and maintain special security measures to protect and back up data. The university's [security program \[16\]](#) consists of policies, procedures, training, and controls to protect university data. Internal audit tests compliance with the TAC 202 standards every other year and performs other audits that relate to security, confidentiality, and integrity. The most recent [audit \[17\]](#) for TAC 202 was conducted as of December 31, 2018. The audit found the university to be generally in compliance.

Disaster/Business Continuity Plan

The University has established an [Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\) \[18\]](#) and [Business Continuity Plan \[19\]](#) to ensure that records will remain safe in the event of any natural or man-made disasters. According to the EOP, Annex C. [Essential Records Management \[18\]](#) covers the identification of essential records, the protection of essential records, and training and maintenance for essential records. Furthermore, "a training program is conducted by the chief information officer (CIO) for all ITS staff, to include periodic briefings to managers about the



ITS and Telecom Disaster Data Recovery plans” and the plans’ “relationship to their essential records and business needs. The ITS staff training focuses on identifying, inventorying, protecting, storing, accessing, and updating essential records. Training records for essential records are maintained by the CIO.”

Notification

Undergraduate students are notified about the university’s use and release of student information each year in the [General Bulletin \[20\]](#). Graduate students are notified in the [Graduate Bulletin \[21\]](#).

Data Back-up

All critical infrastructure servers and other servers requiring backup are archived to disk, tape, or cloud according to a schedule. Critical infrastructure backups are written to disk nightly. Disk backups are written to tape monthly. Large data stores that are too big for disk backups are written to tape at least once per month. Tape backups are sent to a bank vault, couriered by a member of the university police department, as needed. Tape backups are kept in the Boynton vault for three months.

Security Breach

The Incident Response and Reporting [Policy 14.1.9 of the ITS Policy Handbook \[15\]](#) outlines the characteristics of severity in security incidents, the actions taken depending on the severity of the breach, the incident manager, and the persons to notify in the event of a security incident.






















Incident Severity	Characteristics (one or more condition present determines the severity)	Response Time	Incident Manager	Who to Notify
High	1. Significant adverse impact on a large number of systems and/or people 2. Potential large financial risk or legal liability to the University 3. Threatens confidential data 4. Adversely impacts a critical enterprise system or service	Immediate	Chief Information Security Officer or an Executive Incident Management Team	1. Information Security Officer 2. Chief Information Officer 3. Department administrator 4. Department head 5. SIRT representative 6. Departmental security contact 7. Technical support for affected device
Medium	1. Adversely impacts a moderate number of systems and/or people 2. Adversely impacts a non-critical enterprise system or service	4 hours	Appointed by unit head	1. Information Security Officer 2. Chief Information Officer 3. Department administrator 4. Department head 5. SIRT representative
Low	1. Adversely impacts a very small number of non-critical individual systems, services, or people	Next business day	Technical support for affected device	1. Information Security Officer 2. Chief Information Officer 3. Department administrator
N/A	"Not Applicable" - used for suspicious activities which upon investigation are determined not to be an IT security incident.			

Table 2 – 12.5 – “Incident Response Table.” ITS Policy Handbook, Revised October 2, 2018.



SFA protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data by following federal and state guidelines and institutional policies relevant to these issues.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Texas Administrative Code 202 Security Control Standards Catalog.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA FERPA Brochure.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Policy 2.10, Student Records.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 2.1, Access to University Records.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Policy 2.9, Records Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 14.4, Gramm Leach Bliley Act Required Information Security.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Policy 14.1, Information Security Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Policy 14.5, Identity Theft Prevention.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 14.14, Information Security Incident Response and Reporting.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Dual Credit Student Agreement Jan2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Certification of Dependency Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Employee FERPA training.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Employee FERPA Statement.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] ITS Policy Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] SFA Data Standards.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] SFA 19-IX TAC 202 Information Security Audit Final Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Emergency Operations Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] 2020 SFA Business Continuity Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)



12.6 The institution provides information and guidance to help student borrowers understand how to manage their debt and repay their loans.
(*Student debt*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is committed to helping student borrowers better understand how to manage their student debt and repay their student loans.

Managing Debt

Budgeting and Student Loan Education Prior to Enrollment

The [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships \[01\]](#) requires all first-time loan borrowers to complete entrance [loan counseling \[02\]](#). The counseling provides students with general information related to loan borrowing and repayment material.

Financial Aid and Scholarships and Student Affairs provide information concerning debt management to students during the summer [orientation programs \[03\]](#). These [presentations \[04\]](#) are provided twice during each of the five orientation sessions held in the summer as an optional presentation for interested students and parents/guardians. The presentation presents the university definition of financial literacy and information on campus resources. Additionally, the presentation discusses helpful tips on how to plan and budget during students' first year on campus. The presentation learning outcomes include having participants learn and identify campus resources related to financial literacy, and having them learn how to have open dialogue about budget planning and financial forecasting within their family structure prior to attending the university.

Managing Debt Programming Initiatives

In addition to the resources provided by Financial Aid and Scholarships, the Nelson Rusche College of Business (NRCOB), and the Office of Student Affairs promote campus programming initiatives and one-on-one financial planning with trained student financial advisors through the [Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors program \[05\]](#), created in 2014. The Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors promote financial literacy and smart money management to SFA students and the East Texas community through one-on-one appointments, presentations, and workshops. Topics covered include budgeting, credit cards, debt management, insurance, identity theft, fraud prevention, investing, savings, retirement, banking, and paying for college. In addition, the Marleta Chadwick student leaders manage a social media platform through Twitter where they interact with current and potential students (*Twitter: @SFA_sfinadv*). The interactive dialogue helps answer students' questions and provide resources to navigate common financial issues within a medium that college aged students connect with daily. In addition to



providing links and building relationships, this online presence greatly impacts the knowledge of the program as a campus resource for students.

Managing Debt and Loan Repayment

Debt Letters

In order to assist students in making informed decisions about their student loan borrowing, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships sends a [loan debt letter \[06\]](#) each spring. This letter provides personalized loan information for each student outlining their current loan debt, estimated interest rates, and repayment amounts. Additionally, the office provides each awarded student an institutional College Financing Plan ([formerly known as the Federal Shopping Sheet \[07\]](#)). This document provides students with institution specific data such as loan repayment rates, default rates, median borrowing rates, and student specific financial aid data. The university also requires all loan borrowers to complete exit [loan counseling \[08\]](#).

Workshops/Classrooms

During the spring semester, the Marleta Chadwick program hosts a workshop titled “Back to Basics,” which discusses money management and budgeting. The Marleta Chadwick program serves as a campus resource for the freshman seminar (SFAS 1101) classes. Instructors invite the student financial advisers to give presentations on a variety of financial literacy topics, including budget management, savings, and managing debt. All undergraduate, graduate, dual credit, and online students are able to use services from this center. Enrollment data for each course for the past three years is listed in the table below.

	SFA 101-Number of Students Enrolled	SFA 301-Number of Students Enrolled	Total
Fall 2017	1236	19	1255
Spring 2018	41	0	41
Fall 2018	1007	21	1028
Spring 2019	31	0	31
Fall 2019	1067	17	1084
Spring 2020	31	0	31

Table 1 – 12.6 – Back to Basics Financial Literacy Enrollment

The Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors program also hosts workshops and presentations to groups like SFAS 1101 (Freshman seminar) and the [NRCOB Passport program \[09\]](#), a student success program especially designed for business majors. The advisors host educational events during a Money Smart Week, which includes a campus wide event called [Financial Reality Fair \[10\]](#) hosted in partnership with a local credit union and the Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD). During check-in at the Financial Reality Fair, students are given a budget sheet that is associated with a career the participant chooses. Salaries



are based upon research conducted by the CCPD. Students then visit each table and make decisions for each category in their budget. Table options include:

- Savings
- Housing
- Student Loans
- Transportation
- Insurance
- Utilities
- Cable/Internet
- Cell Phone
- Meals and Dining Out
- Clothing
- Salon/Spa
- Fitness
- Pets
- Technology
- Entertainment

During this real-world exercise, financial coaching is provided by the Chadwick Financial Advisors. If the student is “over budget,” the student has to go back to the tables to make different choices to get within budget, or visit a table about finding a “side gig” to gain additional income. There are often consequences, such as a penalty fee for changing their gym membership. Students also receive a copy of the [Building Wealth Handbook \[11\]](#) from the Dallas Federal Reserve.

Under the direction of the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, an online financial literacy training program, called [CashCourse \[12\]](#), is offered to all students. Topics in CashCourse include training on how to make appropriate decisions about personal finance such as investing, insurance, paying for college, budgeting, retirement, and tax planning. Faculty and staff may also use this platform to assist students who may need assistance with money management and budgeting.

Finally, in fall 2016, the university developed a course for transfer students. The SFAS 3101 course provides the transfer population with curriculum related to financial wellness and student debt. SFAS 3101 courses enrolled 19 students in fall 2017, 21 students in fall 2018, and 17 students in fall 2019.

Reducing Student Debt: SFA’s QEP




As part of the university’s decennial accreditation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the university is asked to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is designed to focus the institution on an issue we consider to be important to student learning and/or success. After a selection process spanning the past year, throughout which input was solicited from students, faculty, staff, and alumni through multiple town hall meetings and surveys, the QEP Topic Selection Team—which is



comprised of representatives of all of the above groups—recommended that our next QEP address [Reducing Student Debt \[13\]](#). This is discussed in more detail in the narrative for Standard [7.2](#).

As detailed in the this response, SFA is committed to helping student borrowers better understand how to manage their student debt and repay their student loans.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Loans Financial Aid.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Entrance Counseling.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Student Schedule 2019 Orientation Schedule.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Financial Literacy Summer Orientation Presentations.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Marleta Chadwick Student Financial Advisors.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Student Debt Letter.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Shopping Sheet.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Exit Counseling.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Career Success Passport NRCOB.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Financial Reality Fair Flyer.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Building Wealth Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] CashCourse.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] QEP Announcement.pdf](#)



Section 13: Financial and Physical Resources

13.1 The institution has sound financial resources and a demonstrated stable financial base to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.
(*Financial resources*) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The mission of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is to provide “excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service.” The university has a sound financial base and has demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

SFA follows common reporting and budgeting guidelines established by the State of Texas and is subject to audit standards. As an agency of the State of Texas, the university prepares financial statements that are included in the state’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which is audited by the Texas State Auditor’s Office. The university has a fiscal year end of August 31, which it shares with other state agencies and state universities of higher education.

Following university [policy 3.2, Annual Budget Preparation \[01\]](#), SFA develops its annual operating budget in accordance with guidelines approved by the university’s Board of Regents. The guidelines are prepared by the SFA budget office with input from the president, the provost, the vice president of finance and administration, and the vice president of university affairs. SFA’s annual operating budget is approved and adopted by the Board of Regents.

As an agency of the State of Texas, SFA receives a portion of its funding as an appropriation from the state. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) compiles data from public institutions in Texas regarding tuition and funding support through the Texas Legislature. The THECB reviews student data and makes recommendations regarding funding of higher education to the Texas Legislature. The Texas Legislature then determines the amount of funding to be appropriated to support institutions of higher education in Texas. The Texas Legislature convenes on a biennial basis, and during the legislative session passes an appropriations bill for the upcoming biennium. Formula funding is the major part of the state’s higher education appropriations. It is designed to fund faculty salaries, instructional support, research enhancements, library resources, institutional support, and departmental operating expenses. The instructional and operations formula is driven totally by credit hours. The appropriations bill serves as an important basis for the budget guidelines established by SFA.

Each operating entity within SFA is responsible for developing its own detailed operating budget. Each entity has a department head who leads the budget development process on behalf of their department, who then in turn submits it to the appropriate vice president or the president, who ultimately approves the entity’s budget and submits it to the budget office for approval.



Development of the SFA annual operating budget is guided by the strategic plan, which provides purposeful direction for the university. There are seven aspirational statements in our [vision statement \[02\]](#), as developed in the fall 2014 and the spring 2015. Two of those statements are to achieve financial sustainability without burdening our students and to invest in our faculty and staff. In response, the university created two committees, one to address providing a quality enhancement program (QEP) to address student debt, and the other to address attracting and supporting high quality faculty and staff (ASHQFS). The latter committee surveyed the employees in 2016 to gauge priorities. The results of the [survey \[03\]](#) indicated that the top two priorities are professional development and initiatives for employees and their families. The ASHQFS committee recommended that the task of providing adequate funds for professional development should be a priority of the deans and their department chairs.

The ASHQFS committee also revamped the employee scholarship plan that limited benefits to \$3,000 per employee per fiscal year. In fiscal year 2020, the Employee Scholarship Plan was replaced with the [Lumberjack Education Assistance Program \(LEAP\) \[04\]](#). The LEAP plan limits employees who participate by enrolling in graduate or undergraduate courses to \$5,250 per calendar year. The LEAP plan also allows dependents and/or a spouse of the employee to participate by enrolling in undergraduate courses. All mandatory tuition and fees are exempted, except statutory tuition.

The QEP committee considered many ideas to improve student success and decided that addressing student debt would be the top priority. To keep student debt in check, the committee focused on tuition and fee plans that would be easier for families to budget, that would incentivize students to enroll in more hours, and that would eliminate numerous course and laboratory fees that are charged in addition to the published tuition and fee rates. Previously, the university charged students per credit hour up to eighteen hours. To lay the groundwork for the QEP, tuition and fee tables were developed for undergraduate Texas resident students offering flat rates for all mandatory tuition and fees at twelve or more hours, so that a student taking eighteen hours would be charged the same as a student taking twelve hours. An annual plan and a four-year fixed-price [plan \[05\]](#) were presented to and adopted by the Board of Regents to begin fiscal year 2021 (the 2020-21 academic year). The Board also eliminated all course and lab fees. A differential tuition was created to replace the fees that were eliminated. The differential tuition will also begin with the 2021 fiscal year. See the [Board or Regents Meeting Minutes \[06\]](#).

The university implemented the aforementioned programs to increase enrollment and to incentivize students and employees to enroll in more courses. The new LEAP plan began during the summer term of 2020 and has already proved to be very popular; it is expected that this action will be a very successful recruiting tool. The enrollment trends depicted in the next table indicate that overall enrollment is flat. However, semester credit hours paint a less sanguine picture.



Enrollment by School Fall Semesters 2015-2019

College	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
Business	1,787	1,848	1,890	1,913
Education	4,076	3,968	3,927	3,609
Fine Arts	919	920	962	978
Forestry and Agriculture	768	800	826	819
Liberal and Applied Arts	2,724	2,672	3,113	3,364
Sciences and Mathematics	2,468	2,406	2,426	2,286
Total	12,742	12,614	13,144	12,969

Table 1 – 13.1 – Enrollment by School Fall Semesters 2015-2019

Semester Credit Hours by School and Academic Year 2015-2019

College	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
	(FY 2017)	(FY 2018)	(FY 2019)	(FY 2020)
Business	38,370	39,754	41,027	42,303
Education	82,729	80,946	78,547	76,500
Fine Arts	26,786	26,126	26,309	27,194
Forestry and Agriculture	12,960	13,222	13,575	13,858
Liberal and Applied Arts	100,778	100,569	100,319	97,594
Sciences and Mathematics	68,259	68,381	68,227	67,277
Total	329,882	328,998	328,004	324,726

Table 2 – 13.1 – Semester Credit Hours by School and Academic Year 2015-2019

Over the past four years, enrollment has only increased 1.78 percent while semester credit hours has decreased 1.56 percent. The finance division realized at the start of the 2019-20 fiscal year that revenue projections were going to fall short due to the decrease in enrollment and the decrease in semester credit hours. Budget adjustments would be necessary along with the revision of the next fiscal year’s projections.

The annual operating budget development process typically begins in early spring and is completed by August, prior to the start of the fiscal year on September 1. The budget development process is coordinated by the [Budget Office \[07\]](#).

In the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters, as mentioned above, SFA experienced a slight decrease in enrollment. Student tuition and fee revenue was budgeted conservatively for fiscal year 2020. However, statutory and/or board authorized tuition and fee exemptions created a net revenue shortfall. (See [Tuition and Fee 10-year history \[08\]](#).) The university took specific cost



reduction and/or revenue enhancement activities to offset the revenue shortfall. As a result of cost reduction/containment efforts, the university's recent operating margins have been stable.

The university's financial information as provided in the annual financial reports for fiscal years 2017-2019 is summarized in the table below. Net assets have decreased from \$146.6 million in FY 2017 to \$67.3 million in FY 2019, a decrease of 46% ([AFR 2017 \[09\]](#), [AFR 2018 \[10\]](#), [AFR 2019 \[11\]](#)). This decrease is attributed to the reporting requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 68 and No. 75. In 2015, GASB began requiring disclosures related to defined-benefit pension plans for state and local governments and their related entities. GASB Statement No. 68 requires recognition of the university's contractual contribution requirements to cost-sharing plans. The effect of these requirements increased pension expense and established a net pension liability through a restatement to the university's net assets. In 2018, GASB Statement No. 75 established the same requirements related to other post-employment benefits. The increase in long-term liabilities from FY2017 to FY2019 is directly related to the increase in pension liabilities related to GASB Statement Nos.68 and 75. These pension liabilities accounted for sixty-five percent of the \$152.2 million increase in long-term liabilities during the three-year span. (See [AUNA Summary \[12\]](#).)

Operating revenues have increased 2.6 percent from FY2017 to FY2019, while operating expenses have increased 18.3 percent. (See Financial Summary below.) Although the university began a utility savings program in FY2016 and had a decrease in utility costs in the three-year span from FY2017 to FY2019, the commitment to increase salaries offset any utility cost savings. Over the past five years, salaries and wages have increased 11.2 percent. (See [Salary History and Trend \[13\]](#).) In addition, the onboarding of the \$42 million state-of-the-art Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) building added operational costs of at least \$2 million.

In FY2018, SFA's Advancement Office began a five-year capital fundraising campaign to coincide with the one hundred-year anniversary of the university.



Financial Summary 2017-2019

	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
Change in Net Position	\$20,377,515	\$11,223,741	\$(21,760,511)
Beginning Net Position	\$126,802,798	\$146,610,287	\$101,044,779
Restatements	\$(570,026)	\$(56,789,248)	
Ending Net Position	\$ 146,610,287	\$ 101,044,779	\$ 79,284,268
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 55,345,049	\$ 1,374,727	\$ (26,696,073)
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 24,399,207	\$ 26,104,646	\$ 26,585,971
Permanently Restricted	\$ 5,986,858	\$ 6,019,492	\$ 6,038,068
Capital Assets, net	\$ 60,879,173	\$ 67,545,915	\$ 73,356,302
Total Net Assets	\$ 146,610,287	\$ 101,044,780	\$ 79,284,268
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$55,345,049	\$1,374,727	\$(26,696,073)
Add Compensable Leave	\$4,377,849	\$4,684,167	\$4,965,246
Add Liability Pension GASB 68	\$28,553,006	\$26,521,381	\$64,565,433
Add Deferred Inflows	\$10,653,756	\$22,283,595	\$58,851,752
Less Deferred Outflows	\$(14,758,104)	\$(13,847,599)	\$(141,824,001)
Add back OPEB liability GASB 75	-	\$48,756,360	\$127,450,997 -
Adjusted Unrestricted Net Assets	\$84,171,556	\$89,772,631	\$87,313,354
Current Assets	\$ 163,179,103	\$ 117,502,032	\$ 164,594,395
Current Liabilities – excl. current portion of long term debt	\$101,982,605	\$104,893,243	\$111,231,717
Current Ratio	1.60	1.12	1.48
Total Operating Revenues	\$138,685,195	\$136,843,883	\$142,316,719
Add Non-operating revenues/(expenses)	\$81,053,916	\$83,112,468	\$79,508,913
Less Operating Expenses	\$(216,292,075)	\$(221,676,811)	\$(255,807,839)
	\$3,447,035	\$(1,720,460)	\$(33,982,207)
Add back Depreciation	\$16,264,083	\$16,440,353	\$18,711,720
Operational Bottom Line	\$19,711,119	\$14,719,893	\$ (15,270,487)



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
Compliance Certification

	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
Cash Flow from Operations	\$(58,533,798)	\$(44,030,593)	\$(36,953,381)
Noncapital cash flows	\$75,126,825	\$74,258,104	\$49,322,334
Cash flow related to Operations	\$16,593,026	\$30,227,510	\$12,368,953
State Appropriations	\$51,898,574	\$51,652,473	\$51,627,619
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$100,831,514	\$67,997,897	\$110,313,647
Accounts Payable	\$17,178,173	\$17,333,018	\$18,264,465
State Capital Appropriations	\$11,636,163	\$11,636,163	\$11,636,163
Capital Gifts	\$692,625	\$693,178	\$11,155
Acquisition of capital assets	\$(14,205,874)	\$(36,383,084)	\$(15,021,455)
Principal Paid on capital debt	\$(15,367,950)	\$(13,391,103)	\$(13,549,367)
Interest paid on capital debt	\$(4,899,033)	\$(2,510,119)	\$(7,229,175)
Net Cash Capital and Related Financing	\$(22,144,070)	\$(39,954,965)	\$(24,152,679)
Tuition, gross	\$115,272,064	\$115,572,754	\$124,411,726
Less Scholarship Allowances	\$(22,141,915)	\$(32,472,265)	\$(36,469,053)
Tuition, net	\$93,130,149	\$83,100,489	\$87,942,673

Table 3 – 13.1 – Financial Summary 2017-2019

Student tuition and fee revenue increased \$9.1 million from FY2017 to FY2019. However, with an increase in tuition discounts of 20.3%, there was only a 3.5 percent increase in net tuition and fees of \$2.98 million over the same time period. The State of Texas sets statutory tuition rates, which are currently capped at \$50.00 per semester credit hour. Additionally, by statute the university can charge designated tuition. These designated tuition rates are currently not capped but did not change over the past three years. The Board of Regents also approves fee changes, and in [FY2018 \[14\]](#), four mandatory fees were combined in an effort to minimize the number of fees that are charged to the students. The combined fee was then increased \$24 per SCH for FY2019. In [FY2020 \[6\]](#), hundreds of course fees and lab fees were eliminated and replaced with a differential tuition semester charge. The Board approved a differential of \$100 for undergraduate and \$75 for graduate students. These new rates will be effective in FY2021. The provost in a method to be determined, although enrollment by college has been discussed, will allocate the differential tuition.


















The university's Educational and General (E&G) budget has been consistent the last three fiscal years. Total E&G budget for FY 2017 was \$71 million, FY 2018 \$69.8 million, FY 2019 \$71



million. (SFA Annual Budgets: [FY 2017 \[15\]](#), [FY 2018 \[16\]](#), [FY 2019 \[17\]](#).) These budget amounts coincide with the funding received from the State Legislative Revenue.

In summary, SFA continually evaluates and adapts its financial operations to support its mission. The institution has adequate physical resources to support its mission, and information related to physical resources is covered in detail in the response to standard [13.7](#).

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Policy 3.2, Annual Budget Preparation.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Vision Statement SFA Envisioned SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] ASHQFS survey and conclusion.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Lumberjack Education Assistance Program \(LEAP\) Benefits for Faculty & Staff.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Tuition and Fee Plan for 2021.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Meeting Minutes January 26-28, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Budget Background and Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Tuition & Fees 10 yr. History.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] AFR 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] AFR 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] AFR 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] AUNA Summary.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Salary History and Trend.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Board meeting minutes USF.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Annual Budget 2016-2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Annual Budget 2017-2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Annual Budget 2018-2019.pdf](#)



13.2 The member institution provides the following financial statements:

(a) an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system-wide or statewide audit) for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide.

(b) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year.

(c) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board.

(Financial documents) [CR]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) annually undergoes an institutional audit as part of a statewide audit prepared by the State Auditor's Office (SAO), the Texas governmental auditing agency, using the appropriate audit guide. The SAO issued an unmodified audit opinion on the State of Texas' Consolidated Financial Annual Report, which includes all state agencies.

Institutional Audit

An external accounting firm will issue a review of SFA's FY 2019 and FY 2020 basic financial statements including a Statement of Net Assets, a Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets, a Statement of Cash Flows, and the related Notes to the Financial Statements. For the FY 2019 AFR, a schedule detailing the Unrestricted Net Assets Ending Position (UNAEP) is included, which contains adjustments to remove the effect of the GASB Statements 68 and 75 on the university's net position.



Unrestricted Net Assets, Adjusted

	2017	2018	2019
Change in Net Position	\$20,377,515	\$11,223,741	\$(21,760,512)
Beginning Net Position	\$126,802,798	\$146,610,287	\$101,044,780
Restatements	\$(570,026)	\$(56,789,248)	0
Ending Net Position	\$146,610,287	\$101,044,780	\$79,284,268
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$55,345,049	\$1,374,727	\$(26,696,073)
Temporarily Restricted	\$24,399,207	\$26,104,646	\$26,585,971
Permanently Restricted	\$5,986,858	\$6,019,492	\$6,038,068
Capital Assets, Net	\$60,879,173	\$67,545,915	\$73,356,302
Total Net Assets	\$146,610,287	\$101,044,780	\$79,284,268
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$55,345,049	\$1,374,727	\$(26,696,073)
Add: Compensable Leave	\$4,377,849	\$4,684,167	\$4,965,246
Add: Pension Liability	\$28,553,006	\$26,521,381	\$64,565,433
Add: Deferred Inflows	\$10,653,756	\$22,283,595	\$58,851,752
Less: Deferred Outflows	\$(14,758,104)	\$(13,847,599)	\$(141,824,001)
Add: OPEB Liability	0	\$48,756,360	\$127,450,997
Adjusted Unrestricted Net Assets	\$84,171,556	\$89,772,631	\$87,313,354

Table 1 – 13.2 – Unrestricted Net Assets, Unadjusted

The financial statements will be reviewed in accordance with standards within SSARS (Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services) issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Annual Financial Report

The university prepares its financial statements in compliance with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts’ Reporting Requirements for Annual Financial Reports of State Agencies and Universities. Due to the statewide requirements embedded in [Governmental Accounting](#)



[Standards Board \(GASB\) Statement No. 34, Basic Financial Statements – and Management’s Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments \[01\]](#), and [Statement No. 35, Basic Financial Statements – and Management’s Discussion and Analysis – for Public Colleges and Universities \[02\]](#), the Comptroller of Public Accounts does not require the annual financial report to comply with all of the requirements in these Statements. At the end of the fiscal year, the Controller’s Office publishes and distributes the SFA annual financial report to executive leadership and oversight agencies. See annual financial reports for [2017 \[03\]](#), [2018 \[04\]](#), [2019 \[05\]](#).

Beginning with FY2018, along with the AFR, the Board is provided data with and without the effect of the adjustments made to comply with GASB Statements No. 68 and No.75. (See table below.) Pursuant, to Policy 3.18, Institutional Reserves Fund [6], the ratio provided to the Board is the Primary Reserve Ratio. The Controller’s Office also calculates the Net Income, Return on Net Assets, the Viability Ratio, and the Composite Financial Index, a weighted average of the aforementioned four ratios. With each ratio, the comparison to the university’s target is also provided. These ratios are indicative of the university’s financial health because they reflect our ability to carry out current and future programs. They also measure our total economic return and our ability to cover our debt obligations along with day-to-day operations. All ratios in FY2019 either met or exceeded the established targeted range except the Net Income Ratio, which was less than one percentage point short of the target.

Financial Ratio History

Ratio	2019	2018	2017	Target
Primary Reserve	.05%	21.11%	39.22%	40.0%
Net Income	-12.18%	6.09%	4.89%	2% - 4%
Return on Net Assets	-24.20%	23.38%	14.88%	3% - 4%
Viability	-.39%	26.45%	48.34%	1:1 minimum
CFI	-4.16%	3.99%	2.23%	1% - 3%
Ratio w/out GASB adjustments				
Primary Reserve	50.93%	55.14%	N/A	40.0%
Net Income	1.06%	-7.09%	N/A	2% - 4%
Return on Net Assets	4.53%	9.35%	N/A	3% - 4%
Viability	43.94%	73.89%	N/A	1:1 minimum
CFI	2.31%	1.99%		1% - 3%

Table 2 – 13.2 – Financial Ratio History

During FY2020, the Controller’s office began providing monthly [fund balance projections \[06\]](#) and the Primary Reserve ratio as of the end of that month. The Primary Reserve ratio measures the financial strength of the university with an examination of expendable assets that can be accessed quickly and spent to satisfy debt obligations.

SFA accesses the credit markets on its own strength and as a part of the State of Texas. Debt is issued in the name of the university. The institution has a Fitch rating of AA- and a Moody’s



rating of A1. In FY2016, the university received approval from the State to sell tuition revenue bonds (TRB) for the construction of a state-of-the-art Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) building. A TRB represents capital funding debt service from the State of Texas. This non-formula state-appropriated funding is in addition to regular biennial state appropriations. To prepare for the sale of the 2019 bond issues, the university had affirmations of these ratings with Fitch and Moody's in fall 2018 and fall 2019.











Budget Process

Development of the SFA [annual operating budget \[07\]](#) is guided by the strategic plan, which provides purposeful direction for the university. Each operating entity within SFA is responsible for developing its own detailed operating budget. Each entity has a department head who leads the budget development process on behalf of their department, who then in turn submits it to the appropriate vice president or the president, who ultimately approves the entity's budget and submits that budget to the budget office for approval.

The annual operating [budget development process \[08\]](#) typically begins in early spring and is completed by August, prior to the start of the fiscal year on September 1. The budget development process is coordinated by the Budget Office. The Controller's office provides historical and trend analysis data to the Budget office and the VP of Finance and Administration throughout the year. Many examples are provided in the [SACS Historical Information \[09\]](#).

In the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters, SFA experienced a slight decrease in enrollment. Student tuition and fee revenue was budgeted conservatively for fiscal year 2020. However, statutory and/or board authorized tuition and fee exemptions created a net revenue shortfall. A ten-year history of the exemption and waiver amounts is [provided \[10\]](#). The university took specific cost reduction and/or revenue enhancement activities to offset the revenue shortfall. Because of cost reduction/containment efforts, the university's recent operating margins have been stable.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Summary of Statement No 34.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Summary of Statement No 35.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] AFR 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] AFR 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] AFR 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Fund Balance Projections.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Annual Budget 2019 - 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Budget Background and Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] SACS historical information.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] 10 yr Historical & Trend Analysis.pdf](#)



13.3 The institution manages its financial resources in a responsible manner.
(*Fiscal responsibility*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

The recent financial history of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) demonstrates financial responsibility, as evidenced by steady growth in adjusted unrestricted net assets as explained in standards [13.1](#) and [13.2](#). In the Unrestricted Net Assets, Adjusted table, upon removing the effects of GASB Statements No. 68 and No. 75 along with the removal of the compensable leave liability, unrestricted net assets reflect an increase from FY2017 to FY2019. Net student tuition & fee revenue has increased slightly by 3.51 percent from FY2017 to FY2019, even though gross tuition and fees have increased more than 7.94 percent over the same timeframe. While administration is sensitive to the financial burden put on the university's students by increased tuition and fees, increases from FY2017 to FY 2019 were necessary to outpace the 14.4 percent increase in tuition discounting and the 43.5 percent increase in exemption and waivers as mandated by the state legislature. See [Tuition Discounting Chart \[01\]](#).

As an independent public university and an agency of the State of Texas, SFA follows reporting and budgeting guidelines established by the State of Texas and is subject to the same audit standards. The university's financial report is a part of the Consolidated Annual Financial Report (CAFR) of the state.

SFA has operated with an annual profit (including operations, state appropriations, and investment income) from FY2016 to FY2018. This past year, with an adjustment calculated by the State for the university's share of Other Post-Employment Benefits net pension liability of over \$30 million, the university sustained a negative change in net position. Despite this adjustment, along with the adjustments for other non-cash items, such as depreciation expense and allowance for uncollectible accounts, the generation of cash flows is more than adequate for the university to meet its current and future capital needs. SFA funds its own depreciation, and that expense is recorded in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Financial Reporting

Individuals who manage and sustain the financial stability of SFA are qualified and competent to fulfill the expectations of their positions. The vice president for finance and administration holds a Master of Business Administration and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration. He has served the SFA financial division for nearly 37 years. SFA's controller also holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration and a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license, and has over 37 years of accounting experience, including 19 years of governmental accounting experience. The director of financial services holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration, has 27 years of accounting experience including 8 years in governmental accounting and a CPA license. The director of administrative services has 34 years of accounting experience, including



26 years of governmental accounting, and holds a CPA license. Senior staff members working in financial areas of SFA hold bachelor's degrees in accounting, and some are also completing work at the graduate level.

GASB Effect

Details of the university's financial position can be found in the Annual Financial Reports under Statement of Net Assets ([AFR 2016 \[02\]](#), [AFR 2017 \[03\]](#), [AFR 2018 \[04\]](#), [AFR 2019 \[05\]](#)). Total net assets have decreased from \$126.8 million at the end of FY2017 to \$79.3 million at the end of FY2019, a decrease of 37.5 percent, while unrestricted net assets have decreased from \$55.3 million ending in FY2017 to \$(26.7) million in FY2019, a decrease of 82.0 percent. The cause of this decline was the implementation of GASB Statement No. 68 for state pension plans and the implementation of GASB Statement No. 75 for other post-employment benefits, which required the university to record restatements to unrestricted net assets. The downward adjustment made in FY 2015 was \$27,609,891.88 to record a beginning value to the long-term pension liability, and \$56,789,248.41 was recorded in FY 2018 to record a beginning value for long-term OPEB liability. The state is responsible for recording these adjustments on the face of the financial statements, and all agencies report their proportionate share. Without these adjustments, the unrestricted net assets would have increased \$3.1 million over the period FY2017 through FY2019.

Recent Financial Actions

In order to attract and retain students, SFA developed a tuition and fee billing chart that has total mandatory tuition and fees max out at twelve hours. In 2014, the Texas legislature mandated that all universities offer a tuition and fee plan that provides a fixed, consistent designated tuition rate for twelve consecutive semesters. This plan proved to be very popular with students. For FY2021, the Board of Regents approved a fixed rate plan, the [Guaranteed Price Plan \(GPP\) \[06\]](#), which freezes all mandatory tuition and fees for up to twelve semesters and flattens tuition and fee costs at a twelve semester credit hour level. The variable annual plan was replaced with the Annual Fixed Price Plan, which also flattens tuition and fee costs at twelve hours, but for only one fiscal year. The goal was to encourage students to take more semester credit hours over twelve hours, but pay the same price, in order to make it easier for them and their parents to budget and control student debt by graduating sooner. Student enrollment improved slightly for Fall 2018 with 13,144 students, an increase of four percent. However, in Fall 2019 enrollment decreased. During the past five years, semester credit hour enrollment has increased slightly with a 0.65% increase.

Related Parties

The [SFASU Foundation \[07\]](#) is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the State of Texas with the responsibility for management of donations, gifts, endowments, and other monies. The foundation assumes that an endowed fund will have a permanent life and that it is important to protect the principal and purchasing power of these endowments. The



investment portfolio is diversified to provide reasonable assurances that no single investment or class of investments has a disproportionate or significant impact on the total portfolio.

The SFA Real Estate Foundation serves the purpose of accepting gifts of real property and holding it until the land is sold. All proceeds benefit SFA. As of December of 2018, the SFA Real Estate Foundation currently has assets valued at \$6.3 million.

The university’s endowment fund distributions have remained relatively stable over the last five years. According to SFA [Policy 3.20, Investments - Endowment Funds \[08\]](#), at the end of the investment year, in consultation with the investment manager, the investment officers, the vice president of finance and administration, and the director of financial services review the total return on the endowment accounts and recommend an annual distribution. The target distribution is between 4% and 5%. If returns permit, an amount equal to the rate of inflation is added back to each endowment principal balance. Additionally, if there are any returns beyond the inflation rate, then these amounts are added to a contingency reserve, which may be distributed during years of poor investment performance. As noted in the Donor Restricted Endowments section of the [Annual Financial Report in 2018 \[04\]](#), 3.35% of total earnings was distributed to spending accounts and .4% was added back to the balance of each individual endowment account. No amounts were added to the contingency reserve account. In January 2018, the Alumni Foundation merged with SFASU Foundation.

Endowment funds, while suffering with market conditions in fiscal years 2008-2009, have consistently increased in value, showing stability in investment practices. The university’s reliance on these endowments to fund its operations is minimal. However, given the current state of the economy due to the pandemic, the university may need to access gift funds to supplement the budget. Therefore, the administration closely monitors the impact of investment markets on the university’s long-term investments as well as the investments of the endowed funds.

Endowment Investment Returns

Fiscal Year	SFASU	Foundation
2016	3.59%	5.26%
2017	8.95%	7.55%
2018	8.25%	9.90%
2019	3.57%	2.33%

Table 1 – 13.3 – Endowment Investment Returns



Endowment Distribution Payments

Fiscal Year	SFASU	Foundation
2016	\$ 457,377	\$ 1,083,097
2017	\$434,579	\$1,111,837
2018	\$454,514	\$2,066,981
2019	\$ 495,073	\$1,458,011

Table 2 – 13.3 – Endowment Distribution Payments

Endowment Values as of September 1 of each year

Fiscal Year	SFASU	Foundation
2016	\$17,430,923	\$30,677,174
2017	\$19,453,150	\$33,990,183
2018	\$20,686,080	\$60,644,600
2019	\$20,952,620	\$65,781,664

Table 3 – 13.3 – Endowment Values as of September 1 of each year

Student Enrollment Effect

According to the Statement of Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position, in the AFRs, increases in student enrollment and tuition and fee rates were realized over the last four years. Student tuition and fee revenue increased from \$111.9 million in FY16 to \$124.4 million in FY19, an increase of 4.9%. The State of Texas allows institutions of higher education the ability to charge designated tuition, that is, tuition in excess of statutory tuition. Increases in tuition and fee rates and student enrollment have contributed to the increase in tuition and fee revenues. Enrollment data is shown in the table below.



Enrollment by School Fall Semesters 2016-2019

College	Fall 2016 (FY 2017)	Fall 2017 (FY 2018)	Fall 2018 (FY 2019)	Fall 2019 (FY 2020)
Business	1,787	1,848	1,890	1,913
Education	4,076	3,968	3,927	3,609
Fine Arts	919	920	962	978
Forestry and Agriculture	768	800	826	819
Liberal and Applied Arts	2,724	2,672	3,113	3,364
Sciences and Mathematics	2,468	2,406	2,426	2,286
Total	12,742	12,614	13,144	12,969

Table 4 – 13.3 – Enrollment by School Fall Semesters 2016-2019

Budget Initiatives





SFA’s Educational & General budget has been consistent the last three fiscal years at \$63.5 million in FY 2017, 63.3 million in FY 2018, and 63.3 million in FY 2019. The formula funding and the remissions to the state treasury are directly tied to the enrollment and semester credit hours reported during the base year prior to the biennium. The university has actively worked to improve recruitment and retention programs for students, attract and retain excellent faculty, and increase fundraising. These efforts have resulted in the resources and support necessary to continue existing programs and develop new programs required to provide an excellent education to the institution’s students.

Strategic budget initiatives including faculty and staff positions, as well as strategic equity and merit increases, were approved in FY 2017, FY 2018, and 2019. In FY 2017, the Attracting and Supporting High Quality Faculty and Staff committee of the [Strategic Plan \[09\]](#) presented a proposal to the cabinet to increase salaries using merit and equity. The proposed plan is included in the [documentation \[10\]](#), as well as two [College Budget Worksheets \[11\]](#) with merit and equity allocations. Classroom Upgrades were also proposed from Strategic Plan committees and were funded in the FY 2017 Higher Education Fund Budget. In FY 2018, 18 new lecturer positions were funded in order to support course delivery as well as numerous other individual positions.

As attested by the above narrative and accompanying documentation, SFA consistently manages its financial resources in a responsible manner.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Tuition Discounting Chart.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] AFR 2016.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] AFR 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] AFR 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] AFR 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] 2020 - 21 Guaranteed Price Plan Rate Table.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] SFASU Foundation.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 3.20, Investments Endowment Funds.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] ASHQFS Strategic Plan Recommendations.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] ASHQFS Salary Goal Framework - 3 Year 90% Equity \(Meeting 11-16-15\).pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] College Budget Worksheets.pdf](#)



13.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources.
(*Control of finances*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) exercises appropriate control over its financial resources. As an agency of the State of Texas, SFA has a fiduciary responsibility to steward resources and establish controls.

The Finance and Administration division headed by the vice president for finance and administration (VPFA) has primary responsibility for control over the university's financial resources.

Individuals who manage and sustain financial stability of SFA are qualified and competent to fulfill the expectations of their position. The vice president for finance and administration holds a degree in accounting, a Master of Business Administration, and a doctorate in higher education administration. He has served the SFA financial and business offices for nearly 37 years. SFA's controller has a BBA in accounting and is a certified public accountant. She has served the university for sixteen years and has worked in the accounting field for 35 years. The assistant controller is also a certified public accountant and has worked at the university for nearly ten years. The director of administrative services holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and is a certified public accountant. She has worked in higher education finance for nearly 22 years and served as a controller at her previous institution. She has been at the university for over two years. Senior staff members working in financial areas of SFA also hold bachelor's degrees in accounting.

The VPFA division is responsible for recommending, establishing, and communicating policies and procedures to ensure proper and efficient use of university resources. These duties include receiving and depositing funds; purchasing goods and services; processing and disbursing funds for payroll, goods, and services; investing institutional funds; developing and monitoring the university's budget; performing capital planning and debt management; doing financial reporting; overseeing institutional construction; and maintaining the university's financial systems. The VPFA and other members of the SFA administration are accountable for establishing controls over financial operations.

The SFA Board of Regents (BOR) establishes the institutional commitment to strong internal control by reviewing and approving financial policies that provide oversight of the university's financial, physical and human resources assets. The internal control-related policies are supported by an institutional audit function that reports directly to the board. The Department of Audit Services conducts many financial audits that examine the alignment of institutional policies with campus-wide financial-related functions. The university [policy manual \[01\]](#) is



online and accessible at <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/>. Policies that establish and support financial control are periodically reviewed and approved by the SFA Board of Regents. Examples of some policies that relate to control over financial resources are as follows (policies linked to policy numbers):

#	Policy Name	Control
1.3	Contracting Authority	Contract authority
1.4	Items Requiring BOR Approval	Establishes Items BOR must approve
2.6	Ethics	Ethical behavior
2.7	Fraud	Fraud investigation
2.12	Compliance	Compliance with laws and regulations
3.2	Annual Budget Preparation	Budget process
3.5	Post Bond Issuance Federal Tax Compliance	Bond compliance
3.9	Departmental Budgeting and Accounting Responsibilities	Department budget and accounting
3.10	Discretionary Use of University Funds	Spending funds
3.13	Expenditure Authority for Financial Transactions	Expenditure authority
3.17	Gifts, Loans, Endowments, and Bequests	Gifts to the University
3.19	Institutional Reserves Fund	Financial reserve requirement
3.20	Investments - Endowment Funds	Endowment funds
3.21	Investments	Investment
3.26	Receipts and Deposits	Cash
3.28	Student Accounts Receivable	Accounts receivable
3.29	Travel	travel expenses
3.31	Comprehensive Scholarship Administration	Scholarships
8.3	Grants and Contracts Administration	Grants
12.2	Staff Compensation and Classification	Setting staff compensation
12.6	Faculty Compensation	Setting faculty compensation
17.1	Best Value Procurement	Purchasing
17.5	Delegated Purchasing Authority	Purchasing authority
17.11	Procurement Card	Purchasing with procurement card
17.14	Property Inventory and Management	Managing inventory
17.22	Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality	Purchasing ethics

Table 1 – 13.4 – Policies related to control of financial resources.

Internally, SFA segregates and manages the business enterprise through multiple reporting areas. Each area, including academic departments, auxiliary functions, athletics, plant operations, research and sponsored programs, and development activities, has at least one individual who, with assistance from the VPFA division, has responsibility for managing the financial information of the entity/department/account(s) assigned to them.



SFA uses the Ellucian/Banner enterprise resource system, along with supporting systems, to facilitate electronic controls over financial resources. The system provides a mechanism for financial controls over purchasing, accounts payable, travel, general ledger accounts, payroll, human resources, and budget. Access to the respective systems is restricted to those who have been approved for viewing or updating capability. In addition to system controls, the Division of Finance and Administration employs practices to help minimize risk and strengthen financial controls. Before access to the Banner system is granted to an individual, they must have completed the required [training \[02\]](#) and received all the proper approvals.

Risk Assessment

In order to assess institutional risk, and specifically financial risk, the chief audit executive and vice president for finance and administration submit a risk assessment survey to certain campus members. The survey solicits feedback on various types of institutional risk that include financial, property, system, security, and other types. To provide periodic financial information to university leadership, the Controller's office provides a monthly interim financial statement to the SFA Board of Regents. The financial information includes a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for Budgeted Funds; a Statement of Net Position and Revenue; and a Statement of Expenditures and Changes in Net Position. With respect to investment risk, quarterly investment reports are provided to the SFA Board of Regents and an annual investment update is presented to the Board of Regents at each [January Board of Regents' meeting \[03\]](#). In addition, the regents annually adopt a resolution affirming the review of the university's investment policy and strategy.

Internal Audits

SFA has an internal audit department (Audit Services), which reports to the BOR. The BOR Rules require the BOR to appoint the chief audit executive (CAE) on an annual basis. The BOR Rules specifically state, "It is important that the university auditor be independent of the chief financial and/or accounting officers to ensure independent review of the internal control structure and the financial reporting process." Consequently, Audit Services is independent from other university offices.

The Board of Regents approves the [internal audit charter \[04\]](#) that outlines the duties of the department, which include evaluating controls. Audit Services performs a risk assessment and establishes an annual audit plan, which is approved by the [BOR \[03\]](#). Depending on the audit, the audit objectives include verifying that controls are in place. The CAE presents audit results to the BOR on a quarterly basis and summarizes the audits in an [annual report \[03\]](#). For audit observations, a management action plan and implementation date are established. Audit Services performs follow-up to ensure that the action plans are implemented. See the [Audit Policy \[05\]](#). Examples of audit reports with observations, action plans, and follow-ups are provided [\[06, 07\]](#).



Internal audit reports are submitted to SFA oversight agencies, including the Texas State Auditor's Office, the Legislative Budget Board, the Sunset Advisory Commission, and the Governor's Office.

Cash Handling

Cash, check, and point of sale credit card payments collected by the university are routed through the Bursar's Office. Funds collected at the departmental level are required to be brought to the Bursar's Office each day by 3:00 pm. Each employee who collects and/or deposits funds to the university must complete cash receipts training every year. See [Policy 3.26, Receipts and Deposits \[08\]](#). Checks are electronically scanned for deposit daily to the university's primary depository bank, Commercial National Bank (CNB). Checks that cannot be scanned and cash are deposited daily to the university's local depository. Deposits are delivered to CNB by the university police each business day. All funds are transported in a locked bank bag. The officer does not have a key to the bag. The officer drops off the locked bag and picks up the bank bag from the previous day's deposit. Funds collected electronically through the university's online system are transferred each night to the Banner system. The Bursar's Office is equipped with a fireproof safe, electronic monitoring equipment, and panic alarms, and the doors are always kept locked. The Internal Audit department conducts periodic surprise cash counts. See [Business Office Procedures \[09\]](#).

Investments

SFA holds a diversified investment portfolio, including bank deposits, investment pools, and long-term invested funds. The vice president of finance and administration is the chief investment officer of the university. The director of financial services and director of administrative services are also investment policy-authorized investment officers and participate in the required training of the Texas Government Code 2256 Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA). The VPFA delegates the daily investment function to the Directors of Financial and Administrative Services.

The bank deposits and collateral are monitored by the controller and the director of financial services or the director of administrative services on a daily basis to ensure that proper collateral levels are maintained. The university's long-term investments are invested by the Texas A&M System (TAMUS) via an investment cooperative agreement. Each year, a TAMUS representative appears before the Board of Regents and gives an annual overview of the previous year's investment strategies and results. The Chief Auditor's Office performs required PFIA audits every two years as required by Government Code Chapter 2256 with the most recent audit completed in [July 2019 \[10\]](#). See Policies [3.19, Institutional Reserves Fund \[11\]](#), [3.20, Investments-Endowment Funds \[12\]](#), and [3.21, Investments \[13\]](#).

Monitoring Purchase Orders, Expenditures, and Payroll

The first step in initiating an expenditure is preparing a document to request that expense. The document is in the form of travel or P-card applications, purchase requisitions, purchase orders,



electronic payroll action forms (ePAF's), or direct vouchers. The departments review documentation to determine the appropriateness of the expenditure and the source of funds. See [Policy 17.5, Delegated Purchasing Authority \[14\]](#).

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the university's BOR approves the [annual operating budget \[15\]](#) for that year. The budget is prepared in accordance with the SFA Budget Guidelines. During a respective fiscal year's operations, institutional departments are given flexibility to control and manage the operations and maintenance portion of their budget. However, Banner Finance system controls are in place that deny a travel request or purchase requisition in a fund that has an insufficient budget.

Online, real-time reports are available to each account manager through the university's report-writer program, WebFocus, or through the Self-Service system in Banner Finance. These reports may be viewed online or printed to assure that each manager has the most up-to-date information available. The Controller, Payroll, Human Resources, and Procurement offices offer training classes as needed to assist employees in using the financial system correctly and effectively.

Procurement policies guide employees in the proper procedures to use when procuring goods and services. [Policy 17.1, Best Value Procurement \[16\]](#), affirms that SFA makes purchases, not otherwise delegated through [Policy 17.5, Delegated Purchasing Authority \[14\]](#), in accordance with [Texas Education Code Section 51.9335 \[17\]](#) and university policy. A [website \[18\]](#) is also available with various forms, policies, procedures, and information. These policies are in accordance with statute.

Contracts

Although the BOR approves the annual budget and departments are allowed to expend their budgets accordingly, some contracts must go to the BOR for approval regardless of the amount. The university president may sign contracts under \$500,000 without prior approval from the BOR, unless prohibited by policy. Further, the general counsel reviews and approves contract legality before it is approved by authorized individuals. See [Policy 1.3, Contracting Authority \[19\]](#) and [1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval \[20\]](#).

Endowments

The University Advancement office accepts gifts on behalf of the university and negotiates the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the donor if they wish to establish an endowment. The [Give to SFA website \[21\]](#) discusses the various types of endowments and the required monetary level of each.

External Audits

In addition to internal audits, SFA is externally audited by the State Auditor's Office (SAO) and other oversight agencies. With respect to federal financial aid audits, the Texas State Auditor's Office typically audits federal financial aid every other even-numbered year. The SAO
















conducted its most recent federal financial aid audits in fiscal years 2016 and 2018. Recent audits performed by the SAO include the university's compliance with the Accounting Policy Statement 011 (APS011 Benefits Proportional by Method of Finance) for the [2018 fiscal year \[22\]](#), and a [duplicate payment audit \[23\]](#) for the period beginning September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2018. The SAO indicated in their audit report that they identified no significant issues. The SAO has not issued the final report on duplicate payments. The SAO has indicated to our chief audit executive that the university will be in audit scope for fiscal year 2020.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Controllars Office.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Report to the Board January 26-28, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Internal Audit Charter.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Auditing Policy.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Contract Management Audit Report and Followup 19-20.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] University Admission Audit and Followup 19-20.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 3.26, Receipts and Deposits.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Business Office Procedures.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] SFASU 19-XIX PFIA Final Report for Public Distribution on 073119.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Policy 3.19, Institutional Reserves Fund.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 3.20, Investments-Endowment Funds.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Policy 3.21, Investments.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 17.5, Delegated Purchasing Authority.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] BOR Agenda July 19-21, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 17.1, Best Value Procurement.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Texas Education Code Chapter 51 Provisions Generally Applicable to Higher Education.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Procurement Property Services SFASU.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Policy 1.3, Contracting Authority.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Policy 1.4, Items Requiring Board of Regents Approval.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Give To SFA - Friends.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] SAO 20-015 Selected State Entities' Compliance with Benefits Proportional Requirements.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Agency 755 Notification Letter.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 12.2, Staff Compensation and Classification.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 12.6, Faculty Compensation.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 17.11, Procurement Card.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 17.14, Property Inventory and Management.pdf](#)



-  [Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.12, Compliance.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.6, Ethics.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 2.7, Fraud.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.10, Discretionary Use of University Funds.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.13, Expenditure Authority for Financial Transactions.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.17, Gifts, Loans, Endowments, and Bequests.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.2, Annual Budget Preparation.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.28, Student Accounts Receivable.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.29, Travel.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.31, Comprehensive Scholarship Administration.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.5, Post-Bond Issuance Federal Tax Compliance.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 3.9, Departmental Budgeting and Accounting Responsibilities.pdf](#)
-  [Policy 8.3, Grants and Contracts Administration.pdf](#)



13.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs.
(*Control of sponsored research/external funds*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. Sponsored research and external funds aid in the fulfillment of SFA's mission:

Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

Policies

SFA has numerous policies that address specific internal control over externally funded and sponsored research programs. These policies are published on the university's website in the [Policy Manual \[01\]](#) and are reviewed for any necessary updates every three years. A few of these policies include:

[Policy 3.12, Establishing a New Departmental Account: Fund-Organization Program \(FOP\) \[02\]](#) describes the establishment of new department accounts for external awards and contracts. A [sample request \[03\]](#) to establish a new Banner fund shows evidence of implementation of this policy.

[Policy 8.1, Effort Reporting and Certification for Sponsored Activities \[04\]](#) explains the "requirements concerning employee effort for salary expenditures and cost sharing requirements related to grants, contracts and other sponsored agreements (grants)." A sample [effort report \[05\]](#) provides an example of how the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) certifies effort.

[Policy 8.2, Financial Conflicts of Interest in Sponsored Activities \[06\]](#) describes financial conflicts of interest in sponsored activities in order "to protect the credibility and integrity of Stephen F. Austin State University's (SFA) faculty and staff by ensuring public trust and confidence." The [PI/PD Key Personnel Financial Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Disclosure and Certification Form for Sponsored Projects \[07\]](#) is evidence that ORGS requires such disclosure with each application.

[Policy 8.3, Grants and Contracts Administration \[08\]](#) describes the administration, controls, and procedures for grants, contracts, and sponsored agreements. SFA has a [Grants and Contracts](#)



[Procedure Manual \[09\]](#), which provides overview of ORGS services, roles of university offices, grant-related procedures, Tax Exempt Status, and Description and Purpose of Grant Forms.

[Policy 8.5, Facilities and Administrative \(Indirect\) Cost Recovery, Distribution and Use \[10\]](#) gives the information on indirect cost recovery distribution. The Controller's Office sends out [indirect cost memorandums \[11\]](#) to return a portion of the recovered facilities and administrative costs that are eligible to be distributed.

[Policy 8.7, Misconduct in Federally Funded Research \[12\]](#) outlines the high ethical standards in conduct of scientific research and procedures as well as how to handle misconduct in federally funded research. The ORGS [website \[13\]](#) also describes compliance with research and the procedure for handling misconduct.

[Policy 8.10, Texas Comprehensive Research Fund \[14\]](#) describes the fund and its appropriate use as defined by ([Texas Education Code §62.097 \[15\]](#)) to promote increased research capacity. The policy also details the limitations of the research and development activities as described by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ([Texas Administrative Code, Part 1, Chapter 13, Subchapter G, Rule §13.122 \[16\]](#)). Research means, "a systematic study directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied." Development means "the systematic use of knowledge and understanding gained from research directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including design and development of prototypes and processes." Curriculum development activities are also eligible for funding when "the primary purpose of the project is developing and testing an instructional or educational model through appropriate research methodologies (i.e., data collection, evaluation, dissemination, and publication)." Faculty and staff submit requests for equipment purchases from the Comprehensive Research Fund. A [sample \[17\]](#) of one request submitted and approved for a High Performance Liquid Chromatography Instrument is provided as evidence of implementation of this policy.

[Policy 8.11, Research Enhancement Program \[18\]](#) describes the internal funds for encouraging and enhancing research and creative opportunities, as well as providing seed monies to attract external funding. Internal forms are used to track internal grants and funding. A sample of an approved [mini grant \[19\]](#) shows evidence of implementation of this policy.

[Policy 8.12 Fixed Amount Awards \[20\]](#) explains how the fixed amount agreements are processed by the university. Such awards may include grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, research agreements, and subawards (grants) from federal and non-federal sources to the university. Evidence of implementation of this policy is the [Fixed Price Agreement Closeout Certification Form \[21\]](#).

[Policy 12.1, Compensation from Grants, Contracts, and Other Sponsored Agreements \[22\]](#) "establishes guidelines for compensation paid to faculty and professional (exempt) staff from grants, contracts, and other sponsored agreements (grants) that are consistent with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, and university policies and procedures." An [Electronic](#)



[Personnel Action Form \(EPAF\) \[23\]](#) shows the labor distribution for compensation as evidence of implementation of this policy.

SFA's Accounting for Externally Funded or Sponsored Research Programs

The financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs at Stephen F. Austin State University is maintained through one or more of the following:

- Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS);
- president;
- Office of the Vice President of Finance and Administration;
- Controller's Office;
- provost and vice president of academic affairs (VPAA);
- vice president for university affairs;
- athletic director; and
- vice president of university advancement.

ORGS falls under the VPAA. The management control of external program and research funds within SFA is performed by the assistant director, sponsored programs specialists, compliance coordinator, grants accountant II, administrative assistant, and the dean of research and graduate studies. The [job descriptions \[24\]](#) of each showcase their required skills. The assistant director has more than 15 years of experience with externally funded and sponsored research and programs. The sponsored programs specialist has 30 years of experience with externally funded and sponsored research and programs. The dean has nine years' experience with grants and 16 years' experience with research. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies' [organizational chart \[25\]](#) identifies the major positions and direction of control.

SFA follows internal procedures and generally accepted reporting standards to account for externally funded and sponsored research and programs. The Controller's Office produces an internal [procedure manual \[26\]](#), which is updated at least every three years. Topics covered include budgeting and accounting, budget changes and transfers, overhead expenses, procurement, expenditure (cost) transfers, purchases, capital equipment and other assets, gifts and endowments, and travel. Additionally, the university subscribes to the Financial Accounting and Reporting Manual (FARM), published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers ([NACUBO \[27\]](#)). ORGS publishes a [Grants & Contracts Procedures Manual \[28\]](#) that addresses all aspects of grants management.

Procedures addressed by ORGS include how to request set-up for a new award, how to request a budget revision, cost-transfer requests, and how to certify efforts reports. ORGS personnel procedures are reviewed for accuracy.

All pre-award administration is conducted by ORGS, under the direction of the provost and vice president of academic affairs. Additionally, ORGS personnel help prepare budgets and submit proposals. Further, ORGS executes the post-award and non-financial administration of the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Biosafety Committee



procedures, and compliance. The assistant director from ORGS and the grant accountant from the Controller's Office provide a post award training with the individual primary investigator (PI) and/or the project director (PD) as needed. The PI/PD are responsible for ensuring expenditures comply to the specific award conditions and applicable laws and regulations. The ORGS grants accountant conducts the following:

- Monthly and semester distribution of effort certification reports
- Ongoing review of deficit accounts
- Monthly and quarterly verification of billing and financial reporting instructions in accordance with contract information
- Review of cost transfers for allowability
- Require PI/PD review of expenditures prior to grants accountant submitting an invoice
- Reviewing of contract and grant awards for program sufficiency
- Monitoring of equipment purchases, travel and P-card expenditures

The principal investigators are responsible for ensuring compliance with university sponsored program procedures, as well as all sponsor procedures and regulations and all federal/state/local regulations. ORGS conducts [training programs \[29\]](#) for principal investigators/project directors and support personnel at grant luncheons and when awards are granted. Further, ORGS gives the PIs information on the grant process, consequences of noncompliance, policies, and procedures. The PIs receive a new award email with pertinent information.

Accounting Procedures

The university operates on a reimbursement basis. Obligations are paid using SFA's financial accounting system. The university uses the Banner finance system, which provides real-time accounting that displays the original budget by object code, tracks any budget revisions, and displays each transaction in detail. Before payments are made from the system, the PI/PD must request an account that allows the university to track the expenditures specific to the grant. Until a budget has been set up for a specific grant, obligations cannot be paid from the grant. After the grant has been set up, payments are processed automatically through the Banner finance system and Banner payroll system.

Payroll expenditures and the related payroll benefits are paid after the employee's paperwork is processed in the Human Resources Office. This is done electronically by processing an electronic personnel action form (EPAF). After the EPAF has been processed, persons are paid by the Payroll office either once or twice a month. Salaried persons are paid monthly, and hourly persons are paid based on time entered in an electronic timekeeping system either monthly or bi-monthly.

Payments for goods and services are disbursed after specific steps are taken to initiate payment. First, the department submits a [requisition \[30\]](#). Then, the Procurement and Property Services Office reviews the requisition and processes it into a purchase order. After the department "receives" the goods or services in the system, the Accounts Payable department makes the



payment upon receipt of an invoice from the goods or service provider. If the purchase requires a contract, that is executed prior to the work commencing.

Travel expenditures must first be entered as a travel authorization or requisition, and after the traveler returns, the traveler submits a request for reimbursement by submitting an expense report. Both the travel request and the expense report are reviewed and approved prior to making the payment to the traveler.

Each grant account allows for specific tracking and reporting of revenue and expenditures. Based on a pre-determined schedule using award terms/agency requirements, the grants accountant runs a report in the finance system to determine if there is a balance that needs to be drawn down. After receiving a certification from the PI/PD that the expenditures are appropriate, the grants accountant will draw down the funds using the appropriate federal and state system.

Filing of Reports

Reports are filed in a timely manner, as required by sponsors. When an external grant/award is set up in Banner, the grants accountant adds any reporting requirements to the invoice-reporting recap, which lists timing for invoicing, draw downs, and financial reports required for each grant/award. On or before the due date, the grants accountant completes the required reports, and then the controller approves these before submitting to the agency. These reports can be submitted through regular mail, email, or an agency's online system. Grant [reports \[31\]](#), which detail awarded projects/received grant funds, are approved at each Board of Regents meeting.

Letters of Credit


We are not required to have letters of credit on behalf of any financial regulatory agency. Typically, as a political subdivision of the State of Texas, we are not required to submit a letter of credit to other state and federal agencies.

Liabilities

Some sponsors send all the funds at the beginning of a grant, while others are at specified intervals during the life of a grant. If all the funds are not spent before the grant/award ends, those funds are returned to the agency if specified in the terms and conditions of the award. The grants accountant prepares a purchase voucher for the amount to return, which the controller approves and remits to Accounts Payable to process the payment and return the funds to the agency.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 3.12, Establishing a New Departmental Account.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Request to Establish a New Banner Fund.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 8.1, Effort Reporting and Certification for sponsored Activities.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Effort Report sample.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Policy 8.2, Financial Conflicts of Interest in Sponsored Activities.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] PI PD Key Personnel Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Disclosure and Certification Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Policy 8.3, Grants and Contracts Administration.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and grant Related Procedures.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 8.5, Facilities and Administrative \(Indirect \) Cost Recovery, Distribution and Use.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Indirect Cost Memorandum sample.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 8.7, Misconduct in Federally Funded Research.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] Compliance.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 8.10, Texas Comprehensive Research Fund.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Texas Education Code Chapter 62 Constitutional and Statutory Funds to Support Institution.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Texas Administrative Code.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Comprehensive Research Request Sample.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Policy 8.11, Research Enhancement Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Approved mini-grant sample.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Policy 8.12, Fixed Amount Awards.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Fixed-Price Agreement Close-out Certification Form.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] Policy 12.1, Compensation from Grants, Contracts and Other Sponsored Agreements.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] EPAF Preview sample.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Job Descriptions.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Organizational Chart.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Controllers Office.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Financial Accounting and Reporting Manual for Higher Education NACUBO FARM.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Grants and Contracts Procedures Manual \(ORSP\).pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Post-Award Orientation.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] requisition request.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Grant Report to the Board of Regents - January 2020.pdf](#)

13.6 The institution (a) is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended and (b) audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities under Title IV, SACSCOC relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U. S. Department of Education.

(Federal and state responsibilities) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is in compliance with program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended, and audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

Compliance

SFA is compliant with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act. As indicated in the [Recertification Approval letter \[01\]](#) from the U. S. Department of Education (ED) and Eligibility and [Certification Approval Report \[02\]](#), SFA is approved to participate in Title IV programs. All financial aid programs, both federal and state, are accounted for in accordance with the respective regulations. Policies, procedures, and controls are in place to ensure that regulations are followed, and all transactions are recorded properly and in a timely manner.

SFA is not on the reimbursement method and does not require a letter of credit. The university does not have any impending litigation, has no significant unpaid dollar amounts due, and has not received adverse communications from the Department of Education. SFA has no audit findings related to the current default rate of 8.2%. The institution is not aware of any infractions related to Title IV funding.

Audits

The university meets all audit requirements in accordance with the [Program Participation Agreement \[03\]](#). The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships is subject to audits conducted by the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO), the U.S. Department of Education, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Stephen F Austin State University Audit Services department.

Audits are performed annually by SAO as part of the statewide Single Audit Act. The Single Audit Act requires higher education to perform an audit conducted in accordance with the [Office of Management and Budget's \(OMB\) Circular A-133 \[04\]](#). The audit is referred to as "Single Audit" because one audit is conducted for the state as a whole, rather than multiple audits. The



audits evaluate the institution's financial statements, internal controls, and compliance of the aid programs. Federal student aid programs are included in the scope of the annual statewide audit.

SFA was selected for the Texas Statewide Single Audit for the fiscal year [2017 \[05\]](#). Findings for this audit included:

- The university incorrectly determined the total number of days in the payment period, resulting in 12 of 42 (29%) students tested having the incorrect amount of funds returned;
- The university did not return Title IV funds, resulting in 3 of 32 (9%) students tested having no return of Title IV funds calculation processed;
- The university incorrectly returned all financial assistance received for two students rather than performing a return of Title IV funds calculation.

Based upon [SAO's recommendations \[06\]](#), SFA took [corrective action \(pg397\) \[07\], \[08\]](#). SAO recommended that for return of Title IV calculations, SFA calculate the correct number of days in scheduled breaks and calculate the return based on the correct payment period, accurately determine the correct amount of funds earned and to be returned, and strengthen the process of review for return calculations. The corrective action plan was:

- Strengthen procedures to accurately determine the number of days in scheduled breaks and calculate returns accordingly;
- Strengthen procedures to determine the amount of Title IV funds earned and the amount of returns for students who withdraw.

The next Texas Statewide Single Audit will be conducted in September of 2020. SFA was selected for inclusion in this audit. Audit findings will be available in the Spring of 2021.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, as required, submits an annual [Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate \[09\], \[10\], \[11\], \[12\] \[13\]](#), used by the U. S. Department of Education to determine annual funding allocations.

A U. S. Department of Education Program Review Notification was sent to SFA in January 2015. The Program Review requested [audits \[14\]](#) for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Award Years. SFA received the preliminary [program review report \[15\]](#) in April 2015. The university took corrective action to resolve all audit findings from this Program Review. The Final Program Review Determination [letter \[16\]](#) was received September 2017. With receipt of this report, ED considers findings closed and therefore required no further action by SFA. The following table indicates the Program Review findings and corrective actions taken.



ED Program Review Findings and SFA’s Corrective Actions

Program Review Finding	ED Statement of Non-Compliance	Corrective Action
Distance Education – Lack of internal controls	SFA did not have an adequate system to detect possible fraudulent activity for students in solely distance education programs.	SFA developed procedures [17] in the Department of Information Technology Services to assist in preventing fraud and abuse in distance education programs.
Failure to provide documentation to meet regular and substantive interaction requirements for distance education students	SFA was unable to provide evidence of specific and substantive interaction between instructors and students enrolled in solely distance education programs.	SFA uses the Desire2Learn Brightspace (D2L) Learning Management System as the platform to deliver instruction and conduct interactions between faculty and distance education students. D2L allows faculty to track and document student engagement.
Student credit balance deficiencies – Access to Title IV funds	SFA violated the prohibition of requiring students to borrow additional funds for which interest or other charges are assessed.	SFA assessed book loan fees to students who had undistributed Title IV HEA proceeds. SFA complied with federal regulations to refund the students their excess financial aid balances within 14 days of the start of class. In addition, the SFA Business Office refunded book loan charges to Title IV recipients. As a result, SFA no longer provides book loans to students.
Pell Underpayment	SFA did not award Pell Grant for the correct amount for one student.	SFA corrected the Pell Grant underpayment.
Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy not adequately developed/monitored	The qualitative portion of SFA’s SAP policy was in violation of the regulatory requirement that a student enrolled for more than two academic years must have a grade point average of at least a “C” or better. SFA’s prior SAP policy stated that students in the second year must have at least a 1.8 GPA.	SFA amended the SAP policy [18] to meet the qualitative component requirement for undergraduate students.



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Program Review Finding	ED Statement of Non-Compliance	Corrective Action
Return of Title IV Funds not made or made incorrectly	SFA did not complete the Return of Title IV funds for multiple instances and did not utilize an unofficial withdrawal policy to determine if students withdrew without notice within 30 days of the end of the payment period.	SFA amended the Return of Title IV policy and procedures [08] . Return of Title IV changes are no longer made to any already processed Return of Title IV calculations.
Return of Title IV funds made late	SFA did not return funds identified in a return of Title IV within the 45-day requirement. An original withdrawal date for a student was backdated. At that time, SFA recalculated the return of Title IV calculation based on the updated date, thus causing additional return of funds that were more than 45 days after the date SFA determined the student withdrew.	SFA amended the Return of Title IV policy and procedures [08] . A Return of Title IV change will not be made after the 45-day deadline, if the calculation was correct at the time of processing.
Verification violations	SFA failed to correctly complete verification for some students. Corrections include failure to update U.S taxes paid, failure to resolve conflicting information, and failure to correct students' household size.	All errors identified in the review were corrected. SFA updated the procedure [19] to include new quality assurance methods.
Exit loan counseling deficiencies	SFA was unable to provide evidence that exit counseling was completed for six students who withdrew.	SFA reviewed the files for all loan recipients and corrected all errors. SFA changed the custom population selection and updated the policies and procedures [20] .
Student status inaccurate/untimely enrollment reporting to the National Student Loan Data System	SFA did not report student enrollment data to NSLDS in a timely, accurate manner.	SFA relied on the reporting of information with NSLDS through the National Student Clearinghouse. The enrollment data for the students in question was corrected.


























Program Review Finding	ED Statement of Non-Compliance	Corrective Action
Conflicting information	SFA failed to obtain adequate documentation to resolve conflicting information related to selective service registration. The institution relied on admissions data to validate the student's gender.	SFA changed procedures [21] related to female students and the Selective Service requirement.
Failure to comply with required drug and alcohol abuse prevention program requirements	SFA violated provisions of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA). SFA was unable to produce documentation that showed the distribution of its Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program (DAAPP) to faculty and staff for fiscal year 2013. In addition, SFA only evaluated the effectiveness of the alcohol component of its DAAPP program, while illicit drug prevention did not receive any scrutiny. SFA did not make a full determination in the effectiveness of the program.	SFA strengthened policies and procedures related to DAAPP. Procedures can be found on p. 15 of the revised Biennial Report [22] . University policy 13.11, Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse [23] was revised to comply with federal requirements.

Table 1 – 13.6 – ED Program Review Findings and SFA's Corrective Actions

As detailed in this response, SFA is compliant with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act and audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Approval Letter.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Eligibility and Certification Approval Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Program Participation Agreement.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Circular A 133.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SAO Engagement Letter for AY16-17.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Report No 18-314- 8.31.17 Federal Portion.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Report No 19-315- 8.31.18 Federal Portion.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Return of Title IV.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] 14-15 FISAP.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] 15-16 FISAP.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] 16-17 FISAP.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] 17-18 FISAP.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] FISAP 18-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] DOE Announcement Letter for Stephen F Austin University Program Review 01 2015.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] DOE April 2015 Department of Education Preliminary Program Review Report .pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] DOE final PR 05 2017.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Distance Ed Policy to Detect Fraud.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] SAP Policy .pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Verification P&P.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] Exit Process.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] Procedure for Selective Service Documentation.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] DAAPP Audit Response and Updated Biennial Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Policy 13.11, Drugs and Alcohol Abuse Policy.pdf](#)



13.7 The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

(Physical resources) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures adequate physical facilities and resources on and off campus that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission related activities. The academic physical facilities, buildings, and equipment at SFA fall under the supervision of the Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA); however, the Physical Plant Director manages the day-to-day facility operations and has responsibility for building maintenance, custodial services, grounds and street maintenance, space renovation, new construction, and master planning. The campus technology infrastructure is maintained by the SFA Information Technology Department, under the supervision of the Chief Information Officer; supports student learning; and uses well-maintained, innovative, reliable, and secure technology. See [SFA's Organization Charts \[01\]](#).

Physical Facilities

The university has 158 buildings with 2,287,539 net assignable square feet (ASF), of which 1,037,258 is classified as education and general (E&G). E&G space is used for teaching, research, or the preservation of knowledge, including the proportional share for those activities in any building or facility used jointly with an auxiliary enterprise, or space that is permanently unassigned; E&G space is supported by state appropriations. See SFA's [Building Inventory \[02\]](#). The campus has 59 total parking lots (including campus streets and four (4) parking garages) with approximately 8,139 parking spaces. See the [Campus Parking Map \[03\]](#). The university has approximately 1,210 acres of land in Nacogdoches County, Texas, with the main campus located on 421 acres in the heart of the city of Nacogdoches.

Academic Facilities

Thirty-four buildings are dedicated to academic delivery, research, and administration and include 117 classrooms, 15 auditoriums, 81 class-laboratories, and 118 research laboratories. All classrooms are equipped with audio-visual presentation technology and customized to meet the pedagogical requirements of the various academic departments. SFA recently embarked on a multi-year program to convert a select number of classrooms in each building into flexible learning environments, which support a broad range of collaborative teaching styles and incorporate a rich variety of classroom technologies. Furthermore, flexible learning environments propel SFA and its mission as



a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

The university's most recent space utilization data indicates that the institution currently has sufficient classroom and laboratory space to comfortably support its academic mission. See SFA's [Space Usage Efficiency Report \[04\]](#). On average, classrooms are used 29 hours per week with a 67 percent seat fill rate, and laboratories are used 25 hours per week with a 61 percent seat fill rate. Current utilization data indicates that an additional 2,000 plus students may be accommodated with our current classrooms and labs.

The Ralph W. Steen Library, located at the heart of the campus, provides access to relevant scholarly resources and services, flexible learning spaces, and technology support, helping students achieve academic success. The Library supports faculty, staff, and the larger academic community in the advancement of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, service, and the preservation of the cultural and historical identities of the University and East Texas. The library provides students with 237,044 square feet of space inclusive of 225 work stations, twenty study rooms, four computer labs, 2 million titles (books, journals, etc.), and 271 research databases for students, staff, and faculty. Library holdings are available to enrolled students regardless of the delivery method chosen for their course. Students' off-campus access the library resources and services directly from the library [website \[05\]](#) and have access to library and technical support. In addition to these available resources, the Library houses the Information Technology Departments Help Desk. For a further description of library facilities, see the narrative to Standard [11.1](#).

In addition to the main campus, SFA operates and maintains the following off-campus facilities and operations:

Science Research Center - A 15.7-acre facility with four buildings totaling 32,400 square feet. This space is currently designated as alteration or conversion area and storage space, with approximately 1,750 square feet used as research/non-class laboratory and an associated service area. Storage space at the facility is primarily occupied by the Physical Plant Department and the Department of Geology to store and process rock samples.

[Walter C. Todd Agricultural Research Center \[06\]](#) - A 728.7 acre teaching and research farm located approximately 10 miles north of the main campus. The facility's primary objective is providing hands-on instruction to undergraduate students, space to conduct graduate student driven research, and agricultural outreach to the community. The facility includes a beef center, broiler research center, equine center, poultry research center, sheep and goat center, and swine center. The [SFA Observatory \[07\]](#) is also located on the property and supports the physics and astronomy programs.

[Piney Woods Native Plant Center, SFA Mast Arboretum, Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, Gayla Mize Garden \[08\]](#) - In total, 68 acres of gardens and horticultural research facilities that provide



a natural learning environment for SFA agriculture, biology, and forestry students as well as providing for community outreach.

Richard and Lucille DeWitt School of Nursing – An 18.5 acre site with three buildings (administrative, educational, and annex) totaling 47,244 square feet. It includes the 9,000 square foot Ed and Gwen Cole Simulation Laboratory. This laboratory consists of a 10-bed medical surgical area, a labor and delivery area, a nursery and neonatal area, a health assessment lab, and an emergency room. In addition, the Laboratory has 11 high-fidelity mannequins, which can simulate any patient condition, and are operated by faculty from another area of the building.

Cole Art Center – Located in downtown Nacogdoches, this 9,460 square foot facility is used for year-round exhibitions of international, national, and regional art in three main galleries on two floors. The facility also features the Friday Film Series, poetry readings, and special events.

Off-Campus Instructional Sites

SFA has partnerships with several off-campus instructional locations which are sites located geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers 50% or more of its credit hours for a diploma, certificate, or degree. This includes high schools where courses are offered as part of dual enrollment. Such partnerships include Tyler Junior College (TJC) and Lone Star College-University Center Montgomery (LSCM). SFA and TJC formed a partnership that offers a Bachelor of Social Work. SFA and LSCM formed a partnership that offers courses at The Woodlands, TX, including a Bachelor of Social Work, a Bachelor of Business Administration – Sports Business, and a Master of Social Work.

SFA continues to see growth in our dual credit offerings at high schools. SFA offers 25% or more but less than 50% of a program at the following campuses:

- Burkeville High School
- Palestine High School
- Kirbyville High School
- Warren High School
- Longview High School
- Wills Point High School
- Newton High School
- Nacogdoches High School
- Cushing High School
- Center High School
- Garrison High School

The university ensures there are adequate physical facilities and resources in off-campus locations that appropriately serve the needs of the School of Social Work's educational programs with support services and other mission-related activities. To ensure academic needs are met, a staff member is assigned to review and facilitate the process of assessing the needs of academic programs at TJC and LSCM. Each of these locations has adequate physical resources for the



educational environment and includes facilities that are safe and appropriate for the scope of the institution's programs and services. Both of these off-site locations have dedicated classrooms, offices, and meeting spaces for students and faculty.

The physical facilities are adequate in quality, scope, and condition to support the mission of its programs and services. There are no specific areas of concerns in physical resources. Both TJC and LSCM are very accommodating in the provision of adequate resources to meet the academic needs of the School of Social Work offsite programs. The School of Social Work has sufficient resources to address challenges and to improve the programs. In addition, the university's budget process allows for thoughtful planning and program development. The School of Social Work's core fiscal allocation supports its central functions. This includes course instruction, field education, faculty salaries, travel, supplies and operations, and student recruitment. None of the School of Social Work's central activities are supported by soft funding, and all full-time faculty and staff lines are provided by state allocation. The academic programs have sufficient support staff, other personnel, and technological resources to support all their educational activities, mission, and goals. The programs also have additional workspace with computers, copier, fax machines, binding machines, scanners, and digital cameras. The off campus locations have sufficient supplies, journals, videos, books, and training materials. Technological resources are available campus-wide for additional support. Faculty computers are connected to the university-wide system, which provides email, internet, and various software packages. Annually, an assessment plan is implemented, and data collected and reviewed to determine needs for the academic programs.

The academic programs have adequate access to educational resources necessary for achieving their mission and goals. The university is fortunate to have a superb library and staff that focuses on each academic program. The Library and the School have a strong, positive on-going working relationship. For example, the Social Work Librarian maintains communication with students and faculty by participating in New Student Orientation, and works closely with faculty to ensure the most current and needed resources are available in the library. The University ensures that library resources are available to the School and all program options. Below is some information specifically related to library services for the programs.

Library Services for Off-Campus Instructional Sites:

Computers and Wireless Access: There are 60+ workstations in the library for SFA students to access. These computers will allow printing via a print card that may be purchased in the library. SFA students may also access the wireless network. They will need to see library staff for instructions.

Reserves: The library can put materials on reserve.

TexShare: Steen Library will work with the faculty and graduate assistants to get TexShare cards to the students who want them. SFA students then can access other libraries in the Houston area using their TexShare card.



Access to Electronic Resources and Interlibrary loan (ILL): In all locations, local staff of the libraries have created handouts available for students on how to access SFA electronic resources including how to place an ILL request.

Reference and Instruction: The SFA Steen, Tyler Junior College, and Lone Star Campus-University Center Libraries have partnered to support student learning. Students can ask questions at all locations. If the library cannot answer a question, they will contact the other library for assistance. The Steen Library liaison for a department providing courses at an offsite location will also contact involved faculty members prior to the semester's start to introduce herself/himself, SFA Steen's services, and services provided at libraries available at other locations.

Auxiliary Facilities

The importance of the physical facilities necessary for the support services and other mission-related activities within the Division of University Affairs is captured as part of the divisional mission statement. The mission of the University Affairs division is to provide transformative experiences for our students. This is accomplished through co-curricular programs that create opportunities for student engagement in high-impact learning activities. Further, the division provides activities that strengthen students' connections to the university and to each other. Targeted services support our students' pursuit of their personal and academic goals, and University Affairs develops and maintains the facilities necessary to fulfill its [mission \[09\]](#).

In 2018, SFA collaborated with Gensler, an architectural and design firm, on an Athletic Facilities Conceptual Programming, Planning, and Cost Estimation project for the current state and future planning of the athletic facilities. This project included a design team's strategic analysis, visioning, and conceptual programming of existing athletic facilities on the campus. The report includes a review of the existing athletic facilities, development of a project approach, an initial project vision, and a conceptual program for development and improvements to the following existing SFA facilities: Homer Bryce Stadium Fieldhouse, Jimmy W. Murphy Wellness Center, Homer Bryce Stadium, W.R. Johnson Coliseum, Shelton Gym, and the SFA Soccer Field Facilities.

All [residence facilities \[10\]](#) at SFA are located on the main campus in Nacogdoches. Currently, 15 residential facilities have a capacity of 4,726 revenue beds each semester. In Fall 2019, the residence halls were 88.3% occupied, housing 4,174 students. These facilities include 14 residence halls with a live-in hall director and an apartment complex for select STEM scholars. The hall directors maintain the community environment; coordinate building services, including safety and security; handle discipline issues; supervise service/support staff; and maintain hall administrative records. Approximately 130 student staff members (Community Assistants) are peer mentors that live in the residence halls. The Residence Life Operations division conducts maintenance and provides 24/7 emergency response for residential facilities with the assistance of the SFA Physical Plant and outside contractors as required.

SFA requires students to live on campus until they have earned at least 60 semester hours or have turned 21 or have an approved off-campus permit. All first-year students who live on



campus live in one of six residence halls located together in an area of the campus referred to as the first-year commons area. First-year residence halls are focused on helping first-year students adjust to campus life and improve the first year retention rate by providing academic programming and other critical resources. The Ed and Gwen Cole Student Success Center, located on the first floor of the Lumberjack Landing freshman residence hall, is where tutoring and supplemental instruction classes are provided for freshmen along with study rooms and a computer lab.

Annual student satisfaction surveys are conducted to monitor student satisfaction with their campus living/learning environment. Surveys show that over 70% of residents that responded agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with living in their residence hall, as well as the quality of the residential facility in which they live. Over 96% of the students respected their hall staff members.

In 2017, SFA completed construction of a 20,000 square foot facility that houses the maintenance and custodial operations for the Residence Life Operations Department. The Residence Life Operations Department employs three (3) administrative staff members, 45 full-time custodial staff members, and eight (8) full-time maintenance staff members. In addition, the department employs between 25 and 50 part-time student maintenance helpers, 14 part-time custodian helpers, and six (6) part-time student office helpers.

Recreational Facilities

SFA offers a wide variety of activities designed to provide students with opportunities to develop healthy lifestyle habits, make new friends, and forge lasting relationships. The recreational facilities include highly qualified staff, approximately 125,000 square feet of indoor facilities, and more than 10 acres of outdoor venues. Through the facilities and services offered by Student Services and Campus Recreation, Lumberjacks are provided transformative experiences that directly enhance and support the educational mission of the university. These facilities include:

[Baker Pattillo Student Center \(BPSC\) \[11\]](#) - This 224,000-square foot building is located on the main campus. The Student Center is the hub of on-campus activities, including student government, dining, meetings/conferences, banking, and mail service, as well as a host of cultural, social, and recreational programs. Use of the facility is subject to SFA [policy 16.26 Student Center Operations \[12\]](#).

[Food Service \[13\]](#) – Dining on campus includes two major cafeterias serving approximately 4200 meal plan subscribers. One cafeteria is conveniently located on the north side of campus near several residence halls, and the second cafeteria is located in the student center. Both cafeterias are open to any student regardless of meal plan choice. The cafeterias were redesigned in 2007 and both were refreshed in 2016. SFA contracts with Aramark to provide dining services on campus. Dining services currently offer ten name brand retail outlets and two convenience stores. These outlets are open to all students, faculty, staff, and the public.



[Student Recreation Center \[14\]](#) – An award winning, 78,820 square foot recreation center provides 12,000 square feet of cardio and weight training equipment, group exercise studios (e.g. aerobics, yoga, dance, group cycling), an indoor walking/running track, indoor basketball/volleyball and racquetball courts, a 34 foot indoor rock climbing wall, an 80,000 square foot outdoor courtyard with basketball and sand volleyball courts, an outdoor aquatic facility, and a wellness area housing a massage therapist, dietician, and employee wellness office.

HPE Complex – Includes the following recreation spaces: a main gym area housing five full-sized basketball courts that can also be used for volleyball, badminton, and other sports; 2,200 square foot cardio/weight training room; five racquetball courts; and a 5,000-square foot indoor pool with lap lanes and diving area.

Shelton Gym – A 10,000 square foot facility that houses the women’s volleyball venue and that can be used as a full-sized basketball court (or two half courts) or be used for other inside group activities.

Tennis Complex – A 2,800 square foot facility featuring 8 competition courts with lights, 4 recreational courts without lights, and 4 recreational courts with lights.

Intramural Fields – A total of four lighted fields – encompassing approximately 8.5 acres of land – used for softball, flag football, soccer, ultimate rugby, and more.

Other recreational facilities include the LT Kile G. West Memorial Obstacle Course adjacent to the student recreation center, used by the ROTC program, and 38 acres of mountain bike and hiking trails.

Technological Infrastructure

The department of [Information Technology Services \(ITS\) \[15\]](#) maintains the availability, functionality, and security of the university's technological infrastructure, which includes wired and wireless campus network infrastructures, wide-area network communications, private intranet portal, administrative computer systems, e-mail services, and telephone system. ITS also provides computer services and help desks for students, faculty, and staff.

SFA supports a wide array of information technology systems that aid in content delivery and interaction with students in both face-to-face and online classes. ITS operates two data centers on the SFA campus, which are equipped with uninterruptible power supplies, backup generators, and automatic transfer switches. One of the data centers serves as the primary computing facility housing most of the university’s enterprise data systems, the systems data base analysts, and programming groups. The other data center houses the university’s core networking and telecommunications equipment and serves as the backup datacenter where additional storage and disaster recovery equipment is housed. The latter facility also houses the networking and technical support groups. This level of redundancy has been implemented to safeguard the availability of the technologies utilized for delivery of SFA programs. Infrastructure security is



governed by the following policies: [14.1 Information Security Management \[16\]](#) and [14.2 Acceptable Use of Information Resources \[17\]](#).

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and ITS manage the technology infrastructure supporting distance education classes, off-campus programs, and on campus offerings. Safeguards are in place to guard against data loss or misuse as it pertains to SFA learning environments. Distance education programs are offered through the Learning Management System (LMS) [Brightspace by D2L \[18\]](#). The Center for Teaching and Learning administers the D2L system. The LMS and related course content are self-hosted on servers owned and maintained by SFA. SFA uses the campus Single Sign On (SSO) environment for students to gain access to the systems. SSO is enabled in the campus portal [\(mySFA\) \[19\]](#) and encrypted to allow users secure access to D2L.

SFA created a "keeping up with technological advancements in classrooms" initiative that calls for budgeted classroom technology and delivery support upgrades to the university. The following budgets were enacted to address the needs of aging technology:

- 2019 - \$347,000
- 2018 - \$300,000
- 2017 - \$550,000
- 2016 - \$100,000
- 2015 - \$150,000

Master Planning and Campus Planning

The university created a [2020 Campus Master Plan \[20\]](#), which updated the 2006 Campus Master Plan. The master plan was prepared with the idea of guiding SFA through 2020 and was instrumental in guiding the SFA Envisioned Strategic Plan 2015 – 2023.

This plan is driven by student enrollment, academic development, and student-life needs. The document serves as a roadmap that takes into consideration short, intermediate, and long-term campus and infrastructure needs. An overall goal of the plan is to present a future campus vision that builds upon the University's legacy, tradition, stewardship, values, and accomplishments. The creation of the Campus Master Plan Update utilized the guidance of multiple university and community stakeholders to inform the development of goals, options, and implementation of the framework plan. The SFA campus master planning process involved an assessment, development, synthesis, and implementation phase. This plan guides the development of the infrastructure and landscaping of the built environment supporting the mission and strategic intent of the university.

The master plan supports an expected enrollment growth from approximately 13,000 to 15,000 students by the year 2020, plus a long-range framework to support an enrollment growth to as many as 18,000 students. Proposed projects in the master plan include approximately \$270,000,000 in new construction, building renovation work, utility, and IT infrastructure



upgrades; road and pedestrian way improvements; and energy reduction initiatives. The plan also addresses select deferred maintenance issues.

Projects recently completed include a new 101,910 square foot STEM building, and a 35,000 square foot Residence Life Operations and printing facility.

Projects currently underway include:

- Fine Arts expansion and renovation
- Student residential and dining facilities
- Welcome center and student support services/one-stop shop
- Basketball practice facility
- Space realignment
 - The intent of the space realignment is to fund various campus departmental moves resulting from the FP&C space study and swing space in preparation for upcoming construction.

In addition to the campus master plan, in [April 2016 \[21\]](#), the SFA Board of Regents approved the hiring of an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current and future space usage to develop an [interior master plan \[22\]](#). The plan allows for the allocation of existing education and general (E&B) space that efficiently and effectively locates academic, administrative, and student support activities. The plan identifies and establishes the size and relationships of existing and planned spaces, develops appropriate factors for estimating FTE space allocations, projects budgets, and creates specific project schedules to guide future space usage aligned with the university's [policy 16.3, Space Assignment, Management, and Planning \[23\]](#). The recommendations of the assessment were approved by the board in [July 2018 \[24\]](#), as well as funding for the initial phases of the plan.

Additionally, SFA uses Astra Schedule, a web-based, university-wide scheduling and calendaring system, to actively manage all campus E&G space to best support the academic mission of the university.

Maintenance of Academic and Auxiliary Facilities

The Physical Plant Department (PPD), which reports directly to the university's vice president for finance and administration, is responsible for providing the maintenance of academic and auxiliary facilities for the SFA campus. The physical plant's mission is to provide an environment that supports the mission and core values of the university in an efficient, safe, and cost-effective manner.

The physical plant employs full time in-house personnel for the following services and trades: administration, construction management, mechanical maintenance (HVAC, electrical, electronics, plumbing), building trades (carpentry, painting, graphics, locksmith), grounds maintenance (general, arbor care, irrigation), custodial services (general, recycling), and transportation services (fleet maintenance, bus service, trash removal, heavy equipment



operators). This group is tasked with providing services and maintaining campus facilities. Additionally, SFA's Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management department (EHS&RM), which also reports directly to the university's Vice President for Finance and Administration, ensures that buildings meet applicable fire/life safety codes by working directly with the state authority having jurisdiction.

Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management - The administration of SFA recognizes the significance of providing a safe working and teaching environment for both employees and students. Fulfilling educational philosophies and protecting facility assets are important priorities. Institutional planning, with an emphasis placed on practical approaches to problem solving and risk control, are standards commonly adhered to in a university environment. Multiple policies and procedures address controlling the total cost of risk while meeting the goals of conserving the physical and financial resources of the institution. These policies and procedures include Risk Management, Health and Safety, Environmental Management, Worker's Compensation, and many more. It is the responsibility of the university administration to communicate the campus risk management policy and procedures to university personnel. In so doing, university personnel are educated on the concepts of safety and risk management. By demonstrating the ability to analyze exposure to loss and by implementing measures to control these losses, the image of the university is improved in the marketplace and in the community.

The function of risk management is to minimize the adverse effects of events, be it physical or financial, through the implementation of three basic tools:

Avoidance. Risk is avoided by refusing to assume it. This is not always wise or possible, as it may mean an end to an operation in a specific area.

Loss Prevention and Reduction. When a risk cannot be avoided, it can often be reduced and the severity of losses lessened through the proper training of staff, maintenance of equipment, updating of policies and procedures, and implementation of adequate emergency procedures.

Transfer. If a risk cannot be avoided, it can be transferred to others. In negotiating contracts, the risk manager may recommend an insurance clause be included requiring evidence of the other party's insurance coverage. This type of document is a "certificate of insurance," and where appropriate the institution may need to be named as an additional insured under the contractor's policy.

EHSRM (Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management or the Safety Dept.) makes the physical well-being of the university properties the highest priority to protect students and employees from preventable safety incidents, thus minimizing exposures and potential impact to SFA property. The Safety Dept. performs fire extinguisher maintenance in all the buildings, fire drills, and compliance of all applicable codes and regulations related to environmental health and safety in all departments on campus. EHSRM also works with the State Fire Marshal's Office, SORM, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and other regulating authorities when they periodically audit the campus. The Safety D also responds to any audit findings, making



sure the work orders get issued, violations get resolved, and compliance reports submitted to the auditing authorities. The University Physical Plant maintains other fire suppression systems on the buildings, and the Safety Dept. oversees and follows-up to make sure full compliance is maintained.

The University participates in the SORM (State Office of Risk Management) insurance program. This program provides broad insurance coverage designed to address catastrophic risks faced by the University. The program transfers these risks from SFA to highly rated insurance companies, with coverage tailored specifically to the unique risks of a university campus.

Physical resources, specifically buildings and property, are protected by purchasing property insurance through SORM and again transferring the risk to the SORM property insurance companies.

All State entities, including SFA, are required to have an Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in case of a catastrophic event. The university has a [BCP \[25\]](#) in place along with a [Continuity of Operations Plan \(COOP\) \[26\]](#) and an Emergency Preparedness Plan to cover all aspects of an event. These plans of action are updated regularly, and the COOP is submitted annually to [SORM \[27\]](#) for any new updates or changing regulations that would need to be added to the document. Tabletop exercises have been performed and tested to make sure the emergency plans work.

Property Insurance – Through the State of Texas SORM Insurance Program, the university protects its property by purchasing the following:

- Property – This covers all buildings and property on campus and outlying university property: \$570 million in coverage, \$250,000 deductible.
- Property Inland Marine – This is physical coverage for equipment with a smaller \$5,000 deductible.
- Equipment Breakdown - \$300 million in coverage for almost all perils and a \$10,000 deductible.
- Auto – Comprehensive and Liability coverage for all scheduled vehicles and liability coverage for MUV's (motorized utility vehicles); \$1 million in coverage per accident for claims not subject to the Texas Tort Claims Act.
- General Liability – Accident coverage protection for the University, which includes \$1,000,000 per accident and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.

All property insurance coverage meets at least the minimum standard insurance requirements and mostly provides larger, broader coverage than would normally be required. Property and General Liability insurance includes a time element coverage, which will reimburse for actual business loss, and a building content coverage which is actual replacement costs coverage for items in the buildings that are destroyed in an event. Many properties have been appraised recently and updated in the property valuations, and upon annual renewal, a 3.75% inflation increase is added to the valuations to account for an increase in building construction costs.



Physical Property and Inventory - The director of procurement & property services and associated property managers are responsible for the overall management of university property, maintenance and control of centralized property records, and disposition of surplus and salvage property in accordance with

- [Texas Government Code § 403.2715 \[28\]](#),
- [Government Code § 2054.003\(3\)\(A\) \[29\]](#),
- [Government Code § 2054.130 \[29\]](#),
- [Government Code § 2203.004 \[30\]](#),
- [Government Code §§ 2175.905, 2175.304 \[31\]](#),
- [University Policy 17.14, Property Inventory and Management \[32\]](#),
- [University Policy 16.22, Property Liability \[33\]](#).

In accordance with university policy [17.14 \[32\]](#), "property is to be monitored on a perpetual basis both by the property office and by university property custodians." See the [Property Management Manual \[34\]](#). "Once per year a property inventory audit will be conducted in one of two ways: 1) physical count by the department, or 2) bar code scan by the property office. The signed [Annual Property Inventory Audit Certification form \[35\]](#) must be returned to the property manager by the deadline stated in the property inventory instructions." Additionally, "departments may be required to write a detailed plan for monitoring and accounting for department property. A [template \[36\]](#) for the plan will be provided by the property manager and can be found on the Procurement and Property Services website."

Property Disposal - University property is to be disposed of as described in the property management manual, with the exception that disposition of property acquired through federal or state grants and contracts must respect the terms of the grant or contract under which it was acquired. The property manager will determine the disposal option that complies with Texas [Government Code § 2175.304 and § 2175.905 \[31\]](#) and best meets the needs of the university.

All property sales, including scrap metal, are to be overseen by the property office. All sale proceeds will be deposited to the surplus sales account, unless otherwise approved by the vice president for finance and administration.

Where possible hard drives ("loose", internal or external), memory cards from printers or scanners, or copiers must have all data removed before final disposal of the property. Memory cards from printers or scanners will be destroyed by the property office. Hard drives will be degaussed, destroyed, or overwritten, and the disposal will be documented. Procurement will work with departments to document that data stored on copiers is removed before a copier leaves the campus.

The [Internal Audit Department \[37\]](#) has researched and discussed these reports, and they do not have any findings related to Fixed Assets in the Auditor's Report on Internal Controls or the Federal Awards Audit.



Planned & Deferred Maintenance - SFA assimilates information from various engineering reports, in-depth knowledge of trade forepersons, and input from key facility personnel from various departments, to develop a campus condition assessment report. This report evaluates the condition of building systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, vertical transportation, fire/life safety, envelopes, and interiors) and identifies deficiencies that would likely require maintenance and funding beyond the scope of preventative maintenance and normal wear and tear. This information is also used to identify buildings that could be categorized as deferred maintenance, which The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board defines as a building system that is broken and has gone through an entire cycle (year).

In January and July of each year, key facility personnel provide critical input regarding campus deficiencies or improvement opportunities, including various building systems, utility infrastructure, and various components of the grounds. In January, this list is prioritized and presented in a report that summarizes estimated costs over a five-year period by building/area, and classification for review by the SFA [Board of Regents \[38\]](#). In July of the same year, the highest prioritized projects are ranked and submitted with a justification narrative and estimated cost for approval by the [Board of Regents \[39\]](#). All approved projects are coordinated; specified; and bid, scheduled, and performed in accordance with applicable SFA policies and procedures.

General Maintenance - Preventative and predictive maintenance for all applicable equipment is performed per original equipment manufacturer guidelines and industry best practices and coordinated with academic activities. Fire and life safety equipment testing and documentation is performed per NFPA requirements by a certified, licensed company. Elevators are maintained by an outside contractor consistent with industry best standards and are inspected annually by a state certified inspector. Boilers are maintained by staff personnel and inspected every one to three years per the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation guidelines. Infrared thermal scanning of high voltage electrical transformers is performed on a rotating basis. SFA grounds are maintained in accordance with the scope of work contained in the Grounds Management manual.

Preventative maintenance templates for various equipment types are set up, scheduled, and tracked in a computerized maintenance management system (AiM by AssetWorks) consistent with original equipment manufacturer recommendations, industry best practices, and tradesperson experience.

Space Modification - In 2015, SFA implemented a process to streamline and standardize space modification and design requests. All requests categorized as structural remodel, building system remodel, interior finishes, space function change, new space, technology, or equipment are reviewed by a Space Modification Committee consisting of representatives from key departments (e.g., Academic Affairs, University Affairs, Physical Plant, Safety, Information Technology, Procurement and Property Services). The committee examines all requests for scope and potential costs for submission to the vice presidents of the university. Approved projects are prioritized, funded, scheduled, and routed accordingly for completion. This process improves the stewardship of all [space \[40\]](#), ensures compliance to various building and safety



codes, safeguards against system overloads or incompatibilities, tracks service/system warranties, and generally maintains uniformity throughout the campus.

Facilities Assessments - Inspections conducted on E&G space assess the physical components of the exterior architectural elements, public areas, mechanical areas, and services provided (i.e. custodial). In addition, all Physical Plant personnel are encouraged to exercise casual attentiveness while performing their regular duties and report any deficiencies through the departmental work control center. SFA addressed the immediate needs of aging infrastructure and buildings with the following strategies. SFA strategically incorporates a capital renewal program into an energy savings performance contract (ESCO) with Siemens Industries. SFA extended a STEM project to encompass and address infrastructure issues.

The physical plant also conducts two surveys (customer and student) to seek critical feedback on the various services provided. Annually, key administrative people within the various academic and support departments (customers) have an opportunity to rate the quality of the services they have received. The [customer survey \[41\]](#) specifically tracks building trades, service technicians, custodial activities, and overall grounds appearance. The annual [student survey \[42\]](#) solicits feedback on interior space cleanliness, temperature and humidity, interior and exterior signage, elevator reliability, campus grounds, and shuttle service. All improvement opportunities relayed to the appropriate personnel for resolution ensure the physical environment supports a safe and healthy learning environment.

SFA participates in the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory on even-numbered years. Students participating in the 2014, 2016, and 2018 [inventories \[43\]](#) had favorable responses regarding three facility related questions in the survey, where a score of 4 was neutral. SFA students report that the campus is safe and secure, and that library resources, services, and computer labs are adequate and accessible. Over the four-year period [44], SFA has bridged the performance gap (difference between relative importance and satisfaction score) for the three categories as follows:

- The campus is safe and secure for all students – 28.0%
- Library resources and services are adequate – 18.2%
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible – 55.6%








As evidenced and detailed in the response above, SFA ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the university's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Organization Charts.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Building Inventory THECB Facilities Inventory 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Campus Parking Map.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] SFA Space Usage Efficiency THECB Space Usage Efficiency \(SUE\) Fall 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Ralph W Steen Library Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] Walter C Todd Agricultural Research Center.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] SFA Observatory.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] SFA Gardens.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] SFA University Affairs Mission.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] SFA Residence Halls.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] SFA Baker Pattillo Student Center.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 16.26, Student Center Operations.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] SFA Campus Dining.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] SFA Student Rec Center.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] SFA Information Technology Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 14.1, Information Security Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Policy 14.2, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] SFA Brightspace by D2L.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] mySFA D2L.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] SFA Campus Master Plan 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] BOR Meeting Minutes April 8, 2011 - December 2016.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] SFA FP&C Campus Space Utilization July 23, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] Policy 16.3, Space Assignment Management and Planning.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] BOR Meeting Minutes July 22-24, 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] Safety Business Continuity Plan 7-10-18.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] 2020 SFA Continuity of Operations Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] COOP Review Letter 8-21-2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 403 Comptroller of Public Accounts.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2054 Information Resources.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2203 Use of State Property.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] Texas Govt. Code Chapter 2175 Surplus and Salvage Property.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] Policy 17.14, Property Inventory and Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Policy 16.22, Property Liability.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] Property Management Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Property Approval Form.pdf](#)



-  [\[36\] SFA Department Property Control Plan Template.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] Audit Findings.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] Report to the Board January 26-28, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Report to the Board July 21-23, 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Space Projection Model Fall 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[41\] PPD Customer Satisfaction Survey Results.pdf](#)
-  [\[42\] Student Survey Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[43\] Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory Table \(5-15-19\).pdf](#)



13.8 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.
(*Institutional environment*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) works diligently to maintain a safe, healthy, and secure environment to address the needs of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors and optimize the learning, work, and life experience on the campus. Since our last SACSCOC review, SFA has been ranked by the National Council for Home Safety and Security as one of the safest colleges in Texas and America. SFA ranked as the 3rd safest college campus in Texas and in the top 100 Safest Colleges in America for [2018 \[01\]](#). SFA is very proud of this accomplishment, but no one individual or department can take full responsibility for our health, safety, and security success. The overall health, safety, and security of our campus relies on community teamwork between faculty, staff, the student body, and various interrelated departments: Department of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management; University Police Department; Physical Plant Department; Residence Life; Human Resources; Health Services; Counseling and Career Services; Student Affairs; and the Campus Recreation Department. These groups work both independently and collectively utilizing innovative technology, safety policy, procedure, training, and inspections to optimize the learning experience and minimize the risks associated with a diverse work force and student base in a complex and dynamic environment [\[02\]](#) [\[03\]](#).

Crucial health, safety, and security components include:

- Occupational and environmental safety programs and services;
- Student health and counseling services;
- Residential life programs for students utilizing on-campus housing;
- Comprehensive recreation and wellness programs; and
- Public safety and security service.

Safety Plan and Implementation

SFA's safety plan is comprised of many policies and procedures that have been created to provide a set of guidelines to ensure the safety of our students, visitors, faculty, and staff. While the overall health, safety, and security of the campus is a team effort, the SFA [Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management \(EHS&RM\) Department \[04\]](#) is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective safety policy, programs, training, and inspections in the following areas:



- [fire and life safety \[05\]](#)
- [chemical, biological, and radiological safety \[06\]](#)
- [laboratory/general/shop safety \[07\]](#)
- [occupational health \[08\]](#)
- [hazardous materials management \[09\]](#)
- [industrial hygiene \[10\]](#)
- [asbestos management \[11\]](#)
- [accident and injury prevention \[08\]](#)
- [environmental management and compliance \[12\]](#)
- [emergency response \[13\]](#)
- [risk management \[14\]](#)
- loss control
- insurance (Property, General Liability, Automobile, Crime, Equipment Breakdown, Directors and Officers/Cyber, Worker's Compensation, Medical Malpractice, Study Abroad)

EHS&RM and the campus work hard to assure the safety plan is in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations such as Risk Management for Texas State Agencies Guidelines, Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ), OSHA, EPA, and the National Fire Protection Association, as well as meets academic policies and procedures, guidelines, goals and objectives established by SFA.

Some specific SFA policies and procedures related to safety, health, and risk management include:

- [13.19, Health and Safety, Risk Management \[14\]](#)
- [12.23, Workers Compensation Coverage \[15\]](#)
- [13.26, Environmental Management \[12\]](#)
- [13.24, Radiation, Fire and Life Safety \[16\]](#)
- [11.6, Drug and Alcohol Testing \[17\]](#)
- [16.23, Rental of University Vehicles \[18\]](#)
- [13.4, Asbestos Management \[19\]](#)
- [Fire Extinguisher and Fire Drills \[20\]](#)
- [Lock Out/Tag Out \[21\]](#)
- [Hot Work Permitting \[22\]](#)
- [Hearing Conservation \[23\]](#)
- [Bloodborne Pathogens \[24\]](#)
- [Lab Safety \[07\]](#)
- [Hazardous Materials Disposal \[09\]](#)

As part of a continuous improvement initiative, EHS&RM reviews its safety policies and procedures on a continuous basis. In addition to policy and procedure, an online comprehensive Safety and Health Program lies at the heart of SFA's proactive efforts to ensure the campus is a safe learning, working, and living environment.



In order to ensure SFA safety policies, procedures, and programs are followed and understood by the campus constituents, safety training and inspections are conducted. Safety training is a priority and is tailored for various constituents on the campus from student's safety living in the residence halls (safety handbook, fire drills) to faculty working with chemicals. See [Safety Training Logs \[25\]](#). Employees of the Physical Plant Department and Residence Life Operations receive training programs each month covering a wide variety of OSHA, EPA, and Risk Management topics designed to minimize risk exposure associated with various work functions. This [roster \[26\]](#) from a recent training on asbestos awareness is just one example of the types of trainings provided. Once policy and procedures have been established and employees have received training to ensure understanding, [inspections \[27\]](#) are conducted and documented in order to monitor the safety of the campus.

Administrative Responsibility and Reporting Structure

The overall health, safety, and security of the SFA campus relies on teamwork between faculty, staff, and the student body. However, the administrative departments who are responsible to carry out the safety, security, and health plans for the campus are made up of the following areas: Department of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management; University Police Department (UPD); Physical Plant Department; Student Affairs (Health Services, Counseling, and Career and Professional Development, etc.); Residence Life; Department of Campus Recreation; and Human Resources. These groups work both independently and collectively to ensure a healthy and safe learning, working, and living environment.

Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management

The SFA director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management is responsible for planning and directing the activities of the EHS&RM department and reports directly to the vice president for [finance and administration \[02\]](#). The current director is a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHHM), Certified Professional Environmental Auditor in Health and Safety (CPEA), Radiation and Laser Safety Officer, and Certified Public Manager (CPM), and is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) of campus fire and life safety. The [director \[28\]](#) also holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, a Master of Business Administration, and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. Due to the nature of the responsibilities associated with the director, the position is designated as security sensitive.

University Police Department (Department of Public Safety)

The executive director of public safety/chief of police is responsible for overseeing all university police operations, compliance, and reporting. The executive director runs a team of highly trained and dedicated professionals working with all key SFA departments to ensure a safe and secure environment is provided at all times. The chief reports directly to the vice president of university affairs. SFA hired a new executive director of public safety/chief of police at the end of 2019. This [individual \[29\]](#) holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, a Master of Public Administration, and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. He has a background in municipal and higher education law enforcement. [UPD \[30\]](#) is governed through the concept of community



oriented policing to meet the needs of a progressive institution by providing crime prevention and control, criminal investigations, traffic and parking supervision, emergency services, public order management, campus patrols, and other related services. Other [services \[31\]](#) provided by UPD include a safety escort program for nighttime, on-campus pedestrians, and emergency call station installation, maintenance, and servicing throughout campus.

Physical Plant

The SFA [Physical Plant Department \(PPD\) \[32\]](#) performs nearly all tasks necessary to maintain the equivalent of a small city on a daily basis. This includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); plumbing; electrical and carpenters; painters; locksmiths; signs/graphics; grounds maintenance; transportation service and maintenance; fire and life safety equipment maintenance; and custodial staffing for all on and off campus facilities. The Physical Plant Department is led by a director who reports directly to the vice president of finance and administration. The PPD director holds a Master of Science in Human Sciences and has over 20 years' experience in the Physical Plant Department. See [PPD Director resume \[33\]](#). He has served the university for 25 years. In addition to the director, the various trades within the PPD undergo monthly job-specific training presented in order to minimize risk associated with specific job functions while holding and maintaining required [licenses and/or certifications \[34\]](#) (electricians, plumbers, HVAC technicians). With its widespread presence and intimate knowledge of campus operations, the PPD plays a pivotal role in the safety and security of the university.

Student Affairs

Student Affairs is committed to providing students the highest level of commitment and service and creating a truly personalized learning experience by providing resources for students to succeed academically and in co-curricular programs, maintaining a nurturing and healthy place for students to learn, and delivering activities and [programs \[35\]](#) that make campus life exciting.

The Department of Student Affairs is led by the dean, who has served in this position for more than 12 years. The [dean \[36\]](#) holds a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration and reports directly to the vice president of university affairs. The Department of Student Affairs plays an integral role in safeguarding public health on [campus \[37\]](#) through collaboration with Counseling Services, Career and Professional Development, Disability Services, Health Services, the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Title IX Office.

Residence Life

The SFA [Residence Life Department \[38\]](#) staff works diligently to provide a healthy, clean, safe, and secure environment for our residential students. With approximately 5,000 on-campus students each semester, security is the highest priority for SFA Residence Life. The Residence Life Department is led by a [director \[39\]](#) with more than 30 years of experience in residence life who holds a Master in Counselor Education. In order to provide the safest possible environment



for residents, the department employs applicable technological solutions (emergency call stations outside each hall, a card key access control system, and video surveillance) and works closely with the University Police Department; the Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Department; and the Physical Plant Department to leverage SFA campus resources. Hierarchically, the residence life director reports to the student services director; the student services director reports to the vice president for university affairs; and, the vice president reports to the president.

SFA Residence Life employs 80 full-time staff members, who provide residence hall supervision; judicial oversight; programming activities; custodial, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, and paint services; work control administration; and oversight of contracted services. In addition, approximately 175 part-time student assistants provide supplemental facility service support and contribute to hall rule enforcement efforts and front desk responsibilities. All full-time housing positions are security sensitive, requiring new hires to undergo an extensive background check by [Hire Right \[40\]](#), an outside agency.

The Residence Life Department works with the Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Office each semester to conduct [fire drills \[41\]](#) in all residential facilities and ensure compliance with all applicable fire/life safety codes. Emergency evacuation plans and exit path lighting are located throughout each building. Staff members conduct safety checks of all housing facilities on a regular basis and process work requests as necessary for any potential safety or maintenance concern. Staff training sessions are held each semester with the University Police Department and the Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Department to make sure that residence hall personnel are properly trained in various emergency situations.

Campus Recreation

The SFA [Campus Recreation Department \[42\]](#) consists of a well-trained staff that manages various recreational programs and provides the following services to help meet campus health and safety needs: Fitness & Wellness, Intramural Sports, Sport Clubs, Aquatics, Outdoor Pursuits, Little Jack Rec Camp, and Employee Wellness. The Campus Recreation Department is located in the Student Recreation Center, which features 78,000 square feet of indoor workout and exercise facilities, 16 tennis courts, and an 80,000 square foot courtyard and outdoor pool. The campus recreation [director \[43\]](#) reports directly to the vice president of university affairs, who reports to the president.

The Campus Recreation Department offers many wellness programs and events for the well-being and enjoyment of students and the SFA community. There are several wellness events to inform and educate students about certain health issues and about living a healthy lifestyle. In the Student Recreation Center, a wellness service center offers massage therapy and nutrition counseling. In addition, the [wellness program \[44\]](#) offers a calendar of wellness events throughout the year for engagement and educational purposes.

SFA faculty and staff are eligible to participate in the [Employee Wellness Connection \(EWC\) program \[45\]](#). The EWC is designed to create opportunities for education and participation in



programs that will improve the overall health and wellness of each SFA employee. Program offerings include instructor-conducted water aerobics, aqua-fit and fitness classes, HPE weight room use, noontime basketball and soccer, and programs such as the Wellness Challenge and Lumberjack Fitness Academy.

Human Resources

The [Office of Human Resources \[46\]](#) provides services to the faculty and staff in the areas of employment, benefits, compensation, employee relations, and training. The department continuously updates policies and procedures with the approval of the SFA Board of Regents. A comprehensive [employee handbook \[47\]](#), which can be accessed online, contains policies consisting of employee health and safety issues such as discrimination and harassment and alcohol and a drug free workplace. In addition, the department communicates the university's commitment to health and safety and the roles and responsibilities of each employee through training and orientation. The Human Resources [director \[48\]](#) reports to the vice president of finance and administration, who reports to the president.

Crisis Communication Plan

SFA maintains a comprehensive [Emergency Management Plan \[49\]](#) that establishes policies ([Emergency Operation Policy \[50\]](#) updated April 30, 2019), procedures, organizational structure, and crisis communication for response to emergencies that are of enough magnitude to cause a significant disruption of university functions at on and off campus sites. This plan describes the roles and responsibilities of departments, schools, and personnel during and after emergencies. The emergency procedures are designed to protect lives and property through effective use of university and community resources.

Since emergencies are sudden and without warning, these procedures are designed to be flexible in order to accommodate contingencies of various types and magnitudes and can change at the direction of the Emergency Operations Center, which is headed by the vice president for university affairs who serves as the emergency management coordinator. The [Emergency Management Plan \[49\]](#) also addresses emergency training and crisis communication. All Emergency Operation Center staff have received National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, and all new faculty and staff are presented with emergency planning and crisis communication information at SFA's new [employee training program \[51\]](#). UPD personnel are the first responders to any emergency on campus and have hired a full time director of emergency management to centralize the emergency procedures across campus. The Finance and Administration Division also maintains a [Continuity of Operation Plan \(COOP\) \[13\]](#) and [Business Continuity Plan \[52\]](#) for post-emergency procedures.

SFA also provides a timely warning system (Crisis Communication) that allows for students, faculty, staff, and other members of the campus community to have immediate and clear notice of emergencies. Such incidents include, but are not limited to, weather, arson, burglary, criminal homicide, robbery, or sex offenses. This [Crisis Communication System \[53\]](#) is activated each time an incident, accident, or mock drill or exercise is executed upon campus. It encompasses all



communication within UPD as well as outside supporting agencies (Nacogdoches Police Department, Nacogdoches Sheriff's Department, and Nacogdoches Fire Department). These emergency communications and alerts are delivered in multiple methods including an outdoor siren test, which is tested on a monthly basis. SFA also utilizes a website ([JackAlert](#)) system [54] to notify all subscribers via text message, voice call, email, social media, and campus cable TV. UPD has also added "[Lumberjack Guardian](#)" [55], which is a mobile phone app, to enhance campus safety through real-time interactive features that create a virtual safety network of friends, family, and university police. Features include a panic button, tip texting to report crimes anonymously, personal guardians and safety timer, and a safety profile.

During a crisis, an alert may be developed in a variety of ways. The chief of police and the director of university marketing communications, or their designee, choose the most effective and timely method of notification that focuses on ensuring a consistent message across all forms of university communication. Such warnings may include, but are not limited to, the following information: type of crime committed; date, time, and location of the crime; and available suspect information and safety tips.

The synergy in the crisis communication plan is due to the regularly scheduled monthly meetings that are held by the Emergency Management Committee. See the [Crisis Communication System](#) [53] and [meeting minutes](#) [56]. The Emergency Management Committee (EMC) is a university-wide committee consisting of representatives from across the institution. The committee's mission is to collaborate on emergency management strategies and initiatives designed to enhance preparedness and improve the university's ability to respond to, and recover from, all threats. The EMC engages in special meetings called for larger events and meetings that are held by the University Police Department.

SFA's full crisis communication plan is found in the [Emergency Operation Procedures \(EOP\)](#) [57]. The Emergency Operations Procedures are implemented in the SFA emergency operations center (EOC), which is located in the University Police Department. It is fully equipped with an emergency generator and both internal and external communication sources. The UPD is also the hub for monitoring and recording campus activity via 750 plus video surveillance cameras. They are also responsible for maintaining approximately 300 yellow emergency call boxes located throughout campus to provide people with a direct line to the University Police Department. Police escorts, an evening shuttle bus, and vehicle trouble assistance are offered. More than 900 surveillance cameras are in operation, and approximately 100 automated external defibrillators are positioned across campus.

Students living on campus have [evacuation plans](#) [58] posted on every residence hall bedroom door, and fire drills occur bi-annually. All classrooms have [emergency posters](#) [59] with SFA's evacuation, shelter in place processes, and lock down processes. The SFA Charter School and Early Childhood Lab, consisting of day care to 5th grade, have an [emergency operation plan](#) [60] approved by the State of Texas mandated Safety and Security Committee. The plan addresses emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.



The university also maintains a policy on [Public Health \(13.16\) \[61\]](#). When circumstances arise regarding the safeguarding of public health on campus, the vice president for university affairs convenes a Public/Student Health Committee to advise the vice president for university affairs on matters relating to public health and to coordinate the university's effort to fulfill its responsibility concerning public health. The Public/Student Health Committee recommends policies and procedures for student health services and the operation of the University Health Services facility. The committee follows the guidelines of recognized authorities including: the National Center for Disease Control, the U.S. Public Health Service, the Texas Department of Health, and the American College Health Association. The committee conforms to the Texas Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act and other applicable laws.

Testing and Effective Crisis Communications

The Emergency Operations Center has been activated multiple times in the past few years along with the emergency alert (crisis communication) systems for training purposes and actual emergencies. When these drills or emergencies occur, SFA partners with local supporting agencies such as the Nacogdoches Police, Fire, and Sheriff's departments. Due to these partnerships, the response times of external agencies to campus have been cut from 7 to 5 minutes, while on-campus university police [response times \[62\]](#) average 2-4 minutes.

The Emergency Operations Center was activated in August 2019, in order to conduct a [test \[63\]](#) of the SFA Emergency Plan and crisis communication in regards to a natural disaster (tornado) event on campus to determine if participants can realistically “talk through” their critical functions as well as become aware of possible weaknesses and gaps in the plan. Multiple constituents from across the SFA campus and community participated.

In September of 2019, a mobile Emergency Operations Center was created for the first SFA home football game to ensure the safety of the football patrons on campus. After the game, an [Emergency After Action Report \[64\]](#) was created to address the campus emergency preparedness, and mitigation, response, and recovery readiness. Additional threats and hazards were identified, and improvements and recommendations were generated for future games.

SFA's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and Business Continuity Plan were tested by the Finance and Administrative Division in May of 2018, to analyze our readiness should an active shooter enter the Austin Building, which houses the majority of SFA upper administration and financial services. The [drill \[65\]](#) focused on immediate emergency actions, as well as how to keep the university open and functioning after the incident was over. Strengths of the plan were identified along with areas for improvement. Key personnel were also identified.

The Emergency Operations Center was activated during a power outage and a gas line rupture that occurred in September 2017. These were two separate incidents; however, the responses to the emergencies were similar and included coordination of students remaining on campus, evacuation of buildings during the gas leak, and alternative lighting sources during the power outage. The SFA Crisis Communication System was also activated during these two events, which includes mass emails, website alerts, cell phone alerts, and social media messaging. Due



to proper emergency planning and training, these two incidents caused limited disruption to the university and the services it provides to its constituents.

Testing and Review of Facilities and Grounds

SFA is audited for health, safety, and security internally by the Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Department, Physical Plant Department, Residence Life, Auditing Services, and multiple other SFA departments. It is audited externally by the [State Office of Risk Management \(SORM\) \[66\]](#), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) through the State Fire Marshal, State of Texas Health and Human Services, and insurance providers. A written report is issued with recommendations, and SFA responds with a plan of correction and a timeline for completion. These audits are performed randomly at the discretion of the external auditors – [2018 TDI inspection report \[67\]](#). In addition to the State regulatory authorities, SFA maintains a great working relationship with the local City of Nacogdoches Fire Department.

SFA regularly inspects and tests all on and off campus facilities and grounds for health and safety concerns. A critical function of SFA's inspection and testing functions is to ensure all required fire/life safety, mechanical, and utility infrastructure are maintained and tested as required by the applicable federal, state, and local authorities by a certified company or by licensed in-house personnel. [Deficiencies \[68\]](#) are noted and addressed in a timely manner, and certification documents are filed or posted as required.

The inspections completed on campus include:

- Monthly Fire Extinguisher Inspections
- Annual Fire Extinguisher Inspections
- Fire Damper Inspections
- Annual Fire Door Inspections
- Sidewalk Inspections
- Annual Sprinkler Inspections
- Annual FDC (Fire Department Connections) Inspections
- Annual Knox Box Inspections
- Annual Fire Alarm Inspections
- Bi-Annual Laboratory Inspections
- Annual Safety Shower/Eyewash Safety Inspections
- Monthly Spill Prevention Containment and Conservation inspections
- Monthly Hazardous Waste Storage Inspections
- Annual Fume Hood Inspections
- Annual X-Ray Inspections
- Annual elevator inspections and associated testing
- Required interval inspections (one to three year) for varying types of water boilers
- Bi-annual underground natural gas line testing (leak detection and cathodic protection evaluation)
- Annual water backflow preventer testing.



- Asbestos Inspections
- Building Inspections State Fire Marshall Inspections
- TCEQ Waste Water Audits
- SFA Internal Audits
- Monthly Emergency Call Box Inspections State Office of Risk Management Audits
- Monthly Outdoor Siren Tests
- Annual Fire Drills –These drills are completed with full evacuation, fire alarm testing, police response timing, and a follow up safety brief at the completion of the drill.
- AED Inspections

The SFA internal Audit Services department provides independent, objective assurance and consulting activities that add value and improve university operations. Audit Services provides the SFA Board of Regents and the president an independent appraisal of the effectiveness of the university's system of internal administrative and accounting controls, and the quality of performance when compared with established standards. Audit Services has performed the following health and safety related audits:

- [Safety and Security Audit \(2016\) \[69\]](#)
- [Safety and Security Audit \(2018\) \[70\]](#)

The University Police Department (UPD) also audits/monitors the health, safety, and security of the campus. In compliance with the Clery Act, UPD posts general safety information on their website, including: SFA campus alert system, policies, and procedures related to campus safety, crime prevention training programs and tips, crime definitions, Texas sex offender registry link, reporting procedures, and potential consequences for offenders. A four-year history of crime [statistics \[71\]](#) is also available, with data broken down by offense classification and offense location.

Building Security and Access Control

At SFA we have a system to help provide controlled access to buildings through multiple security measures:

- Card Swipe System – Dorms and safety sensitive classrooms such as chemistry labs have access granted through swipe cards. The swipe card access is granted through form submission to University Police. The swipe card is made available to use as student and staff ID cards.
- Security Systems – These systems allow UPD to be notified of any possible intrusions through proximity sensors and biometric identification.
- Surveillance Camera Systems - The use of security cameras is generally for purposes of monitoring property subject to theft and supervising sensitive access points or offices/areas subject to disruptive behavior.
- [Key designation forms \[72\]](#)
- [Key Audits \[73\]](#)



The SFA University Police Department (UPD) and Information Technology Services (ITS) work together to ensure all on and off campus buildings are secure after hours and accessible during business hours. During the workday, the buildings are accessible using campus assigned access ID cards, or they may be physically unlocked. After hours, the buildings are locked utilizing the access lock system technology. Buildings that are not set up for access locking are locked manually by the night shift police. The UPD officers will also unlock facilities on the weekend when necessary. The UPD Communication Center (dispatch) monitors the access door alarms 24/7 and will dispatch a police unit when an alarm is activated. The night shift officers check buildings nightly to ensure that they are locked and secure.

Staff and students are required to use magnetic [ID cards \[74\]](#) to enter all housing facilities any time that the front desk is closed. Each of the facilities has a front desk that is staffed from 10 a.m. – midnight Sunday through Thursday and 10 a.m. – 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. All housing facilities provide security camera systems that are monitored and recorded by UPD. Emergency call stations located outside each residence hall also provide a direct communication link to the University Police Department, which is operational 24/7.

Building access via a physical key is provided by submitting a work order to the Physical Plant Department (PPD) through PPD's work order management system. Individual building administrators are responsible for the issuance of keys to the employees in their area. Please refer to SFA [policy 14.7, Issuance and Control of Campus Keys \[75\]](#).

Campus Security

Stephen F. Austin State University provides security for the campus utilizing in house resources. The university has a fully staffed and accredited police department that ensures the security of the campus. The University Police Department employs a team of highly trained and dedicated professionals working closely with all SFA departments on and off campus, on a 24/7 basis to provide a safe and secure environment. Police officers work closely with local, state, and federal agencies and provide patrol protection on and off campus, including parking lots, residence halls, and administrative and academic buildings.

University police officers are governed through the concept of Community Oriented Policing to meet the needs of a progressive institution by providing crime prevention and control, criminal investigations, traffic and parking supervision, emergency services, public order management, campus patrols, and other related services. University police are also vested with all powers, privileges, and immunities of peace officers within the country. Current MOU's are also in place, which provide the university the ability to ascertain information or assistance from outside sources when needed. The director of emergency management is tasked with training the campus community on best emergency practices, and providing updated mandated training for the EMS Committees, etc.

The University Police Department maintains a website where campus [security information \[76\]](#) such as the Clery Act information is provided to the campus along with multiple crime



prevention programs offered on a scheduled basis to the SFA community. These programs include Personal Safety Awareness, Residential and Office Security, Sexual Assault Awareness, Rape Aggression Defense (RAD), Drug and Alcohol Awareness, and the Defensive Driving Program.

Local Law Enforcement Relations

The University Police Department has cultivated a professional and excellent working relationship with the local law enforcement agencies (Nacogdoches County Sheriff's Department, Nacogdoches Police Department, Department of Public Safety, Customs, Border Patrol, Texas Rangers, and the FBI). There has always been a spirit of cooperation among city, county, and campus officers. The SFA Police Department has also always been integral in being a training site for local law enforcement agencies. We make a conscious effort to ensure all stakeholders are at the table when important security measures for the university are being decided. In addition, University Police officers serve city and county subpoenas and, on occasions, warrants. If city or county officers must conduct investigations or serve warrants on campus, they are assisted by the University Police.

Off Campus Measures

When it comes to safety and security, the university uses many of the same strategies used on the main campus for off-campus sites. The university does have a few offsite facilities; however, these facilities are primarily in Nacogdoches, which helps with routine patrols of buildings that are not on the main campus. That along with the use of security equipment such as security cameras and alarms, which are monitored 24/7, gives the campus safety and security professionals the same advantages they have for the main campus. Local law enforcement also helps SFA reach our off-campus sites if any issues arise where local departments could be nearer to the situation. Any concerns located at SFA offsite facilities are addressed in a reasonable amount of time to ensure that every site receives adequate responses from the police or university officials.

Procedure Dissemination

At SFA, we take a collective approach to sharing safety and emergency information with the campus. Newly hired employees receive multiple online trainings that give the employee a beginning overview of SFA's policies and procedures. The university also offers a library of [trainings \[77\]](#) assigned through our internal Self-Service Banner. These trainings will range from Safety trainings to Sexual Harassment training. SFA's Residence Life department works with students year-round through hall meetings and fire drills to give the students the tools needed to reside safely in the dorms.

Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management has provided all written safety programs on the [safety webpage \[78\]](#). These programs are updated, and trainings occur on a regular basis to ensure the university continuously receives safety information that is accurate and empowers success in safety for SFA. Trainings include, but are not limited to Shop Safety, Welding,



Cutting, and Brazing, Lock Out Tag Out, Respiratory Protection, Office Safety, Scaffolding, Excavation, Forklift/Manlift, Basic First Aid, Pesticide Safety, Chemical Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Hazard Communication.

University Police also holds trainings such as active shooter and defensive driving to ensure employees and students are alert and prepared for safety sensitive situations. Emergency procedures are also communicated by University Police through the SFA [Jack Alert system \[54\]](#), [RAVE Guardian system \[79\]](#), and university communications, which include text messaging, emails, and phone calls,

Crime prevention [programs \[80\]](#) provided by UPD are offered on a scheduled basis, and upon request, to residence hall supervisors and assistants and other key campus personnel. Topics include Personal Safety Awareness, Residential and Office Security, Sexual Assault Awareness, Rape Aggression Defense (RAD), Drug and Alcohol Awareness, and a Defensive Driving Program.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Investigations and Correspondence

Since the last SACSCOC comprehensive review, SFA has had no investigations into sexual violence by the Office of Civil Rights.

To ensure compliance with state and federal regulations related to the prevention, remediation, and adjudication of sexual misconduct and gender-based violence, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) provides a variety of resources. The [Lumberjacks Care Office \[81\]](#) is the central resource for ensuring gender equality at SFA to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, citizenship, and veteran status. Additionally, Stephen F. Austin State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Unlawful discrimination based on sex includes discrimination defined as sexual harassment.

To fulfill its mission, the Title IX office:

- Coordinates the delivery of detailed educational programs and training concerning discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, interpersonal violence, and stalking;
- Recommends, develops, interprets, and implements policies and procedures in support of non-discrimination;
- Oversees investigations into complaints of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence by promptly organizing an impartial administrative review and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that might be identified during the review of such complaints;
- Serves as the university's designated office responsible for coordinating the university's compliance with state and federal law, including, but not limited to, Title



- IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Violence Against Women Act, Campus SAVE Act;
- Works with the Office of the General Counsel to investigate and respond to external [complaints \[82\]](#) (e.g. EEOC, OCR).

[Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination \[83\]](#), and [policy 2.13, Title IX \[84\]](#), outline the university's commitment and detail the procedures used to prevent, respond, and investigate complaints. It is the responsibility of the university president to ensure that SFA and all its constituencies comply with the provisions of this policy and with all federal and state laws, executive orders, and regulations regarding non-discrimination.

All new students are required to complete an on-line [training module \[85\]](#) titled, "Voices for Change," which covers important topics such as students' rights and responsibilities; preventing sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, harassment and bullying; bystander intervention; substance use; and acting as allies for others in need. Additionally, all university employees are required to take this training. This helps us meet the objective of ensuring that students who report to responsible employees are handled in accordance with state and federal laws as well as university policies.







During orientation programs, SFA provides information about conduct relative to consent as part of "The Great Adventure" skits. Educational content is also included in the [orientation handbook/student handbook \[86\]](#), and in the [orientation program \[87\]](#).

Additionally, SFA sponsors the [Student Wellness Action Team \(SWAT\) \[88\]](#). This student organization focuses on peer education and promoting health and wellness around campus, including sexual health, sexual violence prevention, LGBTQIA+ rights and inclusion, alcohol safety, mental health, and stress management.






































The Lumberjacks Care Office offers a comprehensive index of all resources related to our efforts to provide students an educational experiences that affirm the rights and dignity of each individual.

As detailed in the response to this standard, SFA takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.









Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] SFA Ranked One of the Safest Universities.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Division of Finance & Administration Org Chart.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Division of University Affairs Org Chart.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Emergency Management System.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Fire and Life Safety Policy 2013.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] 2017_Biosafety_Manual.pdf](#)



-  [\[07\] Lab Safety Manual 2018.docx.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] 2019 Employee Safety and Health Training Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] Hazardous Waste Management Manual 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Policy 13.10, Health and Safety.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Asbestos Presentation - Training.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] Policy 13.26, Environmental Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] 2019 SFA COOP.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] Policy 13.19, Risk Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] Policy 12.23, Workers Compensation Coverage.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] Policy 13.24, Fire and Life Safety.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] Policy 11.6 Drug and Alcohol Testing.pdf](#)
-  [\[18\] Policy 16.23, Rental of University Vehicles.pdf](#)
-  [\[19\] Policy 13.4, Asbestos Management.pdf](#)
-  [\[20\] SFA Residence Life Fire Drill Procedure.pdf](#)
-  [\[21\] 2018 Lockout Tagout Electrical Safety Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[22\] 2020 Hot Works Safety Program.pdf](#)
-  [\[23\] 2011 Hearing Conservation Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[24\] Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[25\] 13.8 Training Logs.pdf](#)
-  [\[26\] Asbestos Awareness Training Roster.pdf](#)
-  [\[27\] Inspections-Audits.pdf](#)
-  [\[28\] Resume Higgins.pdf](#)
-  [\[29\] Resume J. Fields.pdf](#)
-  [\[30\] UPD Webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[31\] UPD - Other Services.pdf](#)
-  [\[32\] PPD Web Page Evidence.pdf](#)
-  [\[33\] Resume Watson.pdf](#)
-  [\[34\] PPD Certs & Licenses.pdf](#)
-  [\[35\] Student Affairs Programs - SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[36\] Resume Peck.pdf](#)
-  [\[37\] Student Affairs Office Web Sites.pdf](#)
-  [\[38\] Residence Life Department.pdf](#)
-  [\[39\] Resume Winston.pdf](#)
-  [\[40\] Hireright Webpage Screenshot.pdf](#)
-  [\[41\] Res Halls Fire Drill log.pdf](#)
-  [\[42\] Campus Rec Webpage.pdf](#)
-  [\[43\] Resume Morton.pdf](#)

-  [\[44\] Wellness Campus Rec.pdf](#)
-  [\[45\] Employee Fitness Campus Rec.pdf](#)
-  [\[46\] Human Resources.pdf](#)
-  [\[47\] SFA Employee Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[48\] Resume Kruwell.pdf](#)
-  [\[49\] Emergency Management Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[50\] Policy 13.8, Emergency Operations.pdf](#)
-  [\[51\] Safety Training Transcript.pdf](#)
-  [\[52\] SFA F&A BCP Confidential.pdf](#)
-  [\[53\] Crisis Communication System.pdf](#)
-  [\[54\] Jack Alert System.pdf](#)
-  [\[55\] Lumberjack Guardian.pdf](#)
-  [\[56\] Emergency Management Meeting.pdf](#)
-  [\[57\] Emergency Operations Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[58\] SFA Evacuation Route-Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[59\] SFA - Know What To Do Emergency Poster.pdf](#)
-  [\[60\] Early Childhood-Charter School Emergency Operations Plan.pdf](#)
-  [\[61\] Policy 13.16, Public Health.pdf](#)
-  [\[62\] UPD Call Time Analysis SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[63\] Aug. 2019 EOC Tornado Drill SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[64\] Sept. 2019 Football Game EOC After Action Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[65\] Continuity Tabletop Drill Active Shooter May 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[66\] SORM Audit FY18.pdf](#)
-  [\[67\] 2018 TDI Inspection Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[68\] Fire, Life, Safety Inspection.pdf](#)
-  [\[69\] 2016 Safety & Security Audit SFA.pdf](#)
-  [\[70\] Safety and Security Audit 2018.pdf](#)
-  [\[71\] Campus Crime Statistics.pdf](#)
-  [\[72\] Key Designation.pdf](#)
-  [\[73\] PPD Key Audit-Inventory.pdf](#)
-  [\[74\] SFA Campus ID Key Access Card.pdf](#)
-  [\[75\] Policy 14.7, Issuance and Control of Campus Keys.pdf](#)
-  [\[76\] SFA 2019 Fire & Safety Security Report.pdf](#)
-  [\[77\] SFA Employee Training Library.pdf](#)
-  [\[78\] Env HS&RM Web Page Evidence.pdf](#)
-  [\[79\] RAVE Guardian System.pdf](#)
-  [\[80\] Crime Prevention Programs.pdf](#)

-  [\[81\] Lumberjack Cares - Title IX.pdf](#)
-  [\[82\] Sexual Harassment Complaint Information.pdf](#)
-  [\[83\] Policy 2.11, Nondiscrimination.pdf](#)
-  [\[84\] Policy 2.13, Title-IX.pdf](#)
-  [\[85\] Voices for Change Training.pdf](#)
-  [\[86\] Orientation Site-Online Handbook.pdf](#)
-  [\[87\] SFA Student Orientation Programs.pdf](#)
-  [\[88\] SWAT.pdf](#)



Section 14: Transparency and Institutional Representation

14.1 The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy; and (b) ensures all its branch campuses include the name of that institution and make it clear that their accreditation depends on the continued accreditation of the parent campus.

(Publication of accreditation status) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Accurate Representation of Accreditation Status

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) publishes the name of its primary accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), including the commission's address and telephone number, online in the [General Bulletin \[01\]](#), in the [Graduate Bulletin \[02\]](#), and on the university's [website \[03\]](#). Figures 1, 2, and 3 below are screenshots from the university's website.

Governance and Accreditation

By legislative act, a nine-member Board of Regents appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate governs Stephen F. Austin State University. Each member serves a six-year term, with three new appointments every two years. Each year the governor also appoints an SFA student as a non-voting member of the Board of Regents to serve a one-year term. This board elects all members of the administration, faculty and professional staff, and sets general policies for the university program.

Stephen F. Austin State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of SFA.

Colleges and universities in the United States and all over the world recognize credit earned at Stephen F. Austin State University. Numerous programs of study at the university are accredited by specialized accrediting agencies. For accreditation of specific programs of study, see individual college pages in the [Academic Units](#) section of this bulletin.

Figure 1 – 14.1 – “2019-20 Undergraduate Bulletin.”



Administration and Accreditation

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The Master of Science in Nursing program has been granted candidacy status by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing and approved by the Texas Board of Nursing.

Figure 2 – 14.1 – “2019-20 Graduate Bulletin.”

Accreditations

Stephen F. Austin State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of SFA.

Figure 3 – 14.1 – “SFA Accreditations.”





SFA's Office of University Marketing Communications helps safeguard accurate representation of the university's status and relationship with SACSCOC, as provided for in university [policy 15.8, University Publications \[04\]](#): “To assure that communication to the general public contains accurate and current information and presents, through both content and appearance, a professional image that properly reflects the character, integrity, and accreditation status of the institution, official university publications . . . must be approved by University Marketing Communications prior to printing or electronic distribution.”

Branch Campuses

SFA does not have any branch campuses, so this part of the standard does not apply to the university.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Undergraduate General Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Graduate Bulletin.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Accreditations Website.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 15.8, University Publications.pdf](#)



14.2 The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC's policy.
(*Substantive change*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) notifies SACSCOC of pertinent changes in accordance with SACSCOC's Policy on Substantive Change, and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.

SFA has a policy devoted to upholding the requirements of the SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change. SFA Policy 4.10, "Substantive Change," was originally implemented as Policy A-70 Substantive Change on August 26, 2008, when it was approved by the university's Board of Regents. See the Board of Regents meeting [minutes \[1\]](#). [Policy 4.10 \[2\]](#) covers all types of changes defined by SACSCOC as substantive and assigns responsibility for notifying SACSCOC of any such changes to the university president or president's designee, who is typically the associate provost serving as the SACSCOC liaison. Policy 4.10 is published on the university's [website \[3\]](#), making it accessible to both the SFA community and the general public.

In addition, SFA Policy 5.7, Curriculum Review, Modifications, and Approvals, contains a section on substantive change requiring all curricular changes that are substantive in nature to be communicated to the SACSCOC liaison. [Policy 5.7 \[4\]](#) and 4.10 cross-reference each other.

Furthermore, SFA has built questions into its online curriculum change platform, Curriculog, to which the SACSCOC Substantive Change Prospectus can be attached for any type of curricular proposal that is substantive. See the example of the Master of Arts in National Security substantive change [prospectus \[5\]](#) and [Curriculog proposal \[6\]](#).

Finally, SFA has a [Distance Education Program Form \[7\]](#), which we use to determine if we are initiating a distance learning modality, which would thereby constitute a substantive change in method of delivery. The form is sent out by the Center for Teaching and Learning whenever an academic program requests distance education delivery for their program.

Over the years, SFA has submitted a number of Substantive Change Proposals to SACSCOC and maintains hard copies in the Office of Academic Affairs. SFA maintains written documentation of the Letters of Intent for these substantive changes, along with correspondence from SACSCOC providing approval for each substantive change ([PDF of Sub Change Proposals with examples of Curriculog form](#)) [8].

On August 13, 2018, SFA requested approval from the Commission to close a program we were offering on the campus of the University of Texas Health Science Center in Tyler (UTHSCT), the Environmental and Occupational Health MS track, but the phase-out for the program had



already begun in fall 2016, at the request of UTHSCT. This change was not communicated from the department-level up the chain of command to SFA's SACSCOC liaison and was only subsequently discovered when the Environmental Science program submitted a request to delete the Environmental and Occupational Health MS track through the 2017-2018 curriculum process, resulting in the late request for closure. In order to prevent another such oversight, the university revised Policy 4.10 to require all academic unit heads to attend an annual workshop on substantive change along with the SACSCOC liaison, divisional vice presidents, and academic deans, where all developments pertinent to substantive change are to be shared and discussed. The university community was informed of the change to Policy 4.10 via email. See the Board of Regents meeting [minutes \[9\]](#) and a copy of the [email \[10\]](#). SFA held its first substantive change workshop on May 28, 2019, and followed up with its second substantive change workshop on October 10, 2019. See the Sub Change Workshop [Presentation \[11\]](#). Going forward, the annual substantive change workshop will be held in the fall semester.

SFA is in compliance with the SACSCOC policy on substantive change and will continue to monitor its procedures to ensure full implementation of both the Commission's Policy on Substantive Change and the corresponding SFA Policy 4.10, which is reviewed every five years to maintain currency.

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] BOR Meeting Minutes August.26, 2008.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Policy 4.10, Substantive Change.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Policy Manual.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Policy 5.7, Curriculum Reviews, Modifications and Approvals.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Master of National Security Sub Change Prospectus.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] National Security Fall 2019.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] Distance Ed Program Course List.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] Sub Change Proposal Examples.pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] BOR Meeting Minutes January 26-28, 2020.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] Newly Revised University Policies email.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] Sub change Presentation 10-10-2019.pdf](#)



14.3 The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites.
(*Comprehensive institutional reviews*)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs and off-campus instructional sites. SFA does not maintain any branch campuses. The university's off-campus sites consist of the School of Nursing, a facility in Nacogdoches but not contiguous to the main campus; Tyler Junior College, where the university offers the Bachelor of Social Work; the Lone Star College Montgomery University Center, where the university offers the Bachelor of Social Work, the Master of Social Work, and the Bachelor of Business Administration in Sports Business; and several dual credit high school sites (see table below).

SFA utilizes the precept of inclusion to ensure that students at off-campus facilities receive the same level of instruction and support as students at SFA's main campus. This extends from classrooms to related support. Any SFA student can access any support or services they need to be successful. Student services are available to off-campus students, including academic support services and library resources. Qualified faculty members, using the same standards set forth in SFA's response to Standard 6.2b (linked in the table below); teach every course at off-campus facilities.

Courses and programs offered online are given the same attention to quality and integrity as traditional courses, notably because in order for a course to be offered online, it must be reviewed and approved by both the [Center for Teaching & Learning \(CTL\) \[01\]](#) and the chair (or chair's designee) of its home academic department. Notably, the academic department reviews the course to ensure that the quality and integrity continue to be the same as traditional courses. The academic department is also responsible for monitoring content of courses and programs.

Furthermore, oversight for distance learning is provided by the CTL. This office is deeply involved in review and approval of online courses, reporting of distance education programs to the appropriate entities (e.g. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and regional bodies), software acquisition and support (e.g. ensuring that all products are ADA-compliant and providing faculty and student support for their use), and other distance education-related issues such as the institution's membership in [NC-SARA \[02\]](#). Additionally, the CTL frequently consults with academic departments on questions related to coding online/distance education courses accurately for state reporting purposes, as well as the marketing of distance education programs.



Regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness, pertinent work is collected from all apposite students, regardless of location or mode of instructional delivery. Assessment of SFA’s educational programs is discussed in further detail in standards [8.2a](#) and [8.2b](#).

Finally, SFA requires all off-campus sites to provide adequate facilities for instruction, whether they are physical or electronic. For those settings outside of SFA’s direct control, requirements are ensured through [articulation agreements \[03\]](#) [\[04\]](#).

Further details about how appropriate standards and policies apply to SFA’s distance learning and offsite programs are included in our response to numerous standards. Excerpts from each of these responses are included in the table below.

Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations
<p>3.1a</p> <p>As part of its authorized degree offerings, SFA delivers online degree programs and courses taken by out-of-state students. To ensure the appropriate state authorizations, SFA participates in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). NC-SARA “pertains to approval of distance education courses and programs offered across state lines by post-secondary institutions that already have degree authorization in at least one state.”</p>
<p>6.2b</p> <p>SFA maintains data and contextual measures organized by college to document the university commitment to ensuring that each academic program provides an adequate number of full-time faculty in baccalaureate degree pursuits, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site).</p>
<p>6.5</p> <p>Additionally, CTL is responsible for providing educator development for all faculty seeking to teach online or via ITV. Both development opportunities are offered online at least twice a year. The Online Instructor Certification Course [5] includes content on crafting an online community of learners, teamwork, instructional design, instructional video, ADA compliance, and copyright and fair use. The Interactive Video Certification Course [6] includes content on using the university’s selected web conferencing technology platform, distance learning theory, connectedness, and cognitive load.</p> <p>Faculty who teach in distance education programs and courses receive appropriate training. The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) also offers extensive professional development opportunities to faculty members, with a focus on effective teaching of distance education courses. OIT provides a complete range of professional development activities, including computer-based training, hands-on workshops, and special events for SFA faculty and instructional support staff seeking to enhance their students' learning experience. The office also offers several certificates based upon the successful completion of workshop strands geared toward the development of technical skills required to successfully integrate technology into the teaching and learning process.</p>



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

8.2a

A Note Regarding Modality and Location

Student learning outcomes for our educational programs are assessed, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site). Distance education and off-site programs at SFA are required to follow the same schedule, procedures, and deadlines for assessment as main campus face-to-face programs. Programs that are offered through both online and face-to-face modalities have been asked to disaggregate assessment results for online and face-to-face students and to use the results from both groups in the formulation of their actions for improvement. Many of SFA's course offerings are online or hybrids of in-person and online. The COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, SFA is fully experienced in online instructional delivery. We offer a variety of degrees and concentrations at the undergraduate and graduate level [3]. Most SFA students take at least one course that requires them to learn online. There are a few documented cases of comparison between courses, but these emanate from genuine interest in quality control within a specific class. One example comes from the NRCOB. The criterion for success was 75% meeting expectations on a locally created rubric. Overall, 45 student samples were evaluated by two raters. Discrepancies of more than 1 point between raters were assessed by a third rater. Across all students, 84.44% met the criterion. Nine students from online sections were evaluated, and 77.78% of the students met the criterion. Of the 36 face-to-face students evaluated, 86.11% met the criterion. Another course surveyed 61 students over two years. Well over 90% of online students met criteria on a separate rubric. In both cases, the criterion was met. The attached documents provide further details of these results. [4, 5a, 5b]

The academic programs we offer at off-sites are required to follow the same schedule, procedures, and deadlines for assessment as main campus face-to-face programs. These programs include the Bachelor of Social Work at Tyler Junior College and the Bachelor of Social Work, the Master of Social Work, and the Bachelor of Business Administration in Sports Business at Lone Star College Montgomery University Center.

A Note Regarding Dual Credit Courses at SFA

SFA's Institutional Effectiveness approach is run by faculty (usually program coordinators). Since dual credit courses have corresponding course sections on campus (and online), results for these courses necessarily involve student performance measures from all modes and locations of instruction. We offer the same credit; therefore, dual credit course results are held to the same standards and included in all resultant improvement approaches.

8.2b

Student learning outcomes for our collegiate-level general education competencies of our undergraduate degree programs are assessed, regardless of instructional delivery mode (online or other) or location (on-campus or off-site).



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

8.2c

Outcomes of academic and student services that support student success are assessed, regardless of how students obtain their education (online or other) or where they are located (on-campus or off-site).

9.3

Successful completion of the core curriculum is required of all students regardless of their physical location (on-campus or off-site) or program delivery modality (online or other).

9.4

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) maintains policies that ensure at least 25 percent of the credits required for undergraduate degrees to be earned in residence at SFA. The term "in-residence" includes on-campus, off-campus, distance education, field-based, practicum, internship, and thesis/dissertation work for master's/doctoral degrees offered by Stephen F. Austin State University. The General Bulletin states, "all students must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours in residence at SFA in order to earn a bachelor's degree," constituting more than 25% of the 120 hours typically required for a baccalaureate degree at SFA. University policy 6.15, In-Residence Requirement, also states that "Undergraduate degrees with 120 hours total degree program hours require a minimum of 30 advanced (upper level) in-residence semester credit hours." For the small handful of undergraduate programs that require more than 120 hours, policy 6.15 adds, "Undergraduate degrees with more than 120 total degree program hour requirements will ensure semester credit hours for the specific discipline include at least 25 percent of total semester credit hours in-residence."

10.2

Since all calendars are published online, both face-to-face and online students have easy access to the information. SFA academic calendars are compliant with Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, Rule 4.5 [3].

10.4

SFA closely involves faculty in the development, implementation, quality assurance, and oversight of distance education courses and programs. This includes a rigorous process to certify online faculty, through which they receive professional training [40] in the best practices for developing online courses. During this process, faculty are responsible for creating online modules for their courses and peer reviewing each other's modules, making faculty themselves an integral part of the online training. This process creates ownership over distance education for faculty, achieves consistency in online course design, and fosters better communication between faculty and students, as faculty are able to create more engaging and interactive online experiences for their students.



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

10.5

Students enrolled in a high school or home school programs may be eligible to earn credit toward high school graduation by successfully completing college core (SB1091) curriculum courses. SFA's Dual Credit program is in accordance with the 19 Texas Administration Code 4.84 [12], open to all eligible high school students in grades 9-12. Eligibility is determined by the Texas Success Initiative [13] college readiness guidelines for reading, writing, and mathematics. Dual credit students must be TSI complete in the subject area(s) in which they wish to enroll. Eligible students wanting to participate in dual credit must complete an ApplyTexas application and a Dual Credit Student Agreement and submit appropriate TSI scores. Currently, TSI waivers or exemptions are determined by PSAT, SAT, ACT, or the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores. In order to make dual credit accessible to all eligible students, there is no application fee required for dual credit applications.

Exceptions to admissions policies are controlled by the university admission requirements. Freshman applicants who do not meet automatic admissions go through an individual file review where a holistic review by an admissions counselor takes place. File review instructions [14] exist in order to provide guidelines for a consistent holistic review. Freshman applicants that are denied have two alternative admission options [15] available to them. Transfer applicants that do not meet the admissions requirements are denied. Transfer applicants also have two alternative admission options [16] available to them. Dual credit applicants must meet the state requirements for being college ready. In order to make dual credit accessible to all eligible students, the state currently provides TSI waivers or exemption [17], which are determined by approved scores on the PSAT, SAT, ACT, or STARR.

SFA does not have branch campuses and does not recruit at international sites.

10.6

SFA offers distance education courses across a variety of modalities and ensures that the student who registers for a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit. SFA verifies student identity using two-factor authentication (a secure username and password, plus an additional push-based authentication via mobile app, phone, or token), as well as through proctored examinations.

The application process for distance education students is the same as that of face-to-face students.

Distance education students must use login credentials issued to and known only to them to access all computer systems, including mySFA, the student information system, registration system, electronic mail, library systems, learning management system, and associated instructional content systems. SFA uses a single sign-on authentication system for added security.



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

10.6 (continued)

A student enrolled in a distance or correspondence education course or program may be required (at the discretion of the instructor) to take exam(s) in a remotely proctored environment. Depending on instructor preference, students may have to prove their identity to access a remotely proctored examination.

At the time of registration, distance education students are provided a statement [12] that notes that the distance education fee covers “some proctoring.” At present, the institution pays for one proctored exam per student per course section per semester.

10.7

SFA offers distance education courses, which are defined in Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 4, Rule 4.257 [11] as “the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction.” SFA offers a variety of distance education options: Interactive Video (ITV), web-based, hybrid (a blend of online and face-to-face instruction), and off-campus. All distance education courses taught at SFA adhere to the practices outlined above in relation to the credit hour, in which a 1-credit-hour course must have at least one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit. Course credit hours awarded for asynchronous courses meet the same guidelines as traditionally delivered courses based on equivalent content. Example syllabi [12] provide evidence that online classes have similar content and require similar amounts of work to earn the credit hours awarded. Graduate programs at SFA that are online also have credit hour standards that are equivalent to the definition in policy 5.4 [1]. Additionally, examples of online and hybrid syllabi [13] provide evidence that all types of course delivery follow the credit hour policy. Distance education courses offered at off-campus locations are subject to the same curriculum review and approval process as all courses offered at SFA as stated in SFA Policy 5.13, Off Campus Credit Courses [14]. An example of off-campus syllabi is provided for documentation [15].

11.1

SFA provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources. The library collections consist of more than 2 million titles (books, journals, etc.), and 276 research databases [1]. The entire SFA community—including online students, students at off-campus sites, and all faculty—have access to both print and online collections [2] through the Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Services [3] and proxy authentication [4].



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

11.3

Students enrolled in online and remote site courses, including dual credit, have access to the library's physical resources by requesting delivery through its document delivery services. See the Interlibrary Loan Request Form [3]. They receive the same borrowing privileges as on-campus students. Journal articles or book chapters are delivered to students' email addresses, and books and A-V materials are delivered by regular U.S. mail.

When the library is closed, patrons can renew through the online catalog [9] or drop off materials through the book drop. Patrons, including dual credit and distant education students either online or at a remote site, can use the "Ask the Librarian" online resource [10] or the "ASK ETRC" website [11] services, and a librarian will respond to them within 48 hours.

Library instruction is presented to all students, including at remote sites, via online, and in dual credit, through demonstration classes, orientations, workshops, or individual consultations [12] with a librarian via in-person, phone, or e-mail through the Ask-a-Librarian service [13]. The librarians also provide research guides [14] and the Credo Information Literacy tutorials [15].

12.1

SFA maintains teaching sites at Tyler Junior College (TJC) [13], Lone Star College Montgomery (LSCM) [14], and several regional high schools [15], where we teach a variety of core curriculum courses and introductory career pathway courses as dual credit instruction. At each of these sites, any undergraduate, graduate, and professional student may access all support services to which they are entitled regardless of the format of course delivery (face-to-face, online, dual-credit, off-campus instructional sites, etc.). All SFA students (including dual-credit students) are offered a student ID, allowing them to access SFA's services. Students may utilize available resources and services on campus or remotely when appropriate and requested. Additionally, SFA's academic and student programs, services, and activities are delivered either to students at all levels, or, as appropriate, to certain levels or groups within the student population.

12.3

SFA's policies and procedures for both formal, written complaints and informal complaint resolution do not differ for face-to-face and online students. All students have the opportunity to submit written student complaints via in-person delivery, hard copy mail, email, or fax. University Affairs publishes on its website the formal written student complaint process [18]. An example of a formal complaint that was received and resolved within the past 30 days can be found here [19]. For further discussion of SFA's formal student written complaint process, see the narrative to Standard 12.4.



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

12.4

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. To ensure compliance with state and federal laws, the university grants to students the right of access to their education records, protects students from illegal use of their education records, and restricts the disclosure of the social security account number of students. The university is required by the State of Texas to comply with Texas Administrative Code Section 202 (TAC 202) [1], which establishes security standards. SFA also follows all regulations regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) [2] to protect the privacy of student education records. The policies, procedures, and details regarding the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records in this response apply to all students, including dual credit, distance education, and off-site location students.

12.5

During the spring semester, the Marleta Chadwick program hosts a workshop titled “Back to Basics,” which discusses money management and budgeting. The Marleta Chadwick program serves as a campus resource for the freshman seminar (SFAS 1101) classes. Instructors invite the student financial advisers to give presentations on a variety of financial literacy topics, including budget management, savings, and managing debt. All undergraduate, graduate, dual credit, and online students are able to use services from this center. Enrollment data for each course for the past three years is listed in the table below.

Under the direction of the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, an online financial literacy training program, called CashCourse [12], is offered to all students.

13.7

SFA has partnerships with several off-campus instructional locations which are sites located geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers 50% or more of its credit hours for a diploma, certificate, or degree. This includes high schools where courses are offered as part of dual enrollment. Such partnerships include Tyler Junior College (TJC) and Lone Star College-University Center Montgomery (LSCM). SFA and TJC formed a partnership that offers a Bachelor of Social Work. SFA and LSCM formed a partnership that offers courses at The Woodlands, TX, including a Bachelor of Social Work, a Bachelor of Business Administration – Sports Business, and a Master of Social Work.



Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

13.6 (continued)

SFA continues to see growth in our dual credit offerings at high schools. SFA offers 25% or more but less than 50% of a program at the following campuses:

- Burkeville High School
- Palestine High School
- Kirbyville High School
- Warren High School
- Longview High School
- Wills Point High School
- Newton High School
- Nacogdoches High School
- Cushing High School
- Center High School
- Garrison High School

The university ensures there are adequate physical facilities and resources in off-campus locations that appropriately serve the needs of the School of Social Work's educational programs with support services and other mission-related activities. To ensure academic needs are met, a staff member is assigned to review and facilitate the process of assessing the needs of academic programs at TJC and LSCM. Each of these locations has adequate physical resources for the educational environment and include facilities that are safe and appropriate for the scope of the institution's programs and services. Both of these off-site locations have dedicated classrooms, offices, and meeting spaces for students and faculty.

SFA supports a wide array of information technology systems that aid in content delivery and interaction with students in both face-to-face and online classes. ITS operates two data centers on the SFA campus, which are equipped with uninterruptible power supplies, backup generators, and automatic transfer switches. One of the data centers serves as the primary computing facility housing most of the university's enterprise data systems, the systems data base analysts, and programming groups. The other data center houses the University's core networking and telecommunications equipment and serves as the backup datacenter where additional storage and disaster recovery equipment is housed. The latter facility also houses the networking and technical support groups. This level of redundancy has been implemented to safeguard the availability of the technologies utilized for delivery of SFA programs. Infrastructure security is governed by the following policies: 14.1 Information Security Management [16] and 14.2 Acceptable Use of Information Resources [17].






Standards and Brief Summary of Narratives Related to Distance Learning and Off-site Locations

13.8

When it comes to safety and security, the university uses many of the same strategies used on the main campus for off-campus sites. The university does have a few offsite facilities; however, these facilities are primarily in Nacogdoches, which helps with routine patrols of buildings that are not on the main campus. That along with the use of security equipment such as security cameras and alarms, which are monitored 24/7, gives the campus safety and security professionals the same advantages they have for the main campus. Local law enforcement also helps SFA reach our off-campus sites if any issues arise where local departments could be nearer to the situation. Any concerns located at SFA offsite facilities are addressed in a reasonable amount of time to ensure that every site receives adequate responses from the police or university officials.

Table 1 – 14.2 – Excerpts from standards related to distance education and off-site locations

Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Distance Education — SFACTL.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] NC SARA Renewal Confirmation Letter.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Tyler Junior College Dual Credit MOU.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Lone Star - SFASU - Lease Agreement - Fully Executed 2020.pdf](#)



14.4 The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions. (See SACSCOC policy *Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies*.)
(*Representation to other agencies*) [**Off-Site/On-Site Review**]

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

(a) Institutional Representation

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is consistent in the descriptions provided to all U.S. Department of Education (DE) recognized accrediting agencies from which it holds an accreditation regarding the university's purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents. SFA keeps its DE-recognized accrediting agencies apprised of a change in status with any accreditation held from a DE-recognized accrediting agency. Figure 1 displays the consistent description on the SFA website. Additionally, noted is the accreditation maintenance reminder provided to academic units functions as part of the continuous evaluation and reporting process. A mid-year [check-up \[01\]](#) to academic units also serves as a reminder for consistent and accurate reporting.



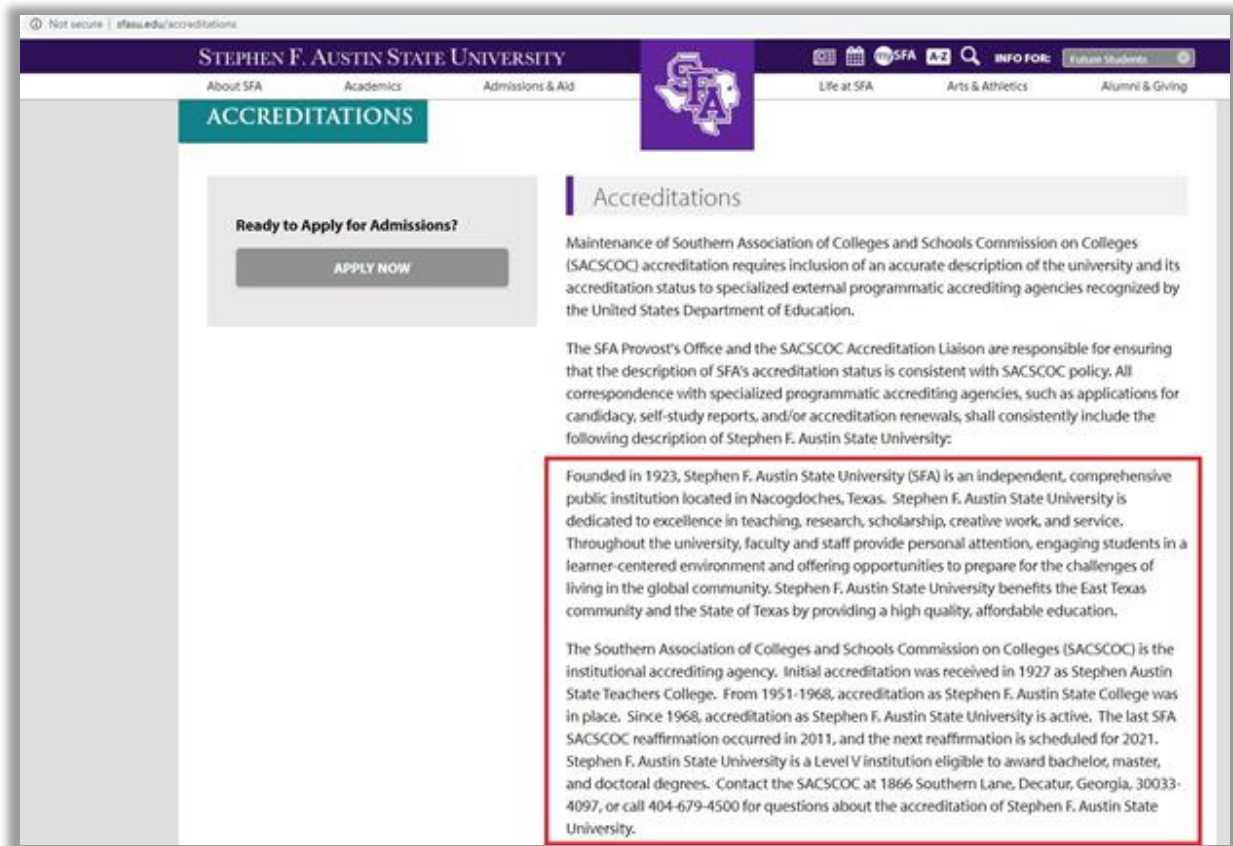


Figure 1 – 14.4 – Consistent SFA Accreditation Description, SFA website

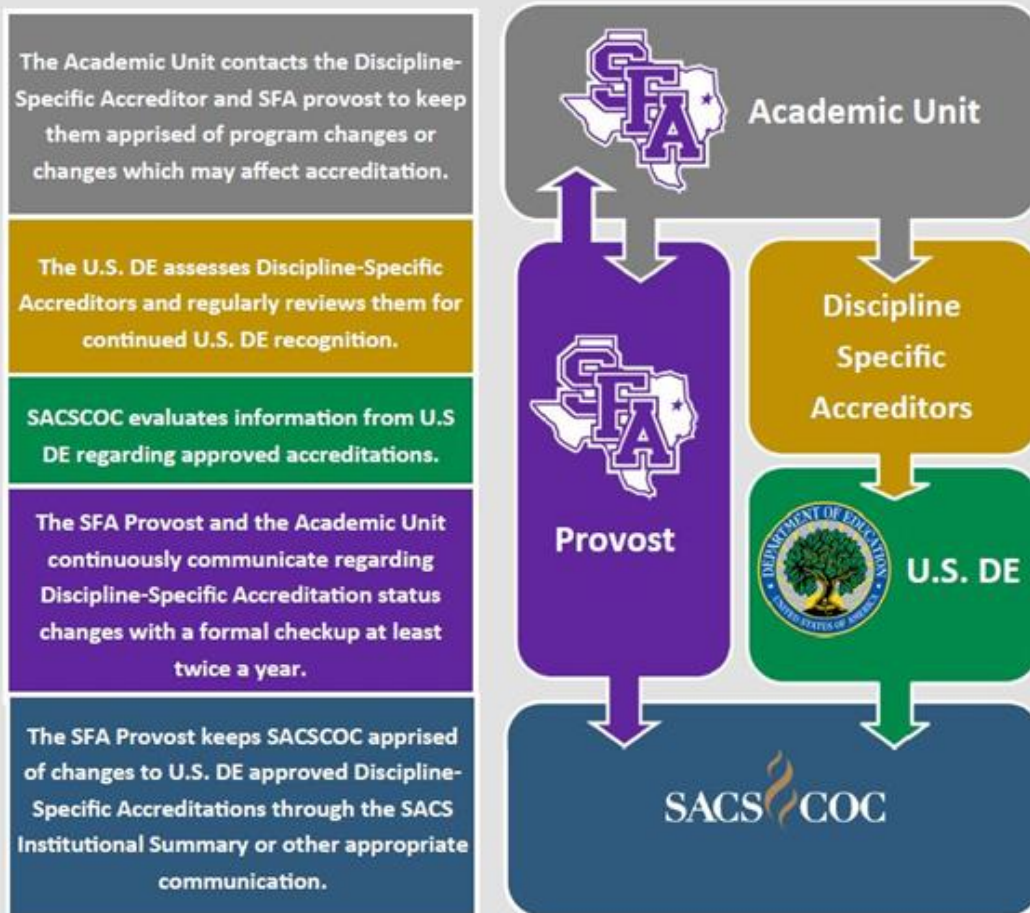
All accreditations held by the institution and its programs are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges by the university’s SACSCOC liaison within the Provost's office. In addition to the consistent description referenced above, a comprehensive, current [list \[02\]](#) of university and program accreditation is published on the main SFA accreditation [webpage \[03\]](#) with a [link \[04\]](#) to more details hosted on the Provost's website.

(b) Accreditation Change Evaluation and Notification Process

As part of the institution’s annual revision process, the list of university and program accreditations are reviewed, verified, and updated as necessary by the SFA Office of Institutional Research (OIR). The SFA Provost (including OIR) and the academic unit continuously communicate regarding discipline-specific accreditation status changes with a formal checkup at least twice a year (Figure 2). An [example \[05\]](#) inquiry and response documents the latest process.



Stephen F. Austin State University Continuous Evaluation of Discipline-Specific Accreditations



SFA Office of the Provost, 2020

Figure 2 – 14.4 – Continuous Evaluation of Discipline-Specific Accreditations



No SFA accreditation has encountered involuntarily termination. Additionally, no negative action been taken by any accrediting agency against SFA or its programs.

Our English Language Institute (ELI) had been accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), which is a DE-recognized accrediting agency. Due to cuts to our ELI budget, we could no longer afford the increasing cost of the CEA annual dues. Thus, we withdrew our accreditation voluntarily. On October 22, 2018, the SFA SACSCOC liaison received a letter from our SACSCOC vice president, Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover, stating we had failed to inform SACSCOC of this withdrawal. In response, the SFA SACSCOC liaison provided SACSCOC with the required [documentation \[06\]](#) and subsequently informed our other DE-recognized accreditors of our voluntary withdrawal from CEA accreditation due to budgetary constraints. Since this time, SFA has discontinued the English Language Institute entirely. In order to ensure timely future communication regarding the status of SFA accreditations, the formal evaluation [process \[07\]](#) described above was established. This more engaging and continuous review cycle will facilitate SACSCOC notification in the event changes to SFA accreditation occurs.

Table 1 below provides a list of the DE-recognized accrediting bodies by accreditation type or program. Also listed in the table are the year of the last review, next accreditation review year, and additional documentation of [accreditation status \[08\]](#). The ED website also presents a printable database query report for recognized SFA [accreditations \[09\]](#). However, the ED database query listing is not completely reflecting every DE-recognized organization. Notations and additional evidence linked below shows DE-recognition and SFA affiliation for the select accreditation organizations and programs not accurately displayed on the ED database list. Also notable are the ED database query listing of residual references to CEA (situation noted above) and the previously DE-recognized National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (NCATE was replaced by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAPE) which is not yet DE-recognized).

Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) [10]	Institutional	2011	2021
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) [11]	Didactic Program in Dietetics (Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences, BS)	2017	2022
	Dietetics (DIETI) - Dietetic Internship	2018	2023
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN) [12]	Nursing (MNUR) - Master's program (Nursing, MSN)	2019	2024
	Nursing (NUR) - Baccalaureate Program (Nursing and Post-RN, BSN)	2013	2021



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
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Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [13]	Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) - Graduate degree programs (Speech-Language Pathology, BS)	2014	2021
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Commission on Accreditation [14] *	<p>Bachelor of Science-4 years: Interior Design. (Interior Design, BS)</p> <p>Master of Science-2 years: Interior Design (Non-Thesis, Thesis). (including Distance Learning). (Interior Design, MS)</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts-4 years: Studio Art. Bachelor of Fine Arts-4 years: Studio Art (Art, K-12 Certification). (Art, BA BFA)</p> <p>Master of Arts-1 1/2 years: Studio Art. Master of Fine Arts-2 to 3 years: Art (Filmmaking); Studio Art. Certificate-1 year: Museum Studies (Graduate). Certificate-1 year: Museum Studies (Graduate). (Art, MA MFA)</p> <p>Master of Arts-1 1/2 years: Art Education (Studio Option, Research Option). (Art Education, MA)</p>	2013	2022-2023



Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Commission on Accreditation [15]*	Composition, Music Education, Performance, Sound Recording Technology, Piano Pedagogy Certificate (Undergraduate)(Music, BM) Music Education (including Distance Learning), Conducting, Performance, Performing Artist Certificate, Theory/Composition (Music, MM)	2012	2022
National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), Commission on Accreditation [16]*	Bachelor of Arts-4 years: Theatre (General, All-Level Teacher Certificate) (Theatre, BA) Bachelor of Fine Arts-4 years: Theatre (Design and Technical Theatre, Performance, Stage Management) (Theatre, BFA)	2014	2024
American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation (APA) [17]	Professional Psychology (IPSY) - Predoctoral internship programs (School Psychology, Doctoral Internship related to PHD)	2019	2020

Table 1 – 14.4 – SFA DE-recognized accrediting bodies


















* U.S. Department of Education (ED) database query listing is not completely reflecting these DE-recognized organizations; evidence linked shows DE-recognition and SFA affiliation.

The described processes and documentation affirms Stephen F. Austin State University is accurately represented to all U.S. Department of Education (DE) recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and maintains processes to inform those agencies of accreditation status changes.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Accreditation Continuous Evaluation and Maintenance.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] SFA Accreditations.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] SFA Comprehensive Accreditation list and details link.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Accreditation links and Provost site reference.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] Accreditation Checkup Email.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] SFA Voluntary Withdrawal CEA Correspondence.pdf](#)
-  [\[07\] SFA Continuous Evaluation Accrediation.pdf](#)
-  [\[08\] SFA Accreditors \(ED Recognized\).pdf](#)
-  [\[09\] ED SFA Accreditation Report Online.pdf](#)
-  [\[10\] SACS membership on website.pdf](#)
-  [\[11\] ACEND Dietetics Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[12\] ACEN Nursing Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[13\] CAA Speech Language Pathology Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[14\] NASAD Art Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[15\] NASM Music Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[16\] NAST Theatre Accreditation.pdf](#)
-  [\[17\] APA School Psychology Int Accreditation.pdf](#)



14.5 The institution complies with SACSCOC's policy statements that pertain to new or additional institutional obligations that may arise that are not part of the standards in the current *Principles of Accreditation*.
(Policy compliance)

Compliance

Non-Compliance

Partial Compliance

Narrative

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) complies with the policies of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, including any new or revised policy statements that are not part of the current Principles of Accreditation.

An example of SFA's compliance with a new SACSCOC policy is the university's creation of an [orientation \[01\]](#) for new dual credit adjunct faculty to ensure compliance with the SACSCOC Dual Enrollment policy. For instance, to fulfill the directive in the policy that dual credit students receive the same services as our other students, new dual credit adjunct faculty are informed of the services available to all students during their onboarding process with Human Resources. See the dual credit adjunct faculty [training module \[02\]](#) and a [roster checklist \[03\]](#) of adjunct faculty training completions.







Another example SFA's compliance with a new SACSCOC policy involves the transition from face-to-face (F2F) instruction to online/distance education for courses taught on the main campus, at the nursing school, and offsite locations due to COVID-19. SFA's SACSCOC liaison [emailed \[04\]](#) the SACSCOC Director of Substantive Change, Dr. Kevin Sightler, pursuant to the SACSCOC [policy statement \[05\]](#), Flexibilities Offered to SACSCOC Member Institutions During the Period of COVID-19 Interruptions, to provide notification of SFA's transition to online/distance education modalities for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester due to COVID-19. Additionally, the liaison notified SACSCOC through the online institutional portal that SFA was also shifting all courses set for F2F instruction for the summer 2020 semesters to online/distance education.

Every summer, the SFA SACSCOC liaison, who is the associate provost, checks the SACSCOC website and reviews the posted publication dates of each SACSCOC policy to see if there are any new or updated policies to review. All SACSCOC emails are held in one of the associate provost's Microsoft Outlook [folders \[06\]](#). The liaison also attends the SACSCOC Summer Institute and the annual SACSCOC conference in December every year, where the liaison goes to any sessions on new policies. The liaison also meets with SFA's SACSCOC vice president at the December conference, who discusses policy changes and how they might affect the institution.

As evidenced in the examples and procedures provided, SFA complies with SACSCOC policy statements that pertain to new and additional institutional obligations that may arise and that are not part of the standards in the current *Principles of Accreditation*.



Evidentiary Documents

-  [\[01\] Orientation for New Dual Credit Adjuncts.pdf](#)
-  [\[02\] Onboarding Modules.pdf](#)
-  [\[03\] Onboarding Completed Checklist.pdf](#)
-  [\[04\] Shifting F2F to Online Email.pdf](#)
-  [\[05\] SACSCOC Flexibilities Policy Regarding COVID-19.pdf](#)
-  [\[06\] SACS Emails folder.pdf](#)

